Rethinking the Role of Philosophy in the Global Age

Edited by
William Sweet
Pham Van Duc

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IT TO 'RETHINK' PHILOSOPHY IN THE GLOBAL AGE?

WILLIAM SWEET

I

It may seem unnecessary to call for philosophers to *rethink* philosophy – for philosophy is, surely, the discipline, *par excellence*, that continually reflects on itself. And while the term 'rethinking' is a fairly recent one[1], the practice of thinking and rethinking has always been a central feature of every genuinely philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, the theme of this volume is neither prosaic nor redundant; it is a response to the increasing awareness that to do philosophy in the twenty-first century cannot be a mere continuation of the practices of the nineteenth and twentieth.

In the past five decades, we have seen significant changes in our world and in our awareness and understanding of it. Social and economic globalization and its effects on human relations, the omnipresence of science and technology as a medium and means of knowing reality – so that we sometimes describe the present era as 'the information age'[2] or 'the digital age' – the growing diversities within communities and nations, the increasing awareness of – and encounters (and conflicts) with – cultures at both the international and the local level, the mounting challenges to values and traditions, and even the critiques of reason itself, indicate that the time in which we live is very different from that which preceded.

These changes and challenges, then, not only oblige us to reconsider what role philosophy has today, but raise the question of what philosophy itself is.

To say that philosophy is the love of knowledge or wisdom may not seem to say very much and, in any event, agreement on what philosophy is, appears to break down beyond that. Does philosophy have a distinctive content? Is philosophy primarily a method? One frequently hears philosophy described as a paradigmatically rational activity, but whether this is so – and indeed what it means to be a 'rational activity' – are contested issues. There have been lengthy debates concerning what may, and what cannot, be included in philosophy: is there room for feeling or

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[1] The first recorded usage of the term 'rethinking' in English is 1881, but it is only in the last 25 years that it has appeared with any frequency.

[2] See Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New 'Post-Modern' World* (New York: Harper, 1959); see also Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

sentiment? for insight or intuition? for world views or ideologies? Can there be genuine philosophies of a religious character (such as Christian, or Buddhist, or Islamic philosophy)? Is philosophy a universal enterprise that extends across cultures and over time – or is it, as the late Richard Rorty would say, an "ambiguous" notion that has referred to many different activities throughout its history?[3] What is it that philosophy does that other activities and practices do not?

All this suggests, then, that 'rethinking philosophy' is a crucial project at this time.

To carry out this project, again a number of questions need to be addressed: What exactly is involved when we speak of 'philosophy'? Are we referring to a discipline, an institution or set of institutions, or an activity? What is the relation of philosophy to other disciplines or activities, to cultures, to traditions, and to world views? Does a rethinking of philosophy involve a rethinking of particular philosophical traditions or does it entail a revision of the field as a whole? What exactly has been the role of philosophy up till now? With the move into the information or digital age, does philosophy in fact need to be not simply rethought but *reconfigured* and, if so, how? And, to the extent that philosophy has begun to be rethought and reconfigured, what has occurred or been accomplished so far?

These and related questions were engaged, in June 2006, at a conference in Hanoi, hosted and organized by the Institute of Philosophy of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), together with the Fédération internationale des sociétés de philosophie (FISP), the College of Economics and Business Administration of Tsinghua University (Beijing, China), the Union of Asian Philosophers, and the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. This conference, in many ways also preparatory to the World Congress of Philosophy to take place in Seoul in 2008, brought together philosophers from over 20 countries, including a very large number of Vietnamese academics and many leading figures from the international philosophical community who serve on the Steering Committee of FISP.

II

Philosophy has been, and is for many, the preeminent rational and critical discipline – a discipline defined frequently as simply an activity: one "does" philosophy. Philosophy is to be found, on this view, wherever there is a rigorous investigation and pursuit of the fundamental questions of human

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[3] See, for example, Rorty's Introduction to his *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays 1972-1980* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

existence. Not surprisingly, philosophy has generally been seen to have a place and a role to play within, but also among, all cultures and traditions.[4]

In **Part I,** "Contemporary Challenges" are raised. What are the specific concerns that philosophy is called on today to address? **William Sweet** ("On the Role of Philosophy in the Age of Globalization") provides a brief summary of some principal issues that need to be attended to – for example, understanding individual and cultural identity, the place of local and traditional values and the common good, the value of nature and the environment, the diversity of the ways of knowing and sources of knowledge, and the relation between the secular and the sacred.

Donny Gahral Adian ("The Role of Philosophy in Multi-Faith Society") focuses on the task of respecting and negotiating among the diversity of faiths and creeds that we find in many countries. He holds that philosophy can provide common ground and serve as a resource to respond to some of the issues posed by religious diversity and by religious fundamentalism. To see how philosophy can do this, Adian focuses on the place of reason within faith in order to determine "what kind of reasoning in faith is appropriate in a world of many faiths."[5]

Another such challenge to which philosophy may help to provide an answer is how to balance cultural values and traditions with the increasing presence of free market economic activity. **William McBride** ("Asian Philosophical Traditions and the Religion of the Free Market: A Critical Western Perspective") maintains that Asian philosophical traditions, such as Confucianism, may be reconcilable, not only with Western religions, but also with philosophically-based ideologies such as Marxism. They may be consistent as well with free-market practices. McBride insists, however, that these traditions are not compatible with the fundamental individualistic and laissez-faire presuppositions and values of the ideology of the free market.

Part II, "Rationality and Methodology," emphasizes the importance of the rational methodologies characteristic of philosophy, and how philosophy has figured – and will continue to figure – in addressing core issues in the contemporary world. **Samuel Lee** ("The Relevance of Philosophy for Public Issues") reminds us that philosophy has long had such a role and that, despite the fact that there have been many answers to the question of what, precisely, philosophy is, there is a wide consensus that it provides tools of dialogue and reflection, based on reason. **Yao Jiehou** ("Intercultural Communication and the Common Progress of World Civilizations") also emphasises this role, adding that, in the current age of globalization, the mission of philosophy should be to contribute to the

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[4] See, for example, *Philosophy, Pluralism, and Culture*, ed. William Sweet (Aylmer, QC: Editions du Scribe, 2002).

[5] See, for example, *Globalisation – Cultures – Religions: Globalisierung – Kulturen – Religionen,* ed. Chibueze Udeani and Claude Ozankom (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2006).

development of world civilizations, by drawing on existing traditions, by "strengthening philosophical studies on intercultural communication" and, finally, by "promoting the rational communication [among] diverse philosophical traditions."[6] **Tran Nguyen Viet** ("The Role of Philosophy in Building Global Consciousness") focuses on philosophy's 'analytical' character, emphasizing that it can "help [humanity] to avoid the cursoriness and insularity of everyday thinking, and to comprehend correctly the contradictions and changes happening in the world." By drawing on philosophy and on "the important conclusions of the interdisciplinary sciences," one can build a "global consciousness," which will enable peoples to cope better with current challenges. **Nguyen Tan Hung** ("Relations among Cultures and Civilizations in the Age of Globalization") argues that "Philosophy can contribute to cultures and civilizations through the detection of the negative aspects of cultural globalization." **Nguyen Trong Chuan** ("The Role of Philosophy in the Present Period of Globalization") similarly argues that philosophy has a key function – that, despite the "huge and complex changes" that exist throughout the world in this age of globalization, "Philosophy not only helps people to grasp an appropriate view on the world, but also suggests solutions to the problems and provides a general orientation for humanity" – for "the sake of man and his happiness."

Among the challenges identified in Part 1 are those of "Globalization and Local Culture." **Ho Si Quy** ("Philosophy in the "Flat World": The Physiognomy of Philosophy in the Era of Globalization") maintains that globalization has made human life 'flat' and that, as a result, humanity has become susceptible to all manner of exotic theories and world views. Philosophy's role, then, is to identify – and impede – this, though he is somewhat skeptical about its success. **Dang Huu Toan** ("The Orientational Role of Philosophy in Realizing and Resolving Global Problems") similarly recognizes the challenges to local sustainable development in a globalized world. His proposal is that, in order to address them, people need to draw on philosophy, but particularly on Marxist philosophy, because of its putative "aptitude for scientific orientation and ability to predict the consequences of contemporary problems for human existence." **Vu Khieu** ("Vietnamese Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion in the Context of Globalization") also finds resources in Marxist philosophy for dealing with problems caused by contemporary globalization. He brings to our attention Vietnam where, he reports, "the Vietnamese are actively developing their country in the spirit of 'renovation'" – which includes a 'renovation' of Marxist thought – "in order to bring prosperity and as well

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[6] For further discussion of this, see *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*, ed. Oliva Blanchette, Tomonobu Imamichi, George F. McLean, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001).

as [to] contribute to the reinforcement of peace and friendship in the world."[7]

If philosophy is to be helpful in responding to the challenges of life in a global era, several authors argue that it must draw on a range of philosophical traditions.

Part III, "Multiple Traditions," shows that one such response involves a rethinking of 'western' philosophy. **Tu Weiming** ("The Spiritual Turn in Philosophy") holds, for example, that we need to reconsider the 'western' tradition, and especially the tradition of the Enlightenment. It is only by making a 'spiritual turn' of the kind characteristic of Asian thought, by correspondingly 'restructuring' philosophy, and by collaborating more closely with religions and particularly Asian religions, that philosophy can assist in the articulation of a new humanism and a dialogical model of civilization. **Young-bae Song** ("On 'Correlative Thinking' and the Idea of Organic Holism in East Asian Thought") similarly argues that philosophy in the 'west' needs not only to make a spiritual turn, but to develop an 'organic holism' and 'correlative thinking' in order to counter 'western' 'anthropocentric instrumentalism.' **Tran Van Doan** ("The Claim of Truth and the Claim of Freedom in Religion") recognizes as well that religion has a role in the rethinking of philosophy. He calls for a reexamination of the ideals of truth and freedom – ideals called for by Marx and by religion alike – to further not just economic and political liberty, but liberty 'in its fullest sense' – i.e., that which frees human beings "from the negative forces that hinder human transcendence."[8]

Yet it seems that it is not simply 'Enlightenment' approaches to philosophy that must be reconsidered. **Huang Ying-huei** ("Is Distributive Justice Possible? A Revision of Marx's Critique of Distributive Justice") argues for a rethinking of the Marxist critique of distributive justice, given that Marx's views are in fact directed only at justice in market-oriented societies, and not at distributive justice in general. Drawing on the classical notion of distributive justice as presented in Aristotle as well as a Marxist analysis, the author invites us to construct a revised form of distributive justice to be applied in newly-emerging market societies such as China and Vietnam. **Nguyen Tai Thu** ("Philosophy in Vietnam in the Context of International Integration") also proposes a rethinking of philosophy –

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[7] For other responses, see William Sweet, "Globalisation, Cultural Integrity, and 'Participative Construction'," *Notes et documents: pour une recherche personnaliste*, No. 64 (2002): 14-24. See also *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*, ed. Blanchette, Imamichi, and McLean, and *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective*, ed. William Sweet, Tomonobu Imamichi, George F. McLean, et alii (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008).

[8] See also *Dialogues of Philosophies, Religions and Civilizations in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Zhao Dunhua (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007).

specifically within the present context in Vietnam. He maintains that, like Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, Marxism has provided important insights, but that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, "we need to rethink, to assert the values which should be preserved, and which need to be developed and supplemented." This, he argues, follows on a recognition of the distinctiveness of traditional Vietnamese philosophical thought, and particularly on the "new conditions for *Doi moi* philosophical thought." **Pham Van Duc** ("Reflections on Philosophical Research in Vietnam in the Age of Globalization") adopts this view as well. Since "the ultimate goal of all development and progress is human development, progress and happiness," he maintains that there is a need to rethink "the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism in the present context of globalization." Marxist-Leninist philosophy provides "theoretical points which still have value for orienting present practical actions," but given that it developed largely as "a result of the generalization of the historical practice of last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century," there may be, he notes, aspects of it which are no longer appropriate in today's globalized world.[9]

The call to rethink philosophy, however, has led some to argue that it is not just particular approaches in philosophy that need to be re-examined; we need to rethink philosophy in general.

Part IV, "Rethinking Philosophy," presents a number of ways in which such a rethinking might take place. **George McLean** ("In Search of a New Paradigm for East and West") insists that we need a new paradigm of philosophy – one that focuses on the whole, on subjectivity, and thus concern and empathy. He invites philosophers to draw on Asian traditions, where we find subjectivity along with a sense of unity with the whole; both are "essential to any new paradigm for a global world."[10] **Maija Kūle** ("Phenomenology and Culture: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue") proposes a broadly similar view, holding that a phenomenological perspective is best suited to allow a discussion of "the fundamentals of the Universe," and to build a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and understanding among cultures.[11] **Le Huu Tang** ("What Role should Philosophy Play in our Lives?") argues, however, that while philosophy has a key role to play in the contemporary world, we should not 'absolutize' this role, and that we

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[9] See also essays in *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective*, ed. Sweet, Imamichi, McLean, et alii.

[10] See George F. McLean, *Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times: Lectures in China and Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2008). See also *Ethics at the Crossroads, Vol. 2: Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*, ed. Richard Wolak and George F. McLean (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992).

[11] See also essays in *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective*, ed. Sweet, Imamichi, McLean, et alii.

need a combination of philosophical and practical knowledge in order to be successful in our practical activities.

The proposal to rethink philosophy also invites philosophers to pursue new initiatives. These include development of a global or intercultural ethics, political philosophies that reflect the existence of a genuinely global community, and philosophical methodologies that draw on cultural products, such as the fine arts, and which provide a means of moving beyond individual cultures and traditions.

Yersu Kim ("East Asia and the Evolution of Common Values") argues that, today, philosophy's role lies in identifying those values "shared by major civilizations, particularly by the European and Asian" – such as the ideals of self-realization, self-cultivation and family – and using them to construct an ethics that can effect a general cultural transformation. **Myrto Dragona-Monachou** ("The Search for a Global Ethics: Confucius and Ancient Greek Moral Philosophy") provides evidence that such a global ethics is possible, given the similarities between Confucian and Socratic ethics. [12] **Peter Kemp** ("Cosmopolitanism and Marxism") holds that, in a global era, we require a correlatively suitable political philosophy, He argues for cosmopolitanism, maintaining that the Stoic idea of the 'world citizen' – revived by Kant, and preserved and concretized in Marxist thought – provides us with a view that respects both the autonomy of cultures and the unity of humanity. [13] Finally, **Keith Lehrer** ("Art, Culture and Autonomy") suggests that, by 'embodying' philosophy within an artistic medium, art can "become the vehicle and exhibition of how we may reconfigure ourselves, our world and our place in our globalized world." Indeed, such an approach may allow philosophers to "autonomously create … the exhibited content of our reconfigured world."

Many of the essays in this volume affirm not only that philosophy applies across cultures, but also that philosophy must draw from local cultures and traditions. Some critics may object that this presumes too much – that there is an incommensurability among traditions and a "difficulty or impossibility of translating key philosophical terms." This is far from an idiosyncratic claim and, if sustained, would clearly undermine philosophy

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[12] For other attempts at constructing an ethics that is responsive to the challenges of contemporary technology, see the extensive work by Tomonobu Imamichi; one recent example is "Technology and Collective Identity: Issues of an Eco-ethica," in *The Humanization of Technology and Chinese Culture, Chinese Philosophical Studies*, ed. Tomonobu Imamichi, Wang Miaoyang and Liu Fangtong (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998). The journal, *Acta Institutionis Philosophiae et Aestheticae*, regularly contains essays by scholars from across the globe that elaborate and develop this approach to ethics.

[13] For a recent essay on this topic, see Doug Al-Maini, "Cosmopolitanism, Stoicism, and Liberalism," in *Philosophy, Culture, and Traditions*, Vol. 4 (2007): 141-159.

as an intercultural or cross-cultural activity or enterprise. **David Evans** ("Semantic Anti-pluralism: How to Translate Terms in Philosophy") argues, however, that this claim fails for, if we were to hold that there are terms or concepts which are "untranslatable" or that "we really lacked the understanding that enables us to translate" them, "How could we [even] recognise the part that we cannot translate"? To illustrate his point, Evans turns to examples from Aristotle to show that terms which may seem to be *prima facie* 'untranslatable' are, in fact, able to be accurately rendered in English.

The authors of the essays in this volume draw their inspiration from a wide range of sources and traditions, and the proposals, analyses, and suggestions they offer are, of course, far from settled matters. Indeed, it is the task of readers to continue this rethinking – in their own writing, in the academy, and in the public sphere.

But this is also the task of the philosophical community as such. **Peter Kemp** ("Rethinking the Role of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies [FISP] in the Global Age") reminds us that FISP, as a federation of philosophical societies, is a "network of philosophers and lovers of philosophy," and that it has a mission in cultural, social and even political contexts.

The role of philosophy in a global age, in short, is to rethink itself and, by so doing, to provide insight and to bring analysis to bear on contemporary social and political concerns.

III

The essays in this volume respond to the call to rethink philosophy and its role in a world that is marked by economic and political globalization, by the omnipresence of information and communication technologies, and by the awareness of a wide range of cultures, world views, and traditions.

To rethink philosophy requires rethinking existing specialties in philosophy – reexamining, for example, current approaches to ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and logic. It also involves rethinking the various philosophical methods or schools; here, the focus has been on those of the Enlightenment west and of Marxism, but one must, of course, include Asian and indigenous thought as well. As we do this, we may come to develop altogether new areas or approaches to philosophy. One result to date has been what might be called 'global' or 'intercultural' ethics. Yet there has been, as well, increased interest on several other topics that require expanding our philosophical resources in general, moving beyond the dominant traditions of the West, and drawing on Asian, African, and 'local' thought.

These options, proposals and solutions are far from uncontroversial and many of the authors in this volume would undoubtedly disagree on the central issues; it is obvious that much remains to be done. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the essays included here all attest to the importance of

philosophy in engaging and responding to larger social and cultural questions of the age. This is simply to affirm that the task of rethinking the role of philosophy in the global age continues.

This volume carries out the work of FISP, of its member societies, and particularly of its Committee on Intercultural Research in Philosophy and of the Council on Research in Values and Philosophy. For these groups – and for all of the organizers of the conference on which this volume was based – there is a recognition of the need not only to engage in a rethinking of philosophy in a global age, but to turn to intercultural research in carrying out such work. This is especially important at the local level in those regions where 'rethinking' has met with social, religious, or political resistance. It is only by taking such responsibilities seriously that philosophers can genuinely exemplify the search for wisdom and truth to which they are called.

Committee on Intercultural Research, FISP
Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

PART I

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES, GLOBALIZATION AND LOCAL CULTURE

CHAPTER I

ON THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN
THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

WILLIAM SWEET

If we are to 'rethink' philosophy, it is important to make a number of distinctions, and the first and most obvious concerns philosophy itself. By 'philosophy,' we might think of the various 'institutions' of the profession of philosophy: the learned societies and associations, the conferences and congresses, the academies, the faculties and departments. But, more fundamentally, 'philosophy' refers to an enterprise or activity in which those who are called philosophers – together with many other thinkers besides – are engaged. I will focus on the second sense, although this clearly bears on the first.

To say what this enterprise or activity is, is a highly controversial matter. But I will take it in the sense close to the Greek etymology of the English word – that it is a love of, and a search for, wisdom. I would add that this 'wisdom' is concerned with the nature or character of reality and humanity's relation in it. It is (to paraphrase the British idealist philosopher, Bernard Bosanquet) "to go from things as they seem, to things as they are." [1] And while this search for wisdom can be described in many ways, I would say that the key issue is going beyond the superficial and 'appearance' to the substantial and 'real.'

To speak of the *role* of philosophy, is to say, concretely, how this search or activity or enterprise is engaged in, and exactly what kind of wisdom or insight it seeks. This is obviously an enormous task, not only because of its range, but because the issues themselves are extremely complex and interconnected. There are many tasks involved. But for practical purposes, this role can be circumscribed somewhat when we note specifically the condition 'in the age of globalization.' Noting this limiting condition on the activity does not mean that philosophy itself need be anything different from what it has always been, but it reminds us that it does have a place in present concrete circumstances, and that some issues are likely more pressing than others.

To limit comments to *the age of globalization* means that we must take account of several points, principally:

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[1] Bernard Bosanquet, "Idealism in Social Work" (1898), reprinted in *Bernard Bosanquet: Essays in Philosophy and Social Policy: 1883-1922*, ed. William Sweet (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Press, 2003), p. 151.

- the fact that we live in a world with diverse cultures, traditions, world views, and approaches to philosophy,
- that globalization has had an impact on these cultures, traditions, etc., and
- that this has not only led to cooperation but to conflict, and further, it brings this conflict directly to us, wherever we may live.

How, then, should philosophy – and philosophers – respond in this situation? Again, I would start with a clarification: we must distinguish between the responses that may be given by philosophers within a particular culture or tradition, and the responses given by philosophers outside of a culture or tradition.

For those working within a particular culture, philosophy should be done in context – that is, by taking account of the experiences and insights of the culture from which philosophy gets its inspiration or origin.

(I do not mean that philosophers should focus only on current problems. Still, there are questions that arise within local contexts and, consequently, what a philosopher can contribute is to try to provide clarifications, analyses, directions, and – if possible – solutions to these questions. In Canada, for example, metaphysical, ethical, epistemological and political questions about personhood, identity, and community are frequently raised because they touch on developments and changes in the Canadian social fabric. Of course, philosophers there pursue a wide range of questions besides these. But these themes are ones that I think Canadian philosophers have to address.)

Moreover, philosophers working within a culture should also seek to make these interests and issues accessible and intelligible to others. For philosophy is a universalizing activity – it tends to general claims – and others outside the community may be interested in these issues as well. Easy recourse to claims of the incommensurability of cultures is likely neither useful nor warranted.

For those philosophers 'outside' a particular community, their first priority must be to listen to those from the particular culture or tradition. This is in keeping with a long tradition – from the empiricists to the Wittgensteinians: "Don't think, but look!"[2]

(So, if I read the work of a Vietnamese philosopher who writes on economics and ethics, or globalization, or exploitation, in terms that are unfamiliar to me, I have to ask: What is the issue or question that is inciting this work?; What values, concepts, and insights does this author presuppose?; What do I have to be clear about before I can address the text critically?)

There is, of course, more to the activity of philosophers, within and outside cultures, than this.

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[2] See Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, section 66.

First, in this global age, philosophers – both within and outside a particular culture – are called on to engage certain issues. By 'engage' here, I mean

- To investigate (especially the presuppositions)
- To clarify the meanings
- To seek to understand
- To relate this to values – i.e., to the lived experience of those affected, to the values shared within that culture, but also to 'outside' values
- To articulate the insights

And then, perhaps, to address the claims being made, and arrive at some judgement

Second, after engaging the issues, the philosopher has the role of teaching or communicating – and not just in universities, but also in the public sphere.

Finally, the philosopher has to be accountable:

- to the (end of the) activity of philosophy itself;
- to the cultures or communities in which the philosopher and one's philosophical reflections are rooted; and
- to those on whom we depend. The philosopher is, after all, a citizen or a member of a society or social or ethnic group, with certain loyalties and commitments, etc – and, to this extent, the philosopher is dependent on insights but also on more material support from the broader community.

So we understand the reluctance in talking about philosophy being done for its own sake or principally as a means of intellectual improvement.

What exactly, then, might philosophers focus on in the present age? What are the issues they are called to address? Here are some issues that concern many in the West. Many of these are 'applied' issues. Let me list five.

1. (Individual and cultural) identity

What it is to be a person, a member of a community, and of a range of communities (constitutional, political, ethnic, racial, religious, etc.)?

What is the place of tradition, culture, and diversity within identity, recognizing that identity and tradition evolve and are dynamic?

These questions are not just metaphysical, but concern values that are characteristic of the culture and the person. These questions involve preserving identity, but also "integrity" (which is a more dynamic conception).

2. Community – and, in particular, the place of a common good, of respecting the individual, and respecting the other (outside of one's community)

Specifically, this requires us to think about human rights (however conceived), and even more concretely, rights such as the right to food. It requires us to consider duties, such as that of hospitality (especially at a time of so much migration, immigration, and displacement of people)

3. The value of nature and the environment

Little needs to be said here, for the issues are obvious and striking, but one must consider the value of human beings in relation to this.

4. The ways of knowing

Here, we note that we must include or make reference to reason, intuition, and faith, and also how philosophers are to guide, educate, and teach.

5. The relation between the secular and the sacred

This may, again, seem to be focused primarily on the ethical. But there are also ontological, epistemological, and logical issues involved, and we also have to be ready to think of how we might show or 'establish' our responses.

Of course, a good many philosophers do not deal with these issues, or do so only obliquely. And while one can certainly be a philosopher without explicitly dealing with any of these issues, it strikes me that it would be very difficult to be a philosopher and yet not have anything to say about these issues at all.

There are likely challenges to the kind of focus I am recommending: from those who reject talking about roles or approaches to philosophy as being too abstract or essentialist; from those who claim that there are no shared claims, or rationality, or values; and from those who challenge whether there is anything called 'philosophy' today at all. I think that there are problems with such views, but (as a philosopher "outside" these views) I would want first to determine what exactly is meant by these challenges and to ask why someone would say this, in order to see how this fits (if at all) with other claims that the critic might make. But, like any philosopher, I must be ready to say more about my own presuppositions as well.

So, to conclude: It is clear that philosophy, and philosophers, have a role – and that they have some specific tasks in the global age. We, as philosophers, have to engage these tasks and be responsible in how we carry them out. We also have to listen to – though not just listen to – others in other cultures and traditions; to be open, and to engage these ideas in good faith.

We are not to be satisfied with things as they seem or as they are given, but have to pursue these questions. And in doing so, we have to be prepared to explain what we are doing, and (ideally) to educate. If we can do this, it shows that we take seriously the responsibility and the calling that we find exemplified in the etymology of the word 'philosophy.'

St Francis Xavier University,
Antigonish, NS, Canada.

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN MULTI-FAITH SOCIETY

DONNY GAHRAL ADIAN

The believer rests in the divine. Any beliefs in the world are founded upon the idea of an ultimate being as an ultimate cause or principle. Some have said that this ultimate being emanates itself into many; others have said that it creates the world out of nothing. Whatever one believes in, it must be underlined: ultimate being reveals itself in a spatio-temporal world. It reveals itself in a heterogenic, not homogenic, world. As a result, we have not only revelation but revelations. God remains a mystery, but its revelations spread around the globe. So we have many communities with different faiths. However, many are not aware of the contingency of their faith. They are trapped into absolutism and try to mold the world into the emporium of their true faith. Fundamentalism is rising. Blinded by their isolated faith, fundamentalists use any means necessary, including violence, to attain their purposes. Is there reasoning in that kind of attitude? I believe there is. It is an instrumental kind of reasoning combined with a high dose of encapsulated faith. This paper will explore the relation between faith, way of life and value, and what kind of reasoning in faith is appropriate in a world of many faiths.

FAITH AND PLURALISM

What is Faith?

Whoever says that he or she believes in God has faith. But what is meant by the word "faith"? Am I saying the same thing when I say that I 'believe' in God and that I 'believe' there are two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule oxygen in water? Is faith the same kind of belief as scientific belief? Roger Trigg in his book, *Reason and Commitment*[1], denies such a connection. He says that scientific belief is a detached belief, whereas religious belief or faith is a committed belief. This means that religious belief, as distinct from scientific, is always followed by commitment or action. It is a living belief, not just belief that is supported by reliable evidence.

Wittgenstein said that religious belief is not a belief in religious propositions. A proposition can be judged as true or false by reason in

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[1] Roger Trigg, *Reason and Commitment* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

accordance with some objective measure. It has an epistemological content. However, religious belief does not have epistemological content. It only has axiological content. So, it is nonsense to talk of right or wrong about our religious belief. The only way to adjudicate between different religious beliefs is to adopt one and discard the other. Religious commitment does not entail a belief that certain things are true. Different religious beliefs are different forms of life with their own language games. This means that each provides its own criteria of truth, and it is impossible to stand outside to adjudicate between them.

Wittgenstein's argument leaves us a question about the role of reason in faith, for if each faith has only a practical impact and cannot be adjudicated independently of its conceptual scheme, reason is permanently prohibited from entering the realm of faith. The problem is that nowadays we witness emerging religious sects, each with its own bizarre beliefs. If religious belief is also regarded as a form of life that we can't adjudicate reasonably, what can we say about religious sects that endorse mass suicide as a welcoming ritual for the apocalypse? It follows that religious belief must have some propositional content that can be adjudicated rationally.

What is the nature of religious propositional content? Is it metaphysical? People in worldly activities usually do not argue about the metaphysical component of their faith. Confucians put high value on filial relations, whereas Buddhism focuses on enlightenment. I believe the nature of religious propositional content is much more axiological than metaphysical. Our understanding of the divine is always associated with a set of values that we must live, devotedly. Hans Frei, in *Faith and Ethics*, said that religious knowledge has been shown (i.e., by empirical theology) to be unique, and this uniqueness has been shown to be due to the fact that it is a type of value knowledge or valuation – as indeed all knowledge probably is.[2]

Roger Trigg has also said that faith is always connected with a way of life. It is not only a descriptive account of reality but something that will make a difference in one's life as it will govern the way one reacts to situations. In short, it is a way of life in accordance with values that one's belief prescribes. Belief in such and such a value must have a truth-claim otherwise one would not commit oneself to it. If I were to commit myself to Islam, I would have to belief that the values which it upholds are true values. It is also the same with Christianity, Judaism and eastern religions.

In the end, faith must contain two elements: belief and commitment. One is theoretical and the other practical. One cannot be without the other. One committed to the value of Christianity must base his commitment on the assumption that the value is true. It follows that he also must believe that God was incarnated, in human form, to teach the values that lead humanity to salvation. So, metaphysical propositions are involved

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[2] Hans Frei, "The Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr" in *Faith and Ethics* (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1957), p. 69.

in our belief. Historical propositions are also involved. As a Christian, one must believe in the historical Jesus. One must believe that Jesus truly lived in such and such a century within human history. However, as I said before, the world of practical concerns is not a world of theory, but of action. The clash lies not in one believer's defense of his metaphysical belief against another. The clash lies in value belief. When reason is forsaken, it becomes a clash of fundamentalisms.

Faith and Value Pluralism

The world of multi-faiths is the world of multi-values, since faith always means a value commitment. As a result, we are confronted with a value pluralist world. We are presented with ultimate ends rather than with the idea of one ultimate end of humanity. Fundamentalists ignore such a reality. They think that their faith-based-value is the highest one. Globalization of value under the name of modernization triggers that kind of attitude. Instead of trying to communicate and enrich their own values, they use any means necessary to universalize their own value. They are insensitive to the idea of value pluralism.

What is meant by the notion of value pluralism? First, we must differentiate it from ethical pluralism. Ethical pluralism posits the thesis that there is no single ethical standard to which all principles of conduct must conform. According to ethical pluralism, a number of ethical principles are equally fundamental. Value pluralism means to go beyond that. Originating from Isaiah Berlin's thought, it is a thesis that denies the existence of one super-value that can be harmoniously integrated with all other values. In other words, values can be in conflict, and there is no rationally determinable answer to the question which should take precedence. Value conflict is *inarbitrable*. The value of utility can be *inarbitrably* in conflict with the value of care, liberty or impartiality. There is no way we can appeal to a super-value to integrate them. Berlin wrote in his major work, *Four Essays on Liberty*:

If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict – and of tragedy – can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition. This gives value to freedom as Acton had conceived of it – as an end in itself.[3]

I hold that different faiths must give birth to different value-schemata. Faith is always related to a way of life, and there is no singularity in the way people live their lives. It follows that, instead of a universality of faith-based-value, we are presented by plurality of it. Some scholars talk immediately about the value consensus among different faiths. I would say

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[3] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 169.

that they are building a castle in the sky. Reality bites. The world of practical concerns is the world of competing or even conflicting values. We may take the province of central Java as an example. In Indonesia, there is conflict between those who profess the Islamic and those who profess the local belief with respect to what they value the most. Javanese local belief puts high value on aesthetics, and this is manifest in dances and other performance art. The dances are performed by woman wearing dresses called *selendang*; these do not cover the shoulder. However, some Islamic leaders say that it has violated an Islamic value which prohibits a woman from showing certain parts of her body. What happens afterward is not a harmonious consensus between those values but an aggressive integration by Islam, using political apparatus. As a result, one religious tradition is becoming an endangered species.

Value pluralism is an axiological fact that needs to be carefully apprehended. The failure to apprehend this may lead to two extremes. One is totalitarianism and the other is relativism. When one believer tries to subordinate all values under his value-schemata, the result is totalitarianism. Isaiah Berlin traces the roots of totalitarianism: all values, desires and interests and ultimately all persons are subordinated to a single overriding goal, whether it is secular or religious. Fundamentalism has this kind of ideology in mind. They use an instrumental type of reasoning for imposing their faith-based-value-schemata as the official one regardless of the heterogeneity of faiths. The value-schema that they hold remains unexamined and never enters into an enriching dialog with the other.

The other extreme is relativism. Value pluralism can lead into an anti-reason relativism. This means that judgments of value can never be judged independently from a belief. Every belief has its own rationality. There is no overreaching rationality that can objectively measure any belief. If two people disagree about some value-claim, they do not just have different reasons for their claim. They even disagree about what is meant by "reason." This kind of relativism is an obstacle of communication. A relativist can never be engaged in communication due to his or her success-oriented action. Under the heading of multi-rationality, every communication held by relativists hides what is truly real: instrumental reason. What they are trying to do is to impose their value by any means necessary. Still, their value remains unexamined under the vague mask called relativism.

Beyond Relativism

Globalization has its own irony: it strengthens sectarianism. Sectarianism itself is the religious attitude that denies the multiplicity of values by looking into their faith-based-value-schemata as an ultimate one. They *transvaluate* alien values as evil in order to call themselves good. They do not use reason to argue about their belief. They just attack alien values and

focus on their own. It is anti-reason-value-pluralism that they are trying to push.

However, the world of multi-faiths and values must not be defined as a world free of reason. God said in the Koran that He created the world in heterogeneity, for man can engage one another communicatively for mutual understanding. Communication presupposes reason. In communication, one does not impose one's belief upon the interlocutor but tries to enrich his own by remaining open to rational criticism. This means one must use reason to explain his belief and, at the same time, listen to the reasoning of his or her interlocutor. This way one's belief can be enriched and not encapsulated within the relativist cubical.

A question arises: can our faith-based-value schemata really be measured by an objective standard? Or is it like the relativist says, i.e., just an expression of one's tradition with its own unique rationality? It is then a question of objectivity of values. Are values only subjective expressions or objective properties that we can argue about?

John Gray defends what he calls objectivist value pluralism. He first differentiates between value relativism and pluralism. Value relativism is the claim that values cannot be rationally assessed and must therefore be taken to have equal value. By contrast, however, pluralism is the claim that, though there is a multitude of values and though these values might well be incommensurable, they really exist in some sense, such that one can be right or wrong in uttering propositions containing value predicates.

In response to Gray's category, Daniel Weinstock categorizes value pluralism into a radical thesis and a moderate thesis.[4] The radical thesis claims that there is no way of knowing what values and combinations of values an objective value pluralism should recognize until different cultures actually take them up and embody them in their institutions and practices. The moderate thesis, in contrast, claims that we can come to some understanding of what values and combinations of values are, independently of their actually having been taken up by particular communities and cultures. As a result, there must be constraint of ways of life. Human nature can be one of them.

I, too, believe that values are objective and that we can use reason to argue about them. This instance might help. Consider a red object. The red object tends to cause us to believe the object is red. It is the property of the object that makes us believe it as such and such. However, objectivity does not depend on the location of an attributed property, or its supposed conceptual tie to human sensibilities. Objectivity depends on there being a systematic relationship between the attitude-causing properties of things and events and the attitudes they cause.

What makes our judgment of the "descriptive" properties of things true or false is the fact that the same properties tend to cause the same

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[4] Daniel Weinstock, "The Graying of Berlin," *Critical Review*, 11 (Fall 1997): 481-501.

beliefs in the different observers, and when observers differ, we assume there is an explanation. The same holds for values. If two people disagree about the worth of an action or an object, they must have in mind the same action and object and the same aspects of those actions and objects. The considerations that prove the dispute to be genuine – considerations that lead to correct interpretation – will also reveal the shared criteria that determine where the truth lies.

This is what a communication across faith and values presupposes. Communication is conditioned by the fact that the values being talked about are not mere subjective expressions but rather objective realities that can be argued about. Otherwise, there is no communication. One does not want to be involved in communication if he or she knows that the argument of one's interlocutor is simply based on his or her subjectivity.

The believer can use his or her own rationality to explain his or her value commitment to the interlocutor. No matter what, he is trying to say something to other. It is a movement out of isolationism. It is what I call an epistemological delivery to other. His intent is not that of an imposition but rather an invitation to the other to enrich his own view. This means it is also an invitation to be measured by his or her interlocutor's rationality. Rationality is not a hiding camp for apologists. It is an invitation for enrichment.

FAITH AND SPECULATIVE REASON

Spectrum of Reason

Stephen Toulmin, in his book *Return to Reason*,[5] argues that reason nowadays has lost its balance. Reason according to him has played a central role in the speculative pursuit of knowledge for 2,500 years. Reason which is embodied perfectly in philosophy once referred to the systematic and methodical treatment of any subject. It covered the range of inquiries that lent themselves to systematic investigation and debate regardless of whether the twentieth century categorized them as science and technology or not. The spectrum reached from geometry and astronomy at one pole, to autobiography and historical narrative at the other. The role of reason in all human activities was given equal consideration. No field of investigation or speculation was dismissed as intrinsically irrational or unphilosophical.

However, from the mid-seventeenth century on imbalance began to develop. Certain methods of inquiry and subjects were regarded as rational and the others were not. As a result, some kind of rational favoritism emerged which privileged scientific and technical rational inquiry. Instead of a free-for-all of ideas and speculations – across competition for attention, across all realms of inquiry – there was a hierarchy of prestige, so that

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[5] Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

investigations and activities were ordered with an eye to certain intellectual demands. Issues of formal consistency and deductive proof came to have special prestige, and achieved a kind of certainty that other kinds of opinions could never claim. This loosening of the balance of reason is actually a reduction of what we call reason. Reason has been reduced to scientific and technical notions. As a result, reason has been separated from *being*. Reasoning *of* being has lost its primordial engagement with life.

So, instead of one ultimate notion of reason, we have a spectrum of reason. We are not dealing with the essence of reason but many faces of reason according to its use.

The first use of reason is metaphysical. I call this speculative reason. Speculative reason is used by humans to seize the metaphysical or divine truth out of the multiplicity of worldly concerns. We are in fact capable of seizing divine truth since we have something divine within us: reason. It is based on the old epistemological principle: the same recognizes the same. Gilson wrote in *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* that of all the beings God created on earth, only man is capable of belief, because he is endowed with reason, which is God's image within man.[6] Man is God's image inasmuch as he is a mind, which, by exercising reason, acquires more and more understanding and grows progressively richer therein. In this notion, reason and divine being are not strictly separated. Reason, in the classical notion, has a divine origin. It means that by cultivating it in order to contemplate eternal or divine truth, we humans become more and more divine. Reasoning is not so much more about contemplating *Being* but becoming one.

Reason is also used for practical concerns. What is meant by 'practical concerns' here is not the same as 'technical.' Practical concerns are worldly concerns about how to lead a good life and at the same time live together in a pluralistic community. I call this reason practical reason. Different from speculative reason, practical reason is not much concerned about metaphysical truth. It answers the question of how to act virtuously in a world of practical concerns. In the Aristotelian notion, reason is used to regulate our actions to find a median between two vices (either lack or excess). However, the main difference between practical reason and speculative reason is its embodiment in worldly concerns. Speculative reason is disembodied reason, while practical reason is embodied. Speculative reason asks man to escape worldly concerns in order to seize metaphysical or divine truth, while practical reason draws man to engage worldly concerns. Speculative reason is an upward movement while practical reason is a downward one.

Meanwhile, the mid-seventeenth century notion of reason has reduced practical reason to a technical one. Instead of answering the question of what constitutes a virtuous life, technical reason only responds

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[6] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 29.

to the question of instrumental concerns. In short, it only answers a question of the most efficient means to an end. This notion of reason has caused the question of value to remain unexamined. Every value is reduced to an economical one. It has brought human life to what Max Weber called an Iron Cage which is made by the human being himself. It is a cage of technical reason, imprisoning the human being from addressing the question of value. The question of how to lead a good life is abandoned totally. Of course, technical reason has contributed dearly to technological advance. But, its contribution is only technical, so that every technological progress is indifferent to ethical evaluation. Technical reason has made us live economically but not virtuously.

The Augustinian Perspective on Speculative Reason

Speculative reason has its root in the Platonic criticism of sophism. Sophism claims that reason can only be used for furthering human interest. Reason can never unravel reality objectively. Our knowledge of reality is anthropocentric by nature. Plato, on the other hand, claims that reasoning is an intellectual enquiry whose aim is not simply to advance theses and to give one's rational allegiance to theses which so far withstand refutation; it aims to understand the movement from thesis to thesis as a movement toward a kind of *logos* which will disclose how things are, not relative to some point of view, but simply as such. The activity of speculative reason has its own *telos*: metaphysical truth. It can unravel this metaphysical truth or logos since it is itself *logos* by nature.

Augustine christianized this notion of reason by saying that reason is God's image in man. This image of God must not be forsaken but be used appropriately to get an understanding of God as ultimate being. However, the fact that reason is God's image in man is not enough for a person to exercise it toward an understanding of God. The fact that it is God's image in man is only the potentiality of understanding Him. Reason, due to its divine nature, helps us to understand God. However, it must be based on faith for confirming its goal. Reason's goal of understanding God cannot be initiated in a theological vacuum. It must be based on belief. The formula is "believe that you may understand" (*Crede ut intelligas*).

Augustine holds strongly that unaided reason cannot understand the ultimate truth, which is God. Its *telos* would be diverted if we did not start with belief. Of course, we can get truth without faith. However, it is just a truth like mathematical truth, not the ultimate truth. Getting at ultimate truth requires faith as a starting point. Faith acts like a navigator for our reasoning. It is said that faith seeks, but understanding finds (*Fides quaerit, intellectus invenit*). It is faith that navigates our reasoning in order to find the true one.

Faith in God is necessary for the main goal of our reasoning, for God is the ultimate source of truth. God is a kind of light that illuminates reason to bring about its divine potentiality and come to an understanding of

the divine. Without illumination, reason as the "eye of the mind" cannot see the ultimate truth. This is just like Plato's prisoner who gets out of the cave and sees things clearly by the illumination of the sun.

Descartes takes a different stance. He sees reason as the being of humanity which intuitively confirms ideas about physical reality, the self and perfect being. Descartes does not take reason as potentially divine but takes the divine as an epistemological guarantee for its right judgment. He reasons about God ontologically, not to contemplate beatific wisdom, but to justify man's knowledge of himself and physical reality. For Augustine, on the other hand, rational understanding of the divine gives the foundation for theodicy which is an explanation of the origin of evil and a prescription for avoiding it. Reason's understanding of God is not just for theoretical but also for practical rightness in our actions.

A Half Way Reasoning

In terms of practical concerns, speculative reason is a half way reasoning. Reason's capacity to contemplate the beauty of wisdom needs to be brought down to earth. Nevertheless, we live in world of competing, even conflicting, values. The speculative use of reason may find metaphysical or divine truth, but what can it say about practical concerns? There is, I believe, another kind of truth needed for our practical concerns. It is not only truth about how to live one's life, but truth of how to live together harmoniously.

Aquinas mentioned that we reason theoretically to and about that ultimate end which is the *arche* of practical enquiry and reasoning, but from that *arche* it is by practical reasoning that we are led to particular conclusions about to how to act. It is strongly stated that the speculative way of reasoning is a half way reasoning, and we need another reasoning which is practical to finish it off.

Kant also plays an important role in this concretization of reason. His major contribution is his critique of metaphysics by limiting the sphere of reason. He said that reason can only operate on the realm of phenomena. He criticizes the medieval way of philosophizing that forces reason to reach realities beyond phenomena. The only justification for doing that, according to Kant, is not ontological but ethical.

We use reason to argue about God, not for God *an-sich*. It is for practical concerns. We argue about God as a regulative idea that gives teleological sense to the world, a sense that is needed by morality. Kant's second critique is his concretization of speculative reason which had been limited in his first critique.

Kant then comes up with the notion of the highest good. The highest good is the coming together of duty and happiness. It is also an unconditioned condition for which all other conditioned goodness of all good things must be judged. By this concept, Kant brought back the divine into realm of reason. God is one of the postulates of practical reason in

order to keep the notion of highest good still. Kant thinks that the perfect integration between good will and happiness can only be solved by postulating the existence of God. A man is not the cause of nature and his will therefore is unable to ensure that nature metes out the happiness which, through the fulfillment of his duty, he deserves. However, the existence of the relation between good will and happiness is postulated as necessary by the moral law and its requirement that we should seek to further the highest good. This means that moral law must postulate the existence of the supreme cause of nature, which can bring about the required correspondence of good will and happiness which would otherwise not exist.

Kant solved the problem of the highest good by putting God back into the realm of reason, practical reason. However, Kant's practical reason answers only the question of how to lead one's life. Kant's God is a Christian God, and the divine imperative of treating another as oneself becomes secularized in Kant's ethics. So the question about how to lead a life in a multi-faith and multi-value world still remains unanswered. Kant's practical reason, I believe, only prescribes a singular value in each situation. The value is duty which is implied in the categorical imperative. He disregards the value of care or utility as alternative imperatives. Kant's practical reason is hiding a value commitment which is historically contingent. The value of duty is, I believe, based on a humanist culture which originated in the Greek and was emphasized by the Judeo-Christian traditions.

The main problem of Kant's practical reason is that there is no room for discussion about values. The categorical imperative as practical reason's imperative works in any situation whatsoever. It imposes the value of obligation without considering other values. As a result, Kant's practical reason is inapplicable in today's multi-faith and multi-value world. In terms of that problem, Habermas's revision of Kant's practical reason and Taylor's[7] notion of the strong evaluator is quite a breakthrough.

FAITH AND PRACTICAL REASON

Hutcheson and Hume on Practical Reason

The word "practical" in practical reason has many senses. First, the capacity to act impartially and transcend one's self interest; second, the capacity to act in such way as to achieve the ultimate or true good of the human being; third, the capacity to act on the basis of calculations of the cost and its consequences.

This third sense of reason has its root in the Sophist notion of reason as a tool for furthering human interests. The main concern of

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

practical reason in this sense is only in finding the best means for a prior end. The end itself is not in question. It is judged by desires only. Practical reason focuses only on the most efficient way to get there.

This sense is also used by the Scottish philosophers, such as Hutcheson and Hume. These Scottish philosophers made an epistemological break with the classical notion of practical reason. The classical tradition says that reason directs the passions in the light of knowledge, which it affords concerning the true end of human being.

Hutcheson's notions of practical reason rest on three major theses. First, there is a sense, to which we apply the name "conscience," as a sense it makes us aware of its particular objects, objects which elicit a specific type of approval and disapproval. Second, in being moved by that which the moral sense makes us aware of, we are delivered from a kind of difficulty which the rest of nature otherwise imposes on us. Third, the perceptions of those objects cause pleasure and pain, but the objects themselves are not to be identified with those pleasures and pains.

Based on that thesis, Hutcheson's notion of practical reason is very much instrumental. We do not reason about the end, it is approved or disapproved of by human desires. Hutcheson maintains that reasoning as power of reflecting, comparing and judging evaluates only the means or subordinate ends; but about ultimate ends there is no reasoning. According to Hutcheson, we prosecute the ultimate ends by some immediate disposition which, in the order of action, is always prior to all reasoning; no opinion or judgement can move action where there is no prior desire of some end.

Hume follows Hutcheson's line of thought by proclaiming that reason is the slave of the passions. Rationality is not exercised in its specific forms of activity with its own goods or its own ends internal to that activity. The human being does not pursue ends specific to that rationality. Reasoned ends are impossible according to Hume. The ends to which rational activity of any kind whatsoever is directed are and must be set before it by some passion. The speculative function of reason, which is to seize the ultimate truth or end, can no longer be maintained. We cannot reason about ultimate ends. Ultimate ends are dictated by human desires and reason adjudicates the best means to obtain them.

Reason, according to Hume, has two practical roles. First, it answers a type of question, which the passions provide motives for asking and answering. These questions concern the existence and nature of those things towards which the passions move human beings – those passions to do, to be, or to have certain actions or characteristics. Second, it prescribes the means for the achievement of such ends set by the passions, and judges those means as more or less efficient in terms, not only of the particular end in view but also in terms of other ends which the agent is or may be moved to pursue.

This practical role, of course, is different from what Kant has in mind. the main concern of Kant's practical reason is basically to transcend

human desires and interests. Practical reason's categorical imperative is to do good, regardless of what our interests or desires are. Only those ethical maxims which can be universal maxims are the true ones. Those maxims which are imbued by desires and interests are in diametrical opposition to practical reason. The view of reasoned good, independent of desires or interests, is a common characteristic of those philosophers following in Kant's footsteps.

Aristotle on Practical Reason

Some philosophers tend to think that Aristotle's practical reason is only deliberating about means, not about ends. However, I would argue that Aristotle[8] does believe that we reason about our ultimate ends, not only about desires. In fact, it is that kind of reason that moves our actions. Desire itself must be put under the strict control of reason and serve the end proposed by reason. The failure to reason about ends and control our desires accordingly can lead to two types of persons. One is *akratic* and the other is *encratic*. The *akratic* person is one whose desires are not yet under rational control, since in one way or another his knowledge of what is good is not brought to bear. The *encratic* person is one who knows what it is good and rational to do, but whose passions have not yet been fully transformed, so that his pleasures and pains are those wholly virtuous.

Practical reasoning occurs via the syllogism. It is a practical syllogism. It starts with a major premise concerning what good is at stake and is followed by a minor premise about the situation. Given that a good is at stake, action is required. The conclusion is the action. A major premise must not say something about desires. It is a true judgment of what is good. Aristotle believes that the sound practical syllogism is the immediate precedent and determinant of rational action.

A sound syllogism must be grounded on true premises. True premises can never be achieved, except by the process called deliberation. It is deliberation which makes sure that our desire is ordered rationally by arguing from ultimate ends to those means that must be adopted accordingly. Aristotle called a reasoned desire *prohairesis*. However, one must note that *prohairesis* can only issue from deliberations of those formed character as a result of the systematic disciplining and transformation of their initial desire by virtue. One might say that *prohairesis* is made up by desire and virtue. Without the virtues, desires cannot be informed by reason. They cannot be transformed into and be effective as desires for whatever reason prescribes.

Aristotle holds the view that there is no practical rationality without virtues of character. Practical reasoning is not a detached activity, like the theoretical. The ultimate end is not its concern. Its concern is how to argue

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[8] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. Christopher Rowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

from the ultimate end to concrete action virtuously. It is said that only the virtuous are able to argue soundly to those conclusions which are their actions.

What must be underlined here is that the question of practicality is not just a question of cost-benefit calculation. It is not also a theoretical question. Practical reason must involve virtues as modifiers of desire. However noble the ultimate end is, it can be diverted by untamed desire. In other words, we cannot simply justify any means necessary to attain a noble end. Deliberation of a rational agent must issue in a conclusion as to what good or goods is or are immediately to be achieved; and this must be done out of a rationally and well-founded desire for just that good or those goods. So, it is not only the ultimate end that we must reason about, but also the desires by which we attain that end.

It is important to see how Aristotle associated reason with moral character. We cannot reason appropriately if we are not supported by moral character habituated by ethical discipline, a discipline which, I believe, is found in many religious traditions. The fact that many religious fundamentalists use vicious means to attain their noble ends shows something corrupted within their faith. Their faith in the divine does not lead them to cultivate a virtuous character. Their practical reasoning is nothing but means-end reasoning.

There is a question then: can Aristotle's practical reason work in a multi-faith and multi-value world? I have some reservations. First, Aristotle placed the contemplative life as the highest mode of life, in contrast to practical life. The true end of human life, according to him, is the contemplative one. By contemplation, we arrive at what the 'real' is. We disclose the nature of the good and live accordingly. Like Kant, this way of thinking is the only answer given to what is needed to lead a good life. The question of how to live together is left out.

In a multicultural society, we cannot just live under the knowledge of the ultimate end or value. We also have to be in dialogue with other ultimate ends or values for mutual understanding and enrichment. Aristotle's practical reason is based upon *arche*, which is unraveled by speculative reason. This *arche* is the highest good under which other goods must be ordered accordingly. It is another name for the domination of good over goods. As far as I am concerned, living together is not based on domination but mutual respect and understanding.

Aquinas's Practical Reason and Pluralism

Aquinas followed the Aristotelian notion of practical reason, making some slight revisions. He also held the Aristotelian view that practical reason is not detached reason, but reason which is connected with moral character. He followed the Aristotelian notion of *prohairesis* as reasoned desire disciplined and directed by right moral habit which accords with reason.

However, Aquinas introduces will as a component of action which expresses *prohairesis*. Will is always free in the sense in that it acts on the basis of contingent judgement as to what is good or bad and is always open to some alternative contingent judgement. The key point here is that will is not moved to any end by necessity. It means that will is moved by the rational understanding of an end which is contingent and always open to rational understanding.

I interpret this notion of Aquinas as moving away from Aristotle's solipsism. It is true that Aquinas followed Aristotle in claiming that we reason deductively from an *arche* found by speculative reason. However, judgement of what is good or bad is judgement of values, which must be separated from the ontological understanding of God. He is infallible, but our judgement of end or value is not. There is not only one ultimate judgement of good that leads the will, but many. It means that there is always room for discussion in the level of judgement of the true end.

Aquinas also held the view that the ultimate end of the human being is contemplating God. This is the first premise of all fully rational practical reasoning, and with respect to the relationship to knowledge it is true that we must reason practically from our understanding of God. However, our contingent judgements of ends or values can never be of a true end. Our ultimate end transcends this present life which rests in God. Alasdair MacIntyre writes:

> Aquinas extended Aristotle's arguments not only so as to exclude other particular items such as worldly power, but also so as to exclude every finite state which can be achieved in this present life, even finding some confirmation of this in Aristotle himself. For every such state will be less good than it might be; it will not adequately exemplify the universality of good or its self sufficiency. So the ultimate end of human beings is outside and beyond this present life.[9]

By qualifying judgements of ends or values in this world as contingent, Aquinas appreciates the plurality of ends or values. We may believe in one God and rest our practical judgement in him. However, our faith does not necessarily mean that our judgements of value are absolute, since we live in the world of practical concerns that make our judgements of end or values always situated. In no way do we act on the basis of an absolute claim of value. That would result in ethical solipsism, which is closed to dialogue and enrichment.

How are we to act in such a multi-value world? Aquinas pointed out four cardinal virtues that must accompany our practical reasoning. The

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[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 192.

first is prudence. Prudence is a virtue through which we arrive at a particular judgement from a universal moral precept. By having this virtue, we are aware of the multiplicity of situations which may need different moral precepts. Unlike Kant, Aquinas's virtuous practical reason is situation sensitive and does not subsume every particular situation under one universal moral precept.

The second is justice. Justice is first of all an application of reason to conduct and is concerned with how the will may be rationally directed toward right action. In this world of many faiths and values, this virtue of reasoning is very important. It tells us not just to act rationally based upon our faith-based values, but to do justice to others. The right action is not simply an act according to our values, for it also takes others into account. This virtue is very much needed whenever our values collide with another's.

The third is temperateness. Temperateness is a virtue by which we restrain whatever passions are contrary to reason. It is a virtue of self-criticism. By this virtue we must disclose and evaluate whatever passion which motivates our noble end. If it is contrary to reason, then it must be corrected. The fourth is courage. Courage is a virtue by which we hold the passions to what reason requires when fear of danger and hardship urges otherwise. By this virtue, I believe, we are encouraged to use reason practically, even in a world that is full of terror. We must put some trust in reason; otherwise we will be drawn into a culture of apathy that allows the world to be overtaken by fundamentalists.

Toward a Multicultural Practical Reason

As I said earlier, now we have to face a social reality of multi-faith based values. The classical notions of practical reason which are technical (Hume), insensitive toward the particular (Kant) and solipsistic (Aristotle) are unable to solve current problem which requires the engagement of one faith-based value with another. We need not only a virtuous practical reason but also an engaging one. Therefore, I would like to review some contemporary notions of practical reason.

The first is Charles Taylor's notion of practical reason. The notion of practical reason is very much associated with Taylor's notion of the 'strong evaluator.' The strong evaluator is one who is good and has the strength of character produced by constant evaluations over time. One who will not do so is regarded as a *simple weigher*. Practical reason, according to Taylor, becomes a tool for the strong evaluators to engage one another in moral discourse and by which moral change is produced. Implicit within that notion lie two simple claims: first, that practical reason arbitrates moral differences; second, that there is no rational inarbitrariness between moral differences.

Taylor divides practical reason into apodictic practical reason and *ad hominem* practical reason. Apodictic practical reason is modeled on scientific epistemology whose main feature is proceduralism. The task of

apodictic practical reason is to establish a neutral set of rights and liberties to allow maximal choice about what constitutes a good life or proper end. Those rights established by apodictic practical reason do not neglect what is good – for that is individually determined – but what is fair. The problem of this version of practical reason, according to Taylor, is that morality can no longer be conceived as a guide for action. It is only about what is considered fair in pursuing each conception of the good. It is insensitive to the particular.

Taylor then proposes the notion of *ad hominem* practical reason. This practical reason is sensitive to the particular; it speaks to someone in his or her particular moral situation. The task of *ad hominem* practical reason is not to change someone's moral position completely by imposing abstract principles, but to increase his or her self-clarity and understanding. In short, the *ad hominem* model of practical reason is not a heavy handed kind of approach. It protects the dignity of persons by shifting their positions on the basis of principles they already accept to something that makes more sense or has better explanatory power.

In terms of *ad hominem* practical reason, one can convince another if he or she speaks to the other personally, either by articulating what underlies other moral intuitions or perhaps by moving him or her to the point of making his or her description like the other's. It is an argument from within that works by imposing general precepts. It is done by an error-reducing move which is sensitive to contradictions and uneasiness. For instance, suppose someone would like to argue about freedom of speech. He or she does not appeal to some external standard of fairness to justify that freedom, however simply points out the conflict between freedom of speech and right of privacy. If one can convince the right of privacy proponents by making his descriptions their own and thereby solving the contradictions, he succeeds in using *ad hominem* practical reason.

By proposing the notion of *ad hominem* practical reason, Taylor suggests two things. First, we do not subscribe to any principle whatsoever unless it makes sense within the context of our own lives. Second, we do not change our actions unless they seem to make sense based on our experience and worldview or picture of how things work. Those two suggestions are a strong challenge to the Kantian tradition, which upholds quite a solid notion of disembodied, formal and insensitive practical reason. The idea is not to judge other moral positions by some general standard approved by reason, but rather to speak to other in his or her particular moral context, and to handle the contradictions that may appear. In that way, *ad hominem* practical reason provides means for discussion, even in the absence of shared moral ground.

A second contemporary notion of practical reason comes from Habermas.[10] He proposes that practical reason answer three questions:

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[10] Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, tr. Ciaran P. Cronin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

pragmatic, ethical and moral. The pragmatic question is a question about technical issues of appropriate methods for satisfying our contingent desires. The ethical question is a question about the prudential issue of developing plans of life in light of culturally conditioned self-interpretation and claims of the good. Lastly, the moral question is about the right or just regulation of social interaction conditioned by plurality of goods that may conflict one another. The third question's implicit message concerns how we should live: this is not an individual problem, but a social one.

The third question, according to Habermas, is best handled by the principle of universalization. The task of practical reason is not to find some formal criterion in solitary reflection like Kant. Rather, its task is to find a valid norm that is capable of meeting these three criteria:

(a) only those norms that could meet with the consent of all concerned, in their role as participants in practical discourse, may claim to be valid.

(b) for a norm to be valid, the consequences and side effects of its general observances for the satisfaction of each person's particular interests must be freely accepted by all.

(c) an ethics is termed 'universalistic' when it alleges that a moral principle, far from reflecting the intuitions of a particular culture or epoch, is valid universally.

Habermas maintains that the task of practical reason, in terms of the moral question, is still to find an impartial and neutral ground for the plurality of goods. In order to be impartial, it is a necessary to adopt the principle of universalization. This principle holds that valid norms should be capable of getting rational assent of all potentially affected by its observance. Some say that this puts Habermas in the formal tradition of Kantian ethics. In Taylor's perspective, Habermas' practical reason is still an apodictic one concentrating upon fairness and not guidance for action. What it lacks is sensitivity to particulars.

Responding to that kind of criticism, Habermas introduces another notion, which is "application." Impartiality, according to Habermas, is not only a matter of universal justification by meeting those three criteria of universalization based on the existence of an ideal speech situation. Impartiality must also involve applicability. What Habermas means by this is that all conclusions concerning valid norms are open to reinterpretation in the light of unforeseen situations of application, and the question of their appropriateness to particular situations must be answered separately from the question of justification.

Habermas thinks that we have to separate the questions of justification and application. When we are confronted with the question of which norm should govern an interaction, we should look for public norms to which all rational agents could freely assent. However, public norms are inappropriate in discerning the ethical question of who I am and who I want

to be. Habermas maintains that what Kant meant by 'maxim' can be judged separately in terms of the ethical and the moral. On one hand, our maxim or situational rules of action can be judged *ethically* when they answer the question of whether the rule is good for me and appropriate in the current situation. On other hand, our maxim can be judged *morally* when it answers the question of whether I can will that a maxim be followed by everyone as a public norm. By doing so, Habermas saves his Kantian position from criticisms coming from neo-Aristotelian philosophers. He wants to stress the point that universalism does not necessarily mean the annihilation of a subject's ethical identity. The question of the ethical and the moral can be separately posed and answered.

One is more than grateful for Habermas's effort to save the particulars. However, Habermas's separation between the ethical and the moral is still problematic. The question of what I should do in the ethical realm already contains a moral question. In today's pluralistic world, one's ethical decisions always involve the conflict of different conceptions of good. Whether I should help my brother to get a job in my office or remain strict to the value of fairness is a clash between the values of care and duty. Moral concern is on a continuum with ethical conerns. It need not be discreetly separated.

The ethical question aims not only to solve conflicts between my present moral identity and my ideal moral identity. It is also aims to solve conflicts between different conceptions of the good. Immediate universalization proposed by Habermas in the moral sphere cannot be the answer. I have thus come up with the term "engagement." When a conflict of ideals takes place, we do not just immediately step into the moral sphere and find a universal public norm. Instead, we must keep our moral position open to each others' conceptions of the good or the ideal in order to have any possibility of enrichment. By "enrichment," I mean something more than but similar to Taylor's notion of "arguing from within." My value commitment is enriched when it can take others' commitment into account by solving both apparent and unapparent contradictions. It is enriched when it gains more explanatory power within my own moral context. It is a vice versa process for another's value commitment.

The question of engagement is also absent from the solipsistic stance of practical thinking. In engagement, the question of what I should do already involves a recognition of the other. We cannot evaluate ourselves but instead we can open our positions to other ideals and find out the possibility of enrichment. It is another task of practical reason, I believe. The first is pragmatic. Practical reason's pragmatic task is about how we must intervene in the objective world in order to bring about a desired state of affairs. The second is ethical. Practical reason's ethical task is to advise us concerning the correct conduct of life and the realization of our personal life project. The third is moral. Practical reason's moral task is to justify and apply norms that stipulate corresponding rights and duties. Engagement is the fourth task of practical reason. Its task is not to find shared moral ground

for plurality of ideals or good, but mutual enrichment and evaluation which is open to the other and is particular-sensitive. This fourth task of practical reason, I believe, is the most appropriate task to be carried out in the current multi-faith and values world.

ENGAGEMENT IN FAITH

Reasoning is a kind of engagement. In terms of faith, we do not just reason about God as the ultimate being, but we also reason about how to live accordingly. However, many types of reasoning are disengaged. Relativist reasoning, for example, imprisons reason to one conceptual scheme. It means that we do not have to explain our beliefs rationally to others since we reason within a different conceptual scheme. As a result, we are disengaged from one another so that we do not welcome any mutual understanding and enrichment.

History also shows how the rich notion of reason has been reduced to mere technicality. By this, reason is severely detached from *being*. Reasoning becomes an instrument to serve whatever human passion or desire proposes. The question of our *being* as part of larger *Being* is left unscrutinized. We treat *being* not as mystery but as a standing reserve, waiting to be manipulated. In terms of faith, this type of reasoning also prohibits mutual engagement among believers. Believers use this type of reasoning to promote their faith-based-value schemata as the ultimate one in order to subordinate others.

Medieval philosophy, especially Augustinian philosophy, withdraws from the classical notion of reason as a speculative way to understand God. This understanding of God is the ultimate end of human living. However this mode of reasoning has disengaged man from practical concerns and from one another in a society of many faiths and values. This mode of reasoning may answer an epistemological, ontological or even axiological question about God. However it does not tell how we should live together in a pluralistic world. Whether or not each believer comes to his or her ultimate end in understanding God, the question of how to live together remains unanswered. Each will be concerned with only his or her ultimate end, disregarding the fact that we live in the world of multiple ends.

So we arrive at practical reasoning as mode of reasoning for engagement among faiths. However I would like to draw a distinction between monistic and pluralistic practical reason. Monistic practical reason deduces conclusions from one supreme end or value. It is basically rooted in the Aristotelian conception which subsumes practical reason under the *arche* contemplated by the speculative one. This *arche* found by speculative reason is the highest good below which others must be ordered. This monistic tradition of practical reason is present up to modern philosophy. Kant's notion of practical reason, for example, is also founded upon the categorical imperative, which shows a value commitment that is indifferent

to the world of multi-faiths and values. However, what is particularly important in Aristotle is his claim that it is not only the end but also the desire to get it that must be justifiable. He introduces practical reason as non-detached reason. It is reason that has to do with one moral character or virtue. A non-virtuous individual cannot reason soundly and practically.

My interpretation of Aquinas prepares the way for contemporary notions of pluralistic practical reason. Aquinas's practical reason recognizes not only the necessity of virtues but also the plurality of human ends. He claims that ultimate ends or values reside only in God. This gives certain constraints on what we value in this world. However it also makes clear that all worldly ends or values are contingent ones. He appreciates the multiplicity of human ends and values. However, Aquinas's conception of the highest good which measures those contingent goods is still quite solipsistic, regardless of the metaphysical character it contains. In the current multi-faiths and values world, we are faced by the plurality of highest good(s) or ideals which are not necessarily in harmony with one another.

My reading of the contemporary notion of practical reason concludes that practical reasoning must become an epistemological site for the dialogical relationship among values. It is not an imposing, but an expanding reason. Practical reason for practical concerns in a world of multi-faiths and values must be an ongoing process of answering questions not only about the art of living but also about the art of living together. In terms of reasoning in faiths, it must open our faith-based value to others for mutual enrichment and evaluation. It is meant to engage faiths for working together in this complex but beautiful world.[11]

University of Indonesia
Jakarta, Indonesia

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[11] For further discussion, see Sharon L Bracci (ed.), *Moral Engagement in Public Life: Theorists for Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); George Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism* (London: Continuum, 2002); Thomas Senor (ed.), *The Rationality of Belief and the Plurality of Faith* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); John Skorupski, "Value Pluralism" in *Philosophy and Pluralism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Action: Aristotle, Actions and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

ASIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS AND THE RELIGION OF THE FREE MARKET: A CRITICAL WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

WILLIAM L. McBRIDE

During a certain period in the late twentieth century in Europe, particularly in Germany, there was a considerable debate on the topic of what was called "secularization." Among the names most closely associated with it were Karl Löwith and Hans Blumenberg; Karl Schmitt and Jürgen Habermas also participated, among others. While this debate was often somewhat esoteric and had at least as much to do with issues of historiographical methodology as with questions of deeper philosophical meaning, its premises and presuppositions seem to me to have been rather clear and common to most if not all of the participants: namely, that a sea change had taken place in both philosophical and popular thinking from the period of the Middle Ages to that of the so-called Enlightenment, such that religious values had given way to secular, that is, this-worldly, values as dominant. To put it in the crude terms of the past, Enlightenment rationalism had replaced religious superstition.

My first remark is that this whole debate was exceptionally Eurocentric, even given the strong Eurocentrism of most of Western philosophy. How easy would it be, for example, to apply a similar analysis to the evolution of thought in countries where Confucianism has predominated? Although I am in no way an expert in this matter, I think I know the answer: not at all easy. My second remark is that in many countries and parts of the world there has occurred and is occurring an evolution in quite the opposite direction from that characterized as "secularization." This is obviously true in many Islamic countries, but it is also true in some of the countries of Eastern Europe, of Africa, of the Americas, and of Asia itself. A new age of faith – diverse in diverse parts of the world – is upon us; whether for better or worse, whether short-term or long-term, remains to be seen. My third remark, which takes us to the core of what I wish to elaborate upon, is that a form of thinking and acting that is best labelled a "secular religion," the ideology of the free market, has in some ways entered into competition with, and in other ways formed common cause with, both traditional religion and traditional secularism.

We need, of course, to try to agree on some common understanding of "religion." This is not easy. Let me suggest that an old conception, based on the etymology of the term in Latin, according to which religion is that which the religious person considers to be most binding on him- or herself – and often, at least in principle, on others as well – is a good start. For one

thing, it avoids the problems occasioned by linking religion with transcendence, as European philosophy so often does, especially when "Transcendence" is taken to mean some allegedly existent reality, such as a personal God, far beyond this world in which we now live – since there are in fact a number of putative religions which do not quite fit such a conception. When I say that free market ideology has become, for many, a secular religion, I of course do not mean that it embraces any transcendence of the sort just mentioned. It does, however, endorse unquestioningly certain abstract entities and norms that it takes to be universal – most notably, historical progress of an indefinite, non-eschatological kind; the maximization of profit as the governing law of commercial enterprises; and the supremacy of so-called "market forces" in determining the course of economic life.

All of these notions, as well as many others that are connected with them, are easily subjected to philosophical criticism – or, if you will, deconstruction. The idea of progress in the absence of a definite *terminus ad quem* is an empty one; it is possible to say truthfully that we have far more sophisticated technologies today than our ancestors had, but that is not the same thing as saying that we have made progress *tout court*. For example, as our Vietnamese colleagues will readily and bitterly recognize, according to statistics recently brought to my attention by an American colleague, Professor Cheyney Ryan of Oregon, that in the twentieth century there were roughly five times as many deaths in wars as in the nineteenth century – 30 per 1000 population *versus* 6 per 1000 – and according to him this discrepancy cannot be dismissed as having been due primarily to more lethal military technology, since *defensive* technology has also "improved" (if that is the appropriate word), along with offensive weapons. And this vast accumulation of deaths in warfare is just a particularly dramatic counter-example to the claim of universal progress, at least in a sense that anyone would wish to embrace, that usually accompanies the religion of the free market.

As for the second supposedly universal pillar of this religion that I have identified (i.e., the maximization of profit as supreme goal in private enterprises), this is what is taught in typical schools of business in my country and in Europe and Asia – and indeed it is reinforced at least in my own country by a legal system that encourages stockholders in any limited liability corporation, the type of enterprise that constitutes the majority of businesses today, to require their management under pain of possible legal penalties to direct their firm's activities primarily toward this goal. On this point, philosophical criticism should be directed not, as in the case of the idea of progress, toward the emptiness of the idea but rather towards its immorality; for the elevation of profit maximization to the position of a supreme principle of action amounts in effect to an ethic of egoism or selfishness, that is, of always preferring the realization of one's own self-interest – here, the self-interests of the stockholders – over any common or

communal good. Now, an ethical system of selfishness is really not an *ethical* system at all, and it is ultimately incoherent.

Finally, I come to the third abstract universal that I have identified as central to the religion of the free market – the third "free market transcendental," if you will – and that is the notion of so-called "market forces," which I personally regard as the most absurd and, if the effects of believing in it were not so enslaving in our world, the most comical of all. How often do we read in our newspapers and magazines the solemn words of some politician or economist, groups of people who are supposed to have received some university education (after all, even the current United States President has a Master of Business Administration degree, the famous "MBA"), intoning the mantra that we must allow market forces to work, that we must never interfere with market forces. The notion that "there are" such forces, that they must be fully and scrupulously respected lest something terrible should happen, reminds me of nothing more than the ending of the usually forgotten fourth book of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, "Of the Kingdom of Darkness," in which he draws an extended analogy between the Roman Catholic Church, which he loathed, and the imaginary kingdom of fairies. My point here is not that Hobbes' criticisms of the Church were fair and accurate – in many respects they were surely not – but that the modern-day language of market forces could easily be analogized in a very similar way, and with much more reason and to better effect. It is particularly useful to consider the ways in which the interests of the "priests" of the free market, the giants of financial capital and industry, are well served by declaring "market forces" to be sacrosanct.

"Force" is an especially vague term, implying a sense of mystery. It served that function in early modern Western philosophy – for example, in the controversy over action at a distance – and it has served the same function in the cinematic series, *Star Wars*. In fact, the notion of market forces is just a mystifying way of expressing such obvious platitudes as that, if several persons have a high-intensity and not easily diminishable desire for the same object which is not available in abundance, then the original owner of that object, if he or she decides to sell it, is in a position to sell it at a high price. This is not, as the common expression goes, rocket science. The mystification of "market forces," so called, conceals the fact that human beings, by having certain desires and wishing to satisfy them, have created the phenomena of rising and falling prices that are said to be the outcome of these supposedly mysterious entities. All the vectors that one may draw as a means of schematically expressing such phenomena depend for their explanatory value on free human choices – as Jean-Paul Sartre has well shown in his analysis of the market in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

Adam Smith is often credited with having first endowed capitalist market ideology with a religious inspiration by means of his famous metaphor of the "Invisible Hand," which, he said, brought it about that individuals' various selfish pursuits resulted in a favorable common

outcome. But Smith himself, in the text in question, used the words "as it were," indicating his belief that it was just a metaphor, not a new religious doctrine. The linkage of practices of saving one's money, of thrift, and of the glorification of "productivity" with a religiously-derived ascetic outlook and way of life, which characterized a certain early phase in the evolution of capitalism, was well identified by Max Weber. But the *contemporary* secular religion of the free market advocates maximal consumption rather than saving, and its saints are not those who engage in demanding productive labor but rather those who manage to amass great amounts of money by manipulating (without, at least in principle, violating) existing legal mechanisms on the road to taking control of the largest and most profitable enterprises.

I therefore wish to suggest that the secular religion which I am identifying evolved gradually, over time, into the absolutist and dogmatic system that it has by now become. When Marx wrote his famous chapter, in *Capital*, on "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof," he was making a very valuable initial attempt to capture this nascent phenomenon; but in fact the secular religion of the free market was at that time at a stage more akin to primitive, fetishistic religions than to the more mature "great" religions such as Christianity or Islam or Buddhism. In making this point about the evolution of free market ideology towards a status of hegemony, I would like again to mention, as I have done in previous papers, that "privatization" – a term introduced by the highly ideological former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and now routinely used by way of advocating the elimination of all, or virtually all, vestiges of political control over economies – was still being defined as a pejorative term with no economic connotations in English-language dictionaries of only a few decades ago. Now, however, with the rise of free market ideology to the status of a global religion, with aspirations and resources to become a truly *catholic* phenomenon (I am referring here to the original meaning of *katholikos*, universal), any attempt to reverse the trend toward privatization in the direction of nationalization is met with the kind of reaction that traditional religions characteristically directed against heretics.

An excellent recent example of this was the reaction of Western leaders to the announcement of the recently elected President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, that he intended to re-nationalize his country's precious natural gas fields, which had been "privatized" a decade ago under circumstances that were suspicious at that time even from a legal point of view, much less from an ethical one. He was immediately called a "demagogue" by the Secretary of State of the United States, and of course the major international news media, with their fiercely capitalistic orientation, heaped scorn on this man who, it was agreed by all of the "faithful" in the free market church, was trying to reverse historical progress.

I would like to conclude by trying to link elements of my analysis with the socioeconomic situation in Asia today. It is understandable that

Asian countries should wish to avoid being isolated from the great possibilities for international trade that membership in such organizations as the WTO – with which, as I understand it, the Vietnamese government has just recently signed an agreement – can bring. This is a pragmatic and secular decision, not a religious one. At the same time, the failures of the state monopoly form of capitalism that, at least according to some interpreters, was the prevalent economic structure in the old Soviet Bloc have made it necessary, from a practical standpoint, for countries such as Vietnam and China, in which, at least up to a point, this model was imitated, to experiment with new forms of economic structure. But this does not entail, as many statements emanating from the World Bank and other, similar organizations have often implied, a religious conversion to free market dogmas as articles of faith. When, about a decade ago, I and a group of philosopher colleagues in a delegation that I was leading were asked, during a visit to the Confucian Institute in Beijing, to suggest ways of harmonizing Confucianism, Marxism, and free market ideology, I was stunned and had no suggestions to offer. Here, at the end of this paper, I think I can finally claim to have begun to find a response to that request – one that, with some necessary appropriate adjustments, could probably also be employed to deal with Asian religions other than Confucianism, some of which of course make more claims about Transcendence than it does. Here are my thoughts.

Confucianism has to do primarily with a set of practices, a way of life; it has no Pope, and it strikes me as being rather easily reconcilable with, for example, some Western religions. Marxism is essentially a critical, philosophically-based methodology for analyzing dominant socioeconomic practices and structures, and demonstrating their contradictions and inadequacies – a methodology which somehow, through a set of historical circumstances, with which most of us are still familiar but which will become quite obscure to future generations, itself evolved into a secular faith, often highly dogmatic in form, that it should never have become. It is free market ideology which, by the end of the twentieth century and roughly simultaneously with the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, has become fiercely dogmatic and aggressive within some very powerful circles all over the world, and which, although it has no Bible or Qur'an, seeks to impose itself as The Truth. It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, to bring together, in people's lives, Confucianism or Buddhism or a number of other religions with Marxism – despite the personal animosity toward religion that was exhibited by Karl Marx himself – and at the same time to experiment with free market *practices*, which in limited circumstances and under controlled conditions may lead to some very positive results, as one sees today especially in China as well as in other Asian countries. What is *un*reasonable, *ir*rational – paradoxical though this may seem, given capitalism's roots in Enlightenment thought with its strong emphasis on a certain conception of Reason – is to try to combine any other religious beliefs or practices, much less Marxist criticism, with an unwavering faith

in the global supremacy of the values of the so-called "free market," whatever its profit-intoxicated zealots may try to maintain to the contrary.

Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

PHILOSOPHY IN THE "FLAT WORLD": THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

HO SI QUY

In August 2003, at the most famous philosophical forum in the world, the XXI World Congress of Philosophy, Jürgen Habermas – whose reputation is so great that his name is known by practically everyone working in philosophy in the world – gave an address on the burning questions of international law. Habermas discussed the costly lessons of the past and philosophy's contribution to the future of international law. Citing Immanuel Kant in criticizing forces that disregard international law, he said: "What remaining significance will international law contain when a global warmonger and free superpower substitutes *ethical reasonings* for processes of *international law*."[1]

When Habermas made these remarks, he was in Istanbul, Turkey, very near Iraq. The "ethical reasonings" mentioned by Habermas are the various justifications for arbitrary and mercenary ethical norms. Some may think that Habermas's voice prompted humanity – and particularly politicians, who have a guiding role in the world political chess-board – to raise its voice or to show a strong reaction. But nothing happened. Habermas's philosophical reflection, rightly assessed as profound, was heard only by the philosophical world. In fact, the philosophical statements put forward by Habermas did not move the world any more than did other voices. Philosophy, in this case, may have been seen as short of prestige, but the question posed remains: Why is philosophy so unable to penetrate ordinary life?

Another case, likely seen as contrary to the above-mentioned case concerning Habermas, is that of the theory of the clash of civilizations, proposed by Samuel P. Huntington.[2] It is an ambitious theoretical model that proposes to interpret and forecast the world's socio-political changes

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[1] Jürgen Habermas. "*Dispute on the past and future of international law. Transition from a national to postnational constellation.*" See the Vietnamese translation in: *Review of Philosophy*, 10 (2003), pp. 42-49.

[2] Samuel P. Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs.* vol. 72, n. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 22-28. www. alamut.com /subj/ economics/ misc/clash.html; see also Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/clashof civilizations.htm.

from the time of the end of the Cold War. According to some theorists, this model contains numerous points which do not merit philosophical debate: not a few philosophers from Russia, China, Taiwan, Europe and other Western countries have pointed out the weak arguments and the negative psychology in Huntington's understanding of culture and of the post-Cold War world order. The irony is that in United States (and also in other countries), the majority of the population has not only failed to criticize the unreasonable conception of the *clash of civilizations*, but admired Huntington and believed that the events of September 11, 2001 were a confirmation of Huntington's forecast.[3] By examining this case, there are many things to be discussed concerning the role of philosophy in the era of globalization.

As is well known, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* was a book published for the first time in early 1996, but its essential viewpoint had been given three years earlier in the *Foreign Affairs Review*, No. 3, 1993, under the title "The Clash of Civilizations." Through a complicated analysis of community psychology, Huntington tried to prove that, since the end of the Cold War, the fundamental source of conflict in the world has not been ideological or economic. The most important line dividing humankind and the dominating source of conflict is – and will be – cultural. "The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." According to Huntington, seven or eight great civilizations exist in the world at this time: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavonic Orthodox, Latin-American and (perhaps) African. "The most important conflicts in future will break out along border lines of these civilizations."[4]

Among the assessments of Huntington's theory, we would like to cite here one considered by us to be a particularly perceptive analysis of the conception of "the clash of civilizations" – it is from William L. McBride, Professor at Purdue University in the United States and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies. At a workshop on "Globalization and the Dialogue between Cultures," held in Moscow in June 2002, McBride directly criticized Huntington's view of the world for being "vulgar and unsubtle" ("вульгарной и меньше изощренной"). He commented: "It is regrettable that a thinker, in the pejorative sense of the word, has however had such a large influence on the way of thinking of diplomats and those who take part

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[3] See: the report of the Institute of Social Sciences Information, *The World Order after the Cold War: Analysis and forecast* (Hanoi, 2001); Liu Zhongmin, *The Relationship between Culture and International Politics*, TTKHXH (1999) TN 99-47; *http:// www.mofa.gov.vn/quocte/DangChuan* ; David North, *The War against Iraq and America's attempt to Dominate the World* (2003) *http://www.vnn.vn.* 02/01/2003; Ngoc Khue, *The Clash of Civilization – a new perspective on the world order* (2002) *Laodong.com.vn.* 29.04.2002.

[4] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," p. 25.

in global relations. His work is a typical example of the attraction of a mediocre way of thinking ("упрошенная мысль"), but with an appearance of brilliance."[5]

To be fair, the theory of the clash of civilizations contains in itself several perceptive analyses, and by examining carefully the words in his work, we may realize that Huntington has no intention to incite cultures and civilizations to engage in conflicts among themselves. But Huntington's theory is worrying, just because of his philosophical view. In this book, Huntington has unintentionally disclosed the orientation of his whole way of thinking, which he prefers to call by the German term *Weltanschauung* – which means, the *world view concerning civilization, the cosmos and human relations.* When identifying the central theme of his book as "culture, cultural identities, which, at the broadest level, are civilization identities," Huntington wrote: "One grim Weltanschauung for this new era was well expressed by the Venetian nationalist demagogue in Michael Dibdin's novel, *Dead Lagoon*: "There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant."[6] Huntington doesn't spare words in extolling this viewpoint and considers it the main underlying principle of his thought.

We are astonished when large numbers of readers are bewitched by this extremist philosophy: "unless we hate what we are not, than we cannot love what we are." Is it true that mankind is accustomed to such behaviour? No, it is quite difficult to believe this. Huntington's argument has drawn on the human psychology of envy. Even though there are possibly some politicians who behave in this way due to their fanatical or deviant minds, how can we think that nations and the whole of mankind are so unwise? What a mistake if the factual clash of civilizations starts from this. (Who can say whether the terrorist hijackers in the US on September 11 hadn't read Huntington's work?)

What is philosophy's role in the era of globalization? The problem is that nowadays the mass media are occupied by vulgar, erroneous, mediocre theories which divert public opinion towards bad values. Meanwhile, perceptive thought, healthy philosophies, and noble values cannot find a place in mankind's spiritual life. Formerly, when the Internet wasn't so widespread, dubious theories and deviant expressions of human psychology hardly found any support, and thus their influence was limited to a few individuals or groups. Today, the mass media enable all sorts of miscreants throughout the earth to gather together in a "common dark corner." This is a fertile condition for the wide-spread dissemination of odd theories. There is no doubt that monstrous theories will appear in the future.

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[5] W. McBride (У. Макбраид) *Глобализация имежкультурный диалог. Вопросы Философии.* № 1. с. 82, 2003.

[6] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, pp. 10-11.

If philosophers and other sane people aren't able to impede these evils, it is possible that humanitarian voices which belong to the minority will be derided by the majority.

Of course, mankind's history is filled with unusual ideas, even decadent theories, such as the German Nazi ideology of the early twentieth century. But at that time, there was no Internet or multimedia, no online Blogs and Hip-Hop music, no HIV/AIDS and the H5N1 virus, no terrorism and savagery in the Al-Qaeda way. There wasn't yet this kind of disorder on a global scale.[7] In our global village, everyday millions of people want to confide many things on online Blogs, from philosophy to perverse feelings and ideas – that is the complaint of Jim Chisholm, an adviser to the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), presented at a high-level workshop of press groups from over sixty nations, held in Athens, Greece, in November, 2005. Also there was Eric Le Boucher, editor-in-chief of *Le Monde*, who remarked that the youth of today are unlike their parents in reading books and newspapers; this means that the reception of philosophical values has changed radically from what it was only one generation ago.[8] If the twenty-first century's spiritual atmosphere is like this, then philosophy is facing a great challenge. Might we even imagine that there may be a time when, as predicted by Lucien Sève, philosophy will become a dialect of groups of aborigines living in deserted peripheral zones[9]?

More than ever, philosophy has a great and heavy responsibility, but it is very difficult to find a way to help to guide public opinion. It seems that people haven't learned much from costly past experience. The lesson from the extremist fanaticism of Nazi thought in the Second World War, the lesson from the wrong evaluation of the role of national consciousness in the 1954-1975 Vietnam War, the lesson from the 1991 Rio Summit Conference (concerning our neglect of nature in our pursuit of economic development), and the lessons from UNESCO concerning the pursuit of an excessive scientism to such a degree that the of role culture and of the human person was neglected during the 1970s and 1980s, etc...[10] We should have learned much more from all these "poignant punishing blows."

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[7] See: Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2005). *http://www.thomaslfriedman.com/worldisflat.htm*

[8] See: *http://www.vnn.vn* 22/11/2005.

[9] See: Lucien Sève, *To Begin with the Ends - Introduction: the trap of the term "communism"* (1974). *http://marxists.nigilist.ru/ archive/seve/lucien_seve.htm*.

[10] See: Bertrand Russell, *The World Today and the Future of Humanity* (Hanoi, 1996), pp. 149-150; Robert McNamara. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 1995); Colin Powell. BBC 6/5/2004 [See: *The Bulletin of Vietnamese News Agency* N° 08/TKNB-QT 6/5/2004)]; David North, *The War against Iraq and America's attempt to Dominate the World.*

Regrettably, philosophy in the era of globalization has been insufficiently effective in reminding humanity to respect precious values and to be careful about their ambitions. Philosophy, as Habermas said, isn't able enough to bring "processes of international law into force," and this has allowed "ethical reasonings" to have too large an influence in the twenty-first century. It should be noted that the ethical creeds mentioned by Habermas are from "a global warmonger superpower" – which means that this ethics is conceived, utilized, and behaviour-oriented in completely subjective ways. In a speech worthy of note, given at the Asia-Pacific Ocean Conference on January 13, 2003, Mahathir Mohamad, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, unhesitatingly criticized the way that we have responded towards terrorism. He said: "The motive of terrorism is certainly not religion. *The world's situation is now not too bad, but the world has wrongly responded to the situation*"[11].

"The motive of terrorism is territory" – this is debatable. But "The world's situation is now not too bad, but the world has wrongly responded to the situation" – this is not a poor idea. What role does philosophy have today, and what can the philosopher do, if Mahathir Mohamad is right?

In fact, William McBride didn't exaggerate when he said that, in this era of globalization, clear and altruistic thinkers generally haven't raised their voices. And someone whose voice is able to transform the world, such as Habermas, is revealed to be "excessively idealist, proposing an ethic which is impossible and at the same time detaches itself from the real world to pass into the abstract world."[12] So "vulgar" theories, cynically mercenary macro-policies, and behaviours short of wise philosophical thinking are given opportunities to spring up.

What place will philosophy have in the era of globalization?

We observe that, in forthcoming years, philosophy will likely keep on being shaped in the way it has been over the last decade: while the voices of famous and generally highly-regarded philosophers (for example, Jürgen Habermas, Peter Kemp, Tomonobu Imamichi, Edgar Morin, Michel Vadée, Jacques Derrida, and so on) have little influence beyond the philosophical world, voices of such theorists as Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, Alvin Toffler, and the like, have more considerable influence – from important politicians to students in universities.

Perhaps Huntington, Fukuyama, and Toffler are talented theorists. But even so, we must examine seriously the philosophical character of their work (for example, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, The End of History and the Last Man, The Third Wave, Future Shock*). It is not wrong to call these books works of philosophy. But it is not wrong either to consider the approach of these works as transdisciplinary or

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[11] Mahathir Mohamad, "Time to stop and think." *The International Herald Tribune* 16/1/2003 (See: TTXVN 17/1/2003 (The Bulletin of VNA (Vietnamese translation)).

[12] W. McBride, 2003.

multidisciplinary. The problem consists in that they are read by masses of readers. We must recognize that this enthusiastic reception is actually addressed to the philosophical insights of these works. Other philosophers, with larger and more profound erudition, have to instruct politicians and the public in general concerning the philosophical value of such work. But we don't know whether masses of readers are passionate for erudite philosophical commentaries.

Concerning the problem of philosophy's position in this present world, we should pay attention to the fact that today it seems that there is not any theory or school which, regardless of its very great role in the past, is able enough to attract or guide the entire world's philosophical interests or to provide credible spiritual support for the future, or to be the ultimate arbiter for estimating values in mankind's spiritual life – from Confucius to Socrates, from Kant to Hegel, from Marx to Freud and Weber, from Teilhard de Chardin to Karl Popper and Jean-Paul Sartre, and so on. Philosophy isn't religion, but formerly, for a good few men, the belief in a certain philosophical world view, sometimes, wasn't inferior to the belief in a religion. Today, this phenomenon no longer exists. Such a situation is likely better but, as for philosophy, evidently its position has much changed.

Presently, the philosophical reflections of those who don't work in philosophy, such as Thomas Friedman (journalist, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and author of well-known works on globalization such as *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000), and *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2005)[13]) sometimes advance genuine philosophical insights. "Flat world," a term created by Friedman, implies that nowadays globalization has made human life no longer "cubic" or "stereo" as before. Although sometimes criticized, this term is well-chosen in showing the globalized character of the world.[14] In this world, the lecture-halls of universities will in fact be vital to showing what all the main schools of philosophy have to contribute. The global network is filled with a good deal of second-class philosophical thinking. But real philosophy has appeared more and more frequently on the internet.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Philosophy's situation in the contemporary world reminds us of the fable of the scholar and the boatman. About to cross a swift river with fierce waves, a scholar spoke to the boatman. Knowing that the boatman was uneducated in philosophy, the scholar gave the boatman some advice: "Anyone who doesn't know what philosophy is, has lost half of his life." The scholar thought that the boatman was suffering from being unschooled in philosophy. But, in response to the scholar, the boatman didn't seem the

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[13] See: *http://www.thomaslfriedman.com/worldisflat.htm*

[14] See: *The Flat World and Vietnam,* http://www.vietnamnet.vn. 23/3/2006.

least bit concerned and, in his turn, teased the scholar: "If you cannot swim, it is possible that you will lose your whole life" (when the waves of globalization overcome us?).

Perhaps life will just go on aimlessly. Philosophers are often pessimistic and obsessed with their roles and positions. After all, everyone knows the price paid for the lack of philosophy. But, in the era of globalization, having illusions about philosophy's value isn't any less dangerous.

If, in this era of globalization, the world has become somewhat more "flat," as imagined by Thomas Friedman, certainly philosophy is no longer as "round" as it formerly was.

Institute of Social Sciences Information
Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

THE ORIENTATIONAL ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN REALIZING AND RESOLVING GLOBAL PROBLEMS

DANG HUU TOAN

Our day is marked by a vigorous development of science and technology, an increase in the place of the knowledge economy, and demands for international integration, communication and cooperation. As globalization becomes more and more an objective reality, humanity formally enters a new global age. In doing so, the entire human community faces global problems which will have immeasurable consequences if they are not jointly resolved.

From the beginning of the 1970s, "the global issue" may be defined as the totality of problems which directly influence the entire human community so that social progress depends greatly on its solution. Global problems are questions which affect the interests of the entire human community – that is, every state and nation, but also each person or separate individual throughout the planet. These problems involve objective factors of socio-economic development in the contemporary age, and have a fundamental influence on the sustainable development of every country, territory and region. Given this character, to resolve today's global problems, philosophy needs to combine the efforts of all peoples, nations, sectors and organizations on both the international and the regional levels.

At present, and in future decades, peace, cooperation and development will be the main trends in the world. But local wars, and armed conflict among nations, races and religions, as well as the arms race, political intervention, revolution, terrorism, and controversy over boundaries, seas, islands and natural resources, continue to happen in many places. This means that the great conflicts of the age will continue, perhaps even more violently and, in some aspects, even more acutely. The world economy continues to develop at a high speed, but beyond this there are implicit factors, unexpected contingencies and dangers leading to crisis. Economic globalization has become an objective trend, giving opportunities for the development of every country and local territory, but it also contains factors that cause difficulties and challenge nations and regions, especially those that are developing. Economic and commercial competition, and struggles over natural resources, energy, the market, capital, and technological development among countries and local territories, have become ever more violent. Sciences and technology develop with higher speed than ever before; this will lead to breakthroughs in the various fields that bear on our knowledge economy and in the development of the labor

force, influencing every country and region both positively and negatively. It is in this context that many global problems have appeared and could become more acute.

First of all, there are such problems as the "increasing disparity between rich and poor countries; increasing population, including immigration flow; exhaustion of energy and natural resources, with deterioration of the environment; disastrous changes of climate; huge epidemics; and increases in trans-national crime."[1]

From an epistemological perspective, global issues emerge from contradictions in development that occur on a worldwide scale. Global issues are not the problem of a particular individual or a nation, but of the whole of humankind. Their existence and development depends on the historical development of the entire human community. *From an ontological perspective*, global issues can be seen to be caused by contradictions between the operational forms of nature and society, and their complete existential condition in the integrity of the time-space complex. They also could be looked at as issues of existence and development under the influence of political, economic, cultural and social contradictions that affect all of humanity. In addition, as natural or social phenomena, they exist and develop in interrelationships and interactions, and are complex in quality. They are classified into three groups. *First*, international problems happen in the relationships among nations and local territories, but also on a regional and worldwide scale, such as the problems of peace and disarmament, the disparity between rich and poor countries, and so on. *Second*, these problems happen in the relationships between society and the individual, such as the increasing population, illegal immigration, dangerous epidemics, the increase of international crime, and so on. *Third*, the problems appear in the relationships of nature - society - man, such as the scarcity of energy, the exhaustion of natural resources, the lack of ecological balance, abnormal changes of weather, and the like. We cannot ignore the need to comprehend deeply and thoroughly the essence of such global issues, for their immeasurable consequences will influence not only the development of cultures, but the survival of civilization itself. We can find effective means to resolve these global problems only on the basics of interdisciplinary, complex studies with the cooperation of all branches of the natural and social sciences and the humanities, including philosophy.

In the 1970s, many thinkers came to have a more thorough awareness of how philosophy might contribute to this. As participants in "Club of Rome," they spoke about the necessity of scientific synthesis and interdisciplinary research for the understanding and resolution of global problems, and emphasized the role of fundamental theories and methodology. With unprecedented speed, science and technology have become fundamental forces of social progress and development. Science

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[1] The Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 10th General Congress* (Hanoi: National Politics Publishing House, 2006), p. 74.

and technology have quickly changed the appearance of the world, promoted historical progress, and at the same time increased the rate and scale of world change. In addition, science and technology have broadened the sphere of human activity and increased the ability to influence the environment in which human beings live. Humanity has, on the one hand, improved the environment but, on the other hand, unreasonable exploitation has seriously damaged the ecological balance. This has led to a serious ecological crisis on a global scale, directly threatening human existence. Thus, philosophy, with its primary functions of criticism and evaluation, needs to combine with other branches of social research and the humanities to warn about the dangers caused by scientific-technological progress. At the same time, philosophy should lead humanity to utilize scientific and technical achievements in humanity's use of nature and its development. More than that, philosophy, with its own scientific predictive capacity as a theoretical and methodological discipline, needs to participate in building a new discipline of science – futurology – and guide it to help it forecast the possibilities of human development in the present global situation.

A number of Marxist philosophers, especially the Soviet ones, confronting the ever more urgent global problems which threaten the existence of the whole human community, have started from a new perspective – that is, they have taken Marxist philosophy, in its essence, as a humanistic theory, providing the most accurate, general methodology for every science, and have wished to use this philosophy to propose and assert the necessity of a process of scientific synthesis, to build collaboration among the sciences, and to pursue interdisciplinary research to investigate and resolve global problems. The theoretical foundation, which is often quoted as evidence for this perspective, is Marx's own forecast of a coming scientific synthesis: once humans become the "direct objects of natural science," and nature becomes the "direct object of the science of humanity," "natural science would consist of human science, and at the same time human sciences would consist in natural sciences: it will become a science."[2] In addition, by adopting this basic perspective, these philosophers insist that human investigation of global problems will produce a system of knowledge with multiple aspects and a synthetic construction, which in every aspect is related to man and his existence and development. To solve these global problems, then, it is necessary to bring the achievements of all branches of science and technology together with the foundations of the theory and method of Marxist philosophy. Marxist philosophy, with its capacity for synthesizing knowledge and for establishing a unified structure of knowledge, is a unique science. It is able to take a complex, interdisciplinary approach in studying a complex, multi-faceted and multi-functional system of knowledge, and in studying the development of our knowledge on the most difficult global issues.

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[2] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Complete Works* (Hanoi: National Politics Publishing House, 2000), Vol. 42, p. 179.

Having recognized Marxist philosophy's scientific orientation and its ability to predict the consequences of contemporary problems of human existence (by scientifically analyzing their hidden causes), Marxist philosophers have come to assert its indispensability for accurately investigating global problems and their direction, as well as for reflecting correctly on these problems in terms of all-round and concrete historical development. Admittedly, the scientific forecasts proposed by Marxist philosophers are merely in terms of methodology, but depending upon them one could propose systems of co-ordinated solutions which are able to resolve and surmount the consequences of global problems.

The function of Marxist philosophy is that of norm and criticism – in Marx's words: "*its function of criticism and revolution*"[3] – and it has been used by Marxist philosophers to decide debates among different perspectives on the essence, cause, scale and degree of the direction of development as well as to resolve present global problems. Marxist philosophy "also implies a view on the negation of present existence, and its inevitable passing away" because it equips us with an objective, accurate, comprehensive dialectical vision about the essence of global problems, their cause, and scale, particularly in the context of the explosion of sciences and technology. Moreover, it also provides us with a theoretical foundation for resolving global problems in a useful direction, leading towards social progress for the benefit of humanity, sustainable existence, and the development of human civilization.

Nowadays, humanity has entered the global age, with its many advantages for sustainable development but also with its threats to human existence. First, in the global age, modern science and technology have not only blossomed, but have also turned out to be "the direct labor force" as Marx predicted, having the most prominent role in the knowledge economy. However, these achievements could be used for evil ends. Second, today, economic globalization is an objective trend, but it "also contains various contradictions, with both positive and negative sides, involving both cooperation and struggle"; it not only provides opportunities for development, but also risks destroying sustainable development. Third, after the "Cold War," the basic contradictions of the world are less tense, but "on each side, contradictions still exist and continue to develop even more severely." Fourth, while the tendencies to integration, association and co-operation become more and more popular, there remains "the danger of corruption," of losing national identity. Fifth, the inherent relationship among nature, society and the human, between society and the individual, between man and man, and so on, has had a new qualitative development, but it still remains in danger of being destroyed.

In an age filled with such unimaginable changes, not only will certain global problems continue, but it is likely that there will emerge other global problems, which are even more severe, and which will have a larger

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[3] Marx and Engels, *Complete Works*, Vol. 23, p. 36.

scale influence on every nation and on the sustainable development of human civilization. These problems will threaten the survival of each person and of the whole human community. At the present time, it can be affirmed that, philosophy's – especially Marxist philosophy's – orienting function on behalf of science has the mission not only of *"explaining the world,"* but also of *"transforming the world,"* as Marx said, with respect to finding the rational means for resolving global questions. Here it plays the most important, and even a decisive, role.

Having entered the global age, humanity has come to realize clearly that civilization has already reached a qualitatively new state. One of the most obvious manifestations of this is economic globalization and the knowledge economy, which strongly influence aspects of the socio–economic life of the world. The socio-economic development of each nation and sector should not ignore the security of human civilization. An increasingly high number of global problems threaten the world – problems involving inter-dependent, inter-woven relations, having a rapid development due to the explosive leap in modern science and technology, and these go so far as to present a danger of self-extermination. Hence knowing the world, forecasting its possible changes, and finding a rational way for its development, should become the fundamental task of modern philosophy.

Only once we have a correct basis in philosophy concerning the changes happening in the contemporary world can we find a rational orientation for sustainable development and a fully human existence. Contemporary globalization is producing contradictions within the development of the whole human community, contradictions which are not easily surmounted or rejected. Nations, states and regions do not all have the same capacities to develop their material and spiritual life and culture, or to promote modern science and technology and to apply their achievements in building a solid socio-economic foundation. In addition, in the past, the process of development was often considered a matter of private choice for each nation, state or region. But now, for the first time in history and because of globalization, it is a global choice, because the goal of globalization is to create common human values. In turn, these issues require us to change our traditional knowledge, our way of knowing and resolving contradictions, which had been dogmatized in the past. In its place, we must build new knowledge, thinking, and ways of evaluating and resolving problems in accordance with a new philosophy. This must be concerned with the need for sustainable development and the development of the whole human community. This means that, in the present global age, we should direct modern philosophical research to the goals of developing not only the traditional values of each nation, but also the common values of the present age. In the other words, modern philosophy has to orient its studies to the sustainable development not only of a nation or state, but of the entire human community.

In this global age, humanity is placed at the center of every development strategy, and so philosophy concerns not only the principle of sustainable development, but the death or survival of every individual, every national community, and of the human community as a whole. Thus, it is necessary to have a more comprehensive knowledge of one's position in "seriously mastering nature and consciousness," in "mastering one's social life," and in creating and mastering the process of historical development of one's consciousness, through liberating oneself from self-enclosure in social caste, status and position in the social life of each national community. Philosophy needs to direct people to accept that, "*in its reality, human nature is the synthesis of social relations*" and, at the same time, to lead them to consider "*the development of the depth of human nature*" as the "*goal*,"[4] as Marx asserted. More than this, in the global age philosophy must: direct human culture and the aspiration for democracy, freedom and equality as the inner, inherent character of humanity which is realized in every individual as well as in national and human communities; direct humanity to know and organize "one's own personal force" as "social forces" and powers for reforming the whole community; enable each person to "leap" "from the realm of necessity to that of freedom"; and finally, to "master one's own social reality" and then by mastering "nature, to master oneself, to become free"[5], and then, to direct both the national community and the human community to develop in accordance with the goal of "the development of each person's freedom as the condition for the development of the freedom of all."[6]

Cultural development must be based on conserving, preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of the nation, on enhancing the process of acculturation of common human cultural values in terms of the age in which we live, and on building "a progressive culture deeply with the national identity." This was accepted as "the first national policy" of Vietnam at the same time as there was a recognition of both the goal and the motive force for the sustainable development of each region, nation, and the whole human community. To make this strategy of cultural development a reality in the condition of contemporary globalization, philosophical methodology should provide the theoretical foundation, methodology and implementation of the strategy. To implement this, a global philosophy is central to the process of cultural synthesis. For this goal, philosophy itself needs to change its traditional one-dimensional character, and involve both Western and Eastern traditional philosophies.

Traditional Western philosophical theories have the general character of employing divisions that polarize thought: they divide things, objects or phenomena into two, and place them in opposition to each other. As the famous Russian philosopher V.I. Lenin wrote, "dividing the whole

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[4] Marx and Engels, *Complete Works*, Vol. 3, p. 11; Vol. 26, part II, p. 168.
[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, pp. 331, 333.
[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 628.

into two and cognizing their opposite parts … is the true essence (one of the basic "essences", characters, even the most fundamental one)" of traditional Western philosophy, from Heraclitus to Hegel.[7] In addition, the common character of traditional Western philosophy is expressed through the conception of imperfection, which existed at the beginning of the universe, and requires "reformation" by humanity. In contrast, traditional Eastern philosophy focuses on a non-polarization of thought. According to Eastern philosophers, the world as universe is always perfectly unified, accepts the identity of all opposites, without contradiction between spirit and matter. They did not develop the concept of matter, because matter is nothing if it is without spirit. They could not have the concept of an immaterial spirit as it would be the same as that of a non-spirit.

According to Eastern philosophers, from the beginning, the universe already had its own perfection. All differences and diversities are relative, so there is no need for a "reformation." These philosophers often recommended the principle of non-action (*wu-wei*), meaning the negation of activity and human creation. They came to assert that everything man needs to do should depend on the harmony of the universe as a criterion. This is to deny the nature of a progressive society.

The above-mentioned traditional Western and Eastern philosophical systems drew on their distinctive characteristics in resolving concrete philosophical problems. For example, the particular character of Western philosophy is its logical character while that of Eastern philosophy is its ethical dimension. Western philosophers consider freedom in term of the secular; for Eastern philosophers, freedom belongs to sacredness. When commenting on the relationship between matter and spirit, Western philosophy always sees unlimitedness or infinity as the ideal, whereas Eastern philosophy holds that matter needs to comply, to depend on spirit.

In a global age, the synthesis of culture and cultural values, and of both matter and spirit, comes to be the controlling aspect of the theory and methodology of the new global philosophy; this considers human existence, under the immeasurable influence of globalization, to be the subject of its study. It is necessary now to reject the one-dimensional approach to philosophy found in traditional Western and Eastern thought, in order to move towards a unified form of thought, a common philosophy, which considers the existence and survival of every individual and of the whole human community to be the highest value for addressing all the positive and negative influences of global problems. Only in this way can contemporary philosophy fulfill its theoretical and methodological role and its function of investigating and resolving the global problems of the contemporary age.

Review of Philosophy
Hanoi, Vietnam

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[7] V.I. Lenin. *Complete Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishing House, 1981), Vol. 29, p. 36.

VIETNAMESE PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, AND RELIGION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

VU KHIEU

Philosophy plays an essential role in every civilization. Today the diversity of civilizations and the closely related need for worldwide dialogue have become more and more prevalent. These issues are currently being addressed in Vietnam, where a wide range of civilizations and philosophical trends are encountered. In this paper, I want to describe the 'rethinking' of philosophy in the history of Vietnamese thought, and how the current phase in the development of philosophy is influenced by, but also bears on, the fact that we now live in a global era.

To talk about the role of philosophy in general does not mean to deny differences among philosophies. Vietnamese philosophy has existed and developed, not only through the affirmation of its national identity but also through the expansion of its exchanges with the world and its acquisition of positive values from other nations. Only the recognition of diversity and respect for the range of philosophies available to us, can help Vietnamese philosophers to see the contributions that might be made by philosophy to human life today.

Philosophy, however, is not some special 'God-given' gift offered only to some countries or regions to help them be regarded as 'civilization.' Every philosophy has been born out of the interaction between humans and the natural, economic and social features of their environment. Acculturation is needed for the development of every national culture. But an acculturation process will be successful only if that nation is able to preserve and promote its national identity while drawing on the values of other cultures and civilizations.

From the dawn of civilization, the life of the Vietnamese has frequently been threatened by natural calamities and foreign invasions. Our most important spiritual values have been brought into play to fight both natural disasters and foreign aggressors. These calamities and invasions have been extremely great challenges for a small country such as Vietnam.

Living under constant threat of being destroyed, the Vietnamese have quickly realized that the sense of community is the only force that can save their lives. This sense of community has led people to share even their scare resources of food and clothing and to help each other in difficulties. Individuals become more vulnerable when they are isolated from community life. A community whose members are closely bound together can be an invincible force:

> One tree alone amounts to nothing,
> (But) three trees clustered together form a high mountain.

Love is a natural human sentiment, a common feature in every religion and ethics. However, in Vietnam it serves as a condition of existence, a weapon for combat, as well as the sustainable meaning of life and man's greatest happiness.

"Love other people as one loves oneself," has long been a popular saying in Vietnam. It has served as a moral precept pertaining to the relationships between individuals and community. Love is established and nurtured first within the family and then expanded more broadly to the national community and, ultimately, to the community of humankind. But because the existence of the family depends first of all on the existence of the country, national well-being is closely related to the peace and happiness of humankind.

The *sense of community* in Vietnam is the strongest expression of the affection an individual has for the country. This is inseparable from family affection; indeed, it is born and nurtured within family life. The patriotism of the Vietnamese has never been a *narrow nationalism* or opposed to internationalism. When faced with foreign invaders, families have been willing to send their children into battle in order to protect the country. But even in the fight against foreign aggressors, the Vietnamese have always differentiated clearly between enemy rulers and the people of the invading country. This 'patriotic morality' is expressed throughout in Vietnamese philosophy, religion and ethics.

Patriotism is not only the clearest manifestation of the sense of community of the Vietnamese, but also the essence of *philosophical* thinking, the highest *ethical* standard and the most sacred of all *religions* in Vietnam.

In ethical terms, the highest honor is given to those who have given their life for the country and the greatest condemnation is given to those who betray it.

In religious terms, this patriotic attitude is expressed more profoundly and strongly. Throughout the history of Vietnam, Heaven worship has not been practiced by any religion. But throughout the country, one finds temples that have been erected to honor and venerate national heroes who rendered great service or who accomplished glorious feats in nation building and in the wars against foreign aggression: Hung King, the first ancestor of our nation, is worshipped nationwide. Every village worships historical figures who made important contributions to the country and its people, and every Vietnamese family has an altar for worshiping their ancestors

This kind of worship reflects not only an *ethical* standard but it is really *religious* by nature. Religion is a stable component of Vietnamese traditional culture, and it serves as a common basis to unite *philosophy, ethics and religion.*

It is essential for our nation to preserve and promote Vietnamese identity and culture but, at the same time, to draw on the cultural values of humanity.

If Vietnam had practiced a closed-door policy to protect its national identity and refused to accept the achievements of other nations, it would have made no progress and perhaps even died out. On the other hand, without a spirit of independence and self-reliance, Vietnam would not be able effectively to acquire the cultural quintessence of the world. All elements acquired from outside must be refined and made adaptable to the conditions and needs of the nation.

Throughout its history, Vietnam has been the site of interaction between two great Asian civilizations: the Indian and the Chinese. The Vietnamese have acquired many values from those two civilizations. However, these imported values have been transformed to fit into the specific context of Vietnam in order to become truly values of Vietnamese culture.

When scholars from India first came to Vietnam to promulgate Buddhism and Indian culture, they lived closely with local people, explained Buddhist principles of compassion and fraternity. However, the compassion for one another that is characteristic of Vietnamese culture, was not something imported along with Buddhism. Rather, it is a quality that originated in the social context of Vietnam – a kind of philosophy of life that arose in the face of the prolonged trials and challenges Vietnamese history. To say that Buddhism brought ideals of compassion and fraternity to the Vietnamese is oversimplistic. One should say, rather, that thanks to the introduction of the teaching of Buddhism, the compassion and fraternity characteristic of Vietnamese culture were promoted to an even higher level. Consequently, a distinctively Vietnamese positive *humanism*, a sustainable factor in the culture of Vietnam, was created.

This is the case also for Confucianism. Once introduced to Vietnam, Confucianism did not simply retain its Chinese character. It was Vietnamized, just as it was modified in Japan and Korea. For the sake of safeguarding and building the nation, Vietnamese Confucians made full use of the positive features of Confucianism with a view to asserting the traditional values of the nation. Vietnamized Confucianism has made a remarkable contribution to positive national values and traditions. It has been able to serve as a stable ideology, capable of boosting national development and providing strength for the country to preserve its independence.

Despite its positive aspects, Confucianism also contains negative elements; these were serious, and made Confucianism increasingly incapable of coping with new challenges in Asian societies. Static and tranquil societies, based on the Asian mode of production and Eastern culture, came to be faced with unprecedented challenges, such as the invasion of Western civilization. Thus, while fully aware that Confucianism

is a great source of strength in cultural life, as Ho Chi Minh pointed out, "Confucianism is suitable only for an unchanged and tranquil society."

The Japanese quickly realized the threat of the new era. Under the rule of the Meiji Emperor, they soon accepted many of the ideals of the West, with its advanced industry, science and technology. As a result, Japan was capable of building up both its economic and military might. Other Eastern Asian countries, including Vietnam, were too conservative – and they fell prey, one after another, to colonialism and became colonies or semi-colonies.

Perhaps the most recent stage in the development of Vietnamese philosophy is that provided by Marxist thought. The key figure here is Ho Chi Minh.

From the experience of colonialism, the Vietnamese drew precious lessons. They have mapped out a way to cope with Western capitalist countries, then socialist countries, and recently with all nations in the context of globalization. Through his attitude and example, Ho Chi Minh set a standard for the relationship between the Vietnamese national cultural tradition and other cultural trends worldwide.

Ho Chi Minh saw moral self-cultivation of the individual as the strong point of Confucianism. But this self-cultivation was not enough to combat colonialism. And so, early in his life, Ho Chi Minh left the East, in a quest for Western values. He recognized the benevolence and strength of Christianity. But this benevolence was not enough to liberate humankind from the suffering caused by oppression and exploitation. He encountered Marxism and saw *dialectics* as its strong point. He adopted Marxism dogmatically, but also creatively. As early as 1924, noting that Marxism was founded on the experience of traditional Western societies, he stressed the need to supplement Marxism with Eastern knowledge. He recognized the relevance of Sun Yat-Sen's doctrine to Asian conditions. However, again, he decided not to copy wholly that experience and policy because he realized the differences between Chinese and Vietnamese contexts.

Ho Chi Minh's thought offers a combination of national values with those of humanity in general in order to construct a new value system appropriate for the development of Vietnam in the present age. He wrote: "Vietnamese culture is the outcome of interaction between Eastern and Western cultures. We learn good things from both the East and the West in order to create a culture for Vietnam." This view, which Ho Chi Minh expressed more than half a century ago, remains the key to the code of conduct of the Vietnamese in the broad dialogue among civilizations and philosophical trends of the world.

The world is experiencing unprecedented changes. The revolution in information technology and communication has quickly expanded the scope of human knowledge. Complex problems in every area of human life demand ever greater renovation in philosophical thinking. Globalization has created an increasing disparity between rich and poor, strong and weak, as well as differences between various societies and within societies

themselves. There is moral deterioration and social evil. In addition, the world suffers from an increasing number of natural calamities, diseases and pandemics, such as cancer, AIDS, SARS, bird-flu, and so on. Humanity has not yet worked out effective measures to deal with the above-mentioned problems or to stop the bloody conflicts among nations due to ethnic and religious differences.

In this present context, the Vietnamese are actively developing their country in the spirit of 'renovation,' in order to bring prosperity and as well as contribute to the reinforcement of peace and friendship in the world. The principle of 'renovation' in Vietnam includes a renewal in thinking.

Driven by this principle, Vietnamese philosophers are committed to research and to finding solutions to problems faced not only by their nation but by humankind. By drawing on their national spirit, Vietnamese philosophers today are striving to renovate their views concerning the needs of the nation and the present age, as well as creating favorable conditions for the unity of philosophy, ethics and religion. In the context of globalization, the significance of this is profound. [1]

Institute of Sociology
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

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[1] For further discussion, see my paper on "Vietnam through Dialogue among Civilizations," in *Proceedings of the International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations*, Delhi, India, 9-10 July 2003.

SEMANTIC ANTI-PLURALISM: HOW TO TRANSLATE TERMS IN PHILOSOPHY

DAVID EVANS

In this paper I focus on an issue in the history of European philosophy. But I have some hope that the thesis which I shall examine and defend is connected, in general terms if not in detail, to much broader concerns. For I want to scrutinise a hermeneutic attitude which is commonly manifested where cross-cultural philosophical commentary is practised. The attitude is one that emphasises the difficulty or impossibility of translating key philosophical terms. Here is an example taken randomly from a book which I was sent recently to review: "*Dharma* is one of those Sanskrit words that defy all attempts at an exact rendering in English or any other tongue."[1] For all I know, this claim may hold good of "*dharma*"; but there are other cases where similar claims are frequently made, and these should be called into question. The hermeneutic attitude that I challenge may be found both in explicit claims about the untranslatability of key philosophical terms and, perhaps more pervasively, in the practice of accompanying a translation with a transliteration of the original language -- as if the translation itself were in counterfeit and untrustworthy coin.

So here is the thesis which I propose to scrutinise; I call it "semantic pluralism". *Key philosophical terms in a particular tradition and language have a meaning which can only be captured within that context; translation into another context can at best be only imperfect.* Whether this thesis applies to all such terms or only to some and also what the precise linguistic status of the recalcitrant elements is, are left open; remember that I am speaking here of a hermeneutic attitude rather than a clear doctrine. I characterise my anti-pluralist thesis, by contrast, as the claim that such translation is always possible; and if that is right, it has practical implications for the conduct and presentation of philosophical discussion between cultures. I shall proceed to defend my claim, first by a general and abstract philosophical argument, and secondly by illustration from apparent counter-instances in European philosophy.

My general argument invokes considerations that have been elaborated by Wittgenstein and Donald Davidson. Let us suppose that language A and language B are sufficiently distinct such that they may contain allegedly untranslatable elements. How can we be certain that two speakers of the same language – or perhaps I should say, morphologically

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[1] Nick Allen in R. Sorabji & D. Rodin (eds.), *The Ethics of War* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), p. 148.

and phonetically the same language – actually share the meanings of the words which they use? You and I, as English-speakers, agree that grass is green. We both appear to understand the same thing by the sentence; and because of our knowledge of how things are in the world, we also agree on its truth. Perhaps, however, the actual situation is not like this. Rather I mean by "green" what you mean by "red" and vice versa. Our visual experiences are similarly discordant: I see red in just those situations where you see green. So, this weirdly sceptical argument goes, we agree on neither the meaning nor the truth of "grass is green," notwithstanding the superficial contrary impression which is created by our common willingness to assert the sentence. If we follow this line of reasoning, it opens the possibility that the language which each of us speaks and understands is an idiolect of English rather than English itself. So each of us may speak a language which is private to him- or herself. But then, as Wittgenstein develops the anti-private-language argument, we note that even my own private understanding of "green" may vary over time, so that tomorrow I myself may mean red by "green."

The intended upshot of Wittgenstein's anti-private-language argument is to block the sceptic at an early stage. My consistent and effective use of the word "green" over time is conclusive evidence that my diachronic communication with myself is sound. The same lesson carries over into interpersonal communication. For two of us to mean the same by using some word is precisely for us to be in a state of general agreement over the truth-value of the statements which contain that word. Moreover, this insight applies not only to users of the same language, but also to those who communicate between different languages. The anti-sceptical strategy for relating my use of "green" and your use of the same English word applies also to my use of "green" and your use of "vert" or "grün." The anti-private-language argument thus covers not only communication between idiolects of a single language, but also different languages.

That idea was not emphasised by Wittgenstein, but was taken up by Donald Davidson. Could there be a radical translation problem, so that there is no fact of the matter as to what piece of language correctly or best translates some item from another one? Davidson's main argument is that, if there were indeed that degree of uncertainty, we could not recognise the alien character of what we are trying to translate. To achieve the recognition of any degree of semantic difference there must be common understanding; and that insight applies not only to the suggestion that there might be complete failure of translation, but also where the case is one of partial untranslatability. How could we recognise the part that we cannot translate if we really lacked the understanding that enables us to translate it?

The arguments of these two philosophers, although somewhat different, support a common conclusion. This is that translation is a condition of intelligibility. The ability to identify common meaning in terms used by a single speaker over time, by speakers of the same language at a time or over time, and also by speakers of different languages at or over

time, all provide evidence that the words in question do in fact have some meaning. What we cannot translate, we cannot understand; and this general lesson will apply to the particular case of philosophical terminology which is viewed in remote cultures.

Now all of this tells us something about how analytic philosophers in Europe have addressed certain deep problems in meaning and communication. Many of these philosophers cared little, if at all, for communication beyond their favoured philosophical circle, and they were often ignorant of foreign languages and cultures. So my next task is to show that these rather abstract thoughts do indeed connect with actual issues in the translation of philosophical language. I am going to focus mainly on Aristotle, because he was supremely sensitive in his philosophy to linguistic matters and also because he commented on much that he found alien in earlier philosophy.

A major tool in Aristotle's philosophical method is his exposure of ambiguity. He devotes one entire book of *Metaphysics* to this project, detailing the complexity of 30 key philosophical expressions; and indeed this kind of analysis runs right through his entire output. A main purpose of this sort of exercise is to comment on the inadequacies of previous theory on the topics signified by the ambiguous terms. So what is Aristotle's attitude to the language which apparently he shares with these earlier thinkers? In order to answer this I shall examine three cases where we may compare Aristotle's linguistic theory with those which are prominent among modern commentators. I shall argue that Aristotle's assessments are the more correct.

First, then, consider his discussion of causes. This is my own – and the conventional – translation – of the Greek word *aitia*. I have no problem with this translation; and I shall shortly say something in defence of its correctness. But while most commentators would accept the translation, they do so with some unease; and this is indicated by their tendency to revert to the transliterated form *aitia* to introduce the concept. However Aristotle's way with this term is different.[2] He recognises its ambiguity and analyses it. In saying that "A is a cause of B" we should understand that what one speaker means by "cause" may differ significantly from the meaning of another speaker. That insight certainly forms part of Aristotle's semantic analysis of the term "*aitia*" ("cause," I would say).

But philosophically there is much more going on here. A cardinal feature of Aristotle's theory of causality is that it assigns priority to ends and goals in explaining why and how things exist and develop as they do. All four kinds of cause have their distinctive parts to play in explanation, but primacy should be assigned to the final cause. Part of the purpose of the semantic analysis of the complexity of "cause" is to disarm disputes which result from confusing one kind with another, as when it is supposed that explanation in terms of material components is incompatible with

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[2] For this discussion see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Δ 2.

explanation in terms of structure. A more important part of the purpose of this analysis is to prevent the final cause from disappearing into the obscurity generated by such confusion. In other words, the semantic analysis is not an end in itself but rather a means to achieving clarity about a substantive theory of causality. Those who fail to appreciate the variety of senses of "cause" are liable to mistake what causes what. If that is right, to present Aristotle's theory as an account of "*aitia*" or in any other similarly transliterated and specialised linguistic form is to completely obscure it. He is taking a familiar concept, analysing it, and then presenting a corrected account of its true contours; and the language in which we represent his thought should reflect the connection between the material from which he starts and what he makes out of it.

Next, let us look at his account of the nature of reality. I am going to talk about Aristotle's commentary on the word "*ousia*," and a familiar translation of this term is "substance." I shall review this convention after we have considered his own discussion of the word.[3] In that analysis, the main distinctions that emerge are between material constituents and essential natures. The sorts of things which qualify under the first heading are elemental stuffs and animal bodies and; those which qualify under the second include the properties specified in real definitions. There is of course an adumbration here of the grand debate on ontology which Aristotle conducts in *Metaphysics* Z: is the fundamental nature of things better conveyed by analysis of material stuff or analysis of essential kinds? However our immediate question is how to translate "*ousia*" in this context. It seems clear that the dialectic in which Aristotle is engaged will only be properly captured if we translate it as "reality." Which things are real, what the reality of such things consists in – these are the questions which prompt the tendencies to materialist ontology, on the one hand, and to concentration on essential properties, on the other.

So the alternative translation "substance" is manifestly inappropriate, since that introduces a concept which is indeed Aristotelian but which, by Aristotle's own account, had not been articulated by those philosophers on whose linguistic practice he is commenting. Of course, what Aristotle positively says about reality (*ousia*) does represent a distinctive element in his philosophy which constitutes his celebrated doctrine of Substance. But if we want to understand how he reaches that doctrine on the basis of reflection on the semantic complexity in the problems which he inherits from his predecessors, we need a translation which encompasses their ideas as well as his. So I defend "reality" as the best translation in all contexts. The worst strategy is to opt for no translation but rather have recourse to the transliterated "*ousia*" to express Aristotle's view; for that leaves it unclear to what extent, at any stage of his argument, his views overlap with or advance beyond what his dialectical predecessors grasped in this area of reflection.

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[3] *Metaphysics* Δ 8.

I want now to consider a third term, which is certainly philosophically important in Aristotle, but is one which he does not mark as ambiguous or otherwise problematic. This is *"eidos."* In different contexts, it is conventionally translated as "form" or "species." These translations are generally regarded as correct, and there is little or no dispute about the appropriate rendition in different contexts. We are very used to the idea that, in some contexts, Aristotle is focusing his attention on the ontological status of individual realities; and here a primary contrast is between the stuff of which such a thing is made and the structure which organises that stuff – in a word, between matter and form. In other contexts, he discusses the classification of things into more and less general kinds and the relations between kinds of these types. The word *"eidos"* occurs in both contexts, and its conventional translations are respectively "form" and "species."

However, this easy convention ignores one awkward fact. This is that, in his central examination of the nature of reality (*Metaphysics Z*), Aristotle concludes both that form, in the sense of structural organisation, is the main element in a true account of reality, and also that universal kinds fail that test. If we reflect on this upshot and on the conventional translations of *"eidos,"* it seems that in one sense – namely, that of "form" – *eidos* is a reality, but in another sense – that of "species" – it is not. Were the situation really like this, it would have provided Aristotle with a classic opportunity to use an appeal to ambiguity to dissolve a philosophical problem. But that is not his way here. There is no appeal to ambiguity, in this discussion or elsewhere in Aristotle, as regards the word *"eidos."* We must take it then that he regards the word as having a single meaning; and in this case the meaning is clearly "form." Since Aristotle signals no ambiguity in the word, this hermeneutic should carry over to those contexts where the translation "species" has become natural.

So let me propose the univocal translation "form" for all contexts in which Aristotle discusses the nature of *eidos*. That translation will cover the contrasts with matter, on the one hand, and kinds on the other, which occur in the various contexts where ontology is at issue. The translation proposes no ambiguity in the term, since Aristotle recognises none. It also makes clear what a number of scholars have argued for independently of translation issues.[4] When Aristotle rejects the claim of universals to be realities, it is the more general kinds that he focuses on, not the specific forms.

These three brief examples from the philosophy of Aristotle show how, if we are determined to follow his own linguistic insights in our pursuit of a suitable English translation, we can reap significant philosophical dividends.

Earlier, I quoted an example of the attitude which I term "semantic pluralism" and which I try to resist. That concerned the word *"dharma"* and

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[4] E.g. M.J. Woods, "Problems in *Metaphysics Z*, Chapter 13," in *Aristotle*, ed. J.M.E. Moravcsik (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), pp. 215-38.

worked across the traditions of different continents. Now watch the example of an Aristotelian scholar commenting on the translation of some of the very terms with which I have illustrated my semantic anti-pluralism: "Ideally some thirty or forty Greek words would be transliterated: the words 'substance', 'essence', 'being' would not appear but only *'ousia'*; instead of 'account', 'reason', 'speech', 'argument,' etc. there would be *'logos'*."[5] Natural and widespread as this attitude is, I hope to have done something to show that it is wrong. If I am right on this, cultural and philosophical communication should be better for it.

Queen's University
Belfast, UK

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[5] J.L. Ackrill, *A New Aristotle Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. xii.

PART II

RATIONALITY AND METHODOLOGY

THE RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY
FOR PUBLIC ISSUES

SAMUEL LEE

The perennial question of philosophy, the question that philosophers have long asked, is "What is Philosophy?" There have been many answers and definitions of philosophy; however, this question has been asked again and again and not a single answer has been perfectly satisfactory and conclusive. The ceaseless controversies over the nature of philosophy have been: is it a science or not, an objective truth or a subjective faith? Should it be only a theory of science (epistemology) or can it also be ethical teaching? Is philosophy an ideology or only the critique of ideology? Should philosophical truth be proved logically or experientially and verified, or can philosophical truth be sufficiently based on philosophical intuition and reflection?

Philosophy has never given up the search for absolute truth. However, the history of philosophy has been the history of failure and mistakes, and thus it must be criticized and reformed, as Adorno has claimed. The strength of philosophy has been its emphasis on the question and the critique. Philosophy as the act of loving wisdom, as defined by 'sophia,' has always been looking for truth through questions and reflections. According to Plato's dialogues, Socrates always gave questions to his dialogue partners, so that they may realize their ignorance and correct their prejudice and misunderstanding.

Although philosophy has a long history of creative thinking and great contributions to human wisdom and development, modern philosophy as a professional academic science has been faced with the fundamental question of its relevance and validity as an objective truth or science. After Hegel, the great era of philosophy as the queen of all sciences has disappeared. The philosophy of nature has been replaced by natural science as providing the standard of exact, verifiable truth. The philosophy of society has been reformed as sociology according to the positivist thinker Auguste Comte. The role and function of the philosopher has been transferred to social scientists and anthropologists. Even Karl Marx was ready to declare the end of philosophy and replace it with revolutionary theory such as political economy. Contemporary analytical philosophy has limited its role only to logical or linguistic analysis. Practical philosophy or ethical norms are regarded simply as a matter of decision-making. So, it is very confusing to talk about philosophy in general. We have to talk about what kind of philosophy and whose philosophy, because many philosophers do not agree with each other, but oppose or fight against each other. We can

talk about German idealistic philosophy versus British empirical philosophy, and liberal philosophy versus Marxist philosophy or communitarian philosophy, and mathematical philosophy versus linguistic philosophy. So it is said that philosophy today can exist only in relation to some kind of science and theory like the philosophy of law, the philosophy of history, the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of art.

Regarding the role of philosophy or philosophers in the discourse of public issues such as social and political development, there are many different models according to the kind of philosophy or characters of philosophers. Most philosophers have been concerned with public issues and expressed their opinions and reflections on the problems of politics and society, such as freedom, social justice and human rights. However, they have warned against being involved directly in political matters, because these fields are the sites of power struggles and not of philosophical reflection.

Plato believed that philosophy and politics can be or should be integrated in the ideal state, saying that the philosopher should be king, or that the king should learn philosophy. However, once Plato spent time as a king's advisor, he became frustrated with political realities. Kant believed it is neither possible nor desirable that a philosopher be king or a political ruler, because philosophical or ethical thinking is different work from the political power game. But Kant also thought that there could be rationalized and moralized politics, when politicians take the advice of philosophers seriously.

Hegel, however, who believed that "What is reasonable becomes real, and what becomes reality is reasonable," did not differentiate philosophy from political work. He believed philosophers should contribute to political development through philosophical statements on political affairs, because philosophy should include all kinds of principles. So he expressed his opinion on political matters explicitly. He supported the authoritarian rule of the Prussian King, with the rationale of protecting freedom and order. However, he criticized the English Reform Bill that supported democratic reform, because he said it would destroy the rationality of the state.

Karl Marx was not satisfied with the role of philosophers as commentators or advisors on political affairs. He believed that the role of philosophers should be to change social and political reality. Theory should become praxis. According to Marx, it is not enough for philosophy to interpret the world, but it is very important to change the world.

The four different perspectives of Plato, Kant, Hegel and Marx show different models of relationships between philosophy and politics. They have both strengths and weaknesses. When philosophy is deeply involved in political matters or public issues and takes a side, it falls into the danger of becoming "ideology." Philosophy cannot be the same as political ideology.

So it is very difficult for philosophy to participate in public and political affairs and not to become ideology. In modern social philosophy, the critical theory of the Frankfurt school contributed much to political development through its critique of ideology. Philosophers like Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas have established important philosophical theories critiquing the ideologies of liberalism, capitalism, imperialism, national socialism and soviet Marxism.

Horkheimer defined the mission of philosophy as the sustained, methodological effort to bring reason into the world. The social function of philosophy toward this mission lies in the critique of existing reality. Marcuse thought the task of philosophy is to think of the ideal emancipated society of reason, while critiquing established society and its distorted and oppressed reality. Adorno and Habermas developed critical theory to critique the false ideologies of politics, science/technology, religion, and traditions for the purpose of universal enlightenment.

Of course there have been questions, such as whether philosophy should play only the role of critic, and whether it is unnecessary to have a positive theory and visions as the base or framework of the critique. Bubner said that every critique must be supported by some theoretical presupposition. So philosophers have to look for some philosophical theory or hypothesis in order to criticize any other theory or ideology. There have been many other philosophers who have claimed that the role and function of philosophy should be something more than critique or raising questions. Mittelstraß defined philosophy as enlightenment that leads human practice. Hermann Lübbe added to the role of philosophy the task of management of what he called "the orientation crisis."

In order to be able to criticize any socio-political system or situation, and to do the job of building theory, practical enlightenment, or crisis management, philosophy should possess the capability of social-scientific analysis, interpretation and calculation. In some cases, philosophy needs to take an ideological position or political side in order to provide critique or enlightenment.

Raymond Aron has affirmed that philosophers may or must be courageous enough to take some political position – even if their position has the danger of being identified as an ideology. Such has been the case with Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Marx. However, philosophers are individuals who are not satisfied with ideology, but continue to ask questions, broaden their perspectives and seek better answers.

In this regard, Hans Lenk has said that philosophers are specialists who continue the dialogue of Socrates on politics, the economy, science, education and culture, by asking questions and focusing on the points of the real problem. The power of philosophy still lies in its ability to dialogue and reflect, based on human reason and moral consciousness.

Korean National Commission for UNESCO
Seoul, Korea

CHAPTER IX

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND THE COMMON PROGRESS OF WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

YAO JIEHOU

INTRODUCTION

As global communication increases, the world reveals a trend of increasingly diversifying cultures and developments. Both intercultural studies and studies of world civilizations have become popular branches of research, and interdisciplinarity is an increasingly important concern in international academic circles. One of the primary objects of intercultural studies is intercultural understanding and communication, which is involved in every discipline – such as economics, politics, and cultural studies, and the like. – and which penetrates into every facet of world civilization today. Moreover, diversity and identity in the contemporary world are central themes, and probing into them should be deepened through philosophical studies on intercultural communication. The present essay provides only a brief discussion of the relationship between intercultural communication and the process of world civilizations (including philosophical traditions), by putting forward the three points: that intercultural communication is a vital impetus of a world civilization that includes philosophical traditions; that intercultural understanding involves interculturality and a recognition of identity in diversity; and that it is important to adopt a positive intercultural attitude to promote intercultural communication and the common progress of world civilizations.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AS A VITAL IMPETUS OF A WORLD CIVILIZATION

The history of civilization is, in its essence, history of humanity. Civilization consists in that human beings realize their essence through practice; civilization represents itself as an organic integration historically formed by the economic-political structure and the basic cultural ethos, in a process of mutual penetration and mutual influencing. Culture in a broad sense (including material culture, system culture and spiritual culture) is the concrete meaning of civilization, and culture in a narrow sense (with philosophy as its theoretic core) and the spiritual conforming of civilization are embodiments of the Zeitgeist (the spirit of the era).

Throughout history, the nations of the world have created distinct cultures, traditions, beliefs and values, and have given birth to time-honored

and dynamic civilizations. Diversity is the essential trait of world civilizations. Diversity means difference, difference necessitates communication, and communication facilitates development – thus making our world more dynamic. If we take a comprehensive view of history, we see that a civilization could hardly develop and advance if it were self-enclosed and in isolation; it is by being in the mainstream of progress that various civilizations have been enriched and developed through harmonious communication and mutuality. Intercultural communication has been a motive force of evolution in world civilizations throughout the ages.

If we look at western history, the ancient Greco-Roman civilization continued for more than a thousand years; it is the source of the civilization of Western Europe – indeed, of the whole of western civilization – and it laid down a sound foundation for the tradition of scientific reason and humanism. However, its evolution was not based on being self-enclosed and insular. Though there were eminent differences between the ancient Greco-Roman civilization and the eastern (Near Eastern and Northern African) civilizations, the former absorbed the finest fruits of the eastern civilizations early, having obtained important cultural results through intercultural communication with the latter, so that the Greek and Roman nations were inspired, the wisdom of multi-nationalities in both western and eastern areas was combined, and the resplendent Greco-Roman culture was created. The forming and developing of Greek classical philosophy benefited considerably from the scientific and religious thought of western Asia and Egypt. In particular, the prominent achievements of astronomy, mathematics and myth in Egypt and Babylon played a foundational role in the birth of Greek philosophy and religion. Cosmopolitan communication between eastern and western cultures was the chief trait of the Hellenistic and Roman civilizations. Late Greek and Roman philosophy directly and readily accepted the influence of the scientific knowledge, religion, and philosophies of the eastern world, and almost all the major doctrines of the chief philosophical schools reflected a convergence of eastern and western cultures. In particular, Jewish and early Christian culture, as a special pattern of monotheism, gradually converged with Greek and Roman philosophy, and it led later Greek and Roman philosophy to unifying with religion. The theology and philosophy of Christianity which came out of such a convergence exerted a strong, deep, and long-standing influence on western civilization.

By means of multiform intercultural communications, accepting the alien, and aiming at harmony, the centuries-old and splendid Chinese civilization also imbibed the manifold fine fruits of outside civilizations so as to enrich and develop itself. From about the first century, China, India, the Middle East, and Europe initiated and expanded the "Silk Road on Land" and the "Silk Road on the Sea." The resulting intercultural communications, including economic and spiritual ones, effectively promoted the progress of Chinese civilization and a number of other civilizations in Asia and Europe. As a result of the intercultural

communication between China and India from the Han and Tang dynasties, Indian Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy spread among the common people and intellectuals of China. Such communication engendered a number of schools of Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy with Chinese characteristics (for example, the Tiantan School, Faxiang School, Huayan School, and Chan School, and so on), and they have become part of Chinese cultural tradition. Their mutual penetration and integration with Chinese Confucianism and Taoism profoundly influenced the evolution of the Chinese philosophical and cultural traditions. This is a successful example of intercultural communication. Since the Tang dynasty in the seventh century, there have been several examples of harmonious, successful intercultural communication between the Chinese civilization and the Islamic civilization. A mosque having a Chinese pattern may be found in Xi'an, an ancient capital of China, and it has an epigraph made by an emperor of the Tang dynasty. In it, we can see communication and harmonization between Chinese traditional culture and Islamic religious culture. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, because of the intercultural communication between China and the western world brought about by western missionaries in China, Chinese intellectuals began to understand western or Greek scientific and philosophical thought. Comparative studies of Confucianism and Western learning started with the arrival of Matteo Ricci, an Italian missionary; Limadou was his Chinese name. On the other hand, many missionaries brought a number of classical Chinese texts back to Europe. Chinese civilization exerted a positive influence on the French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and it was especially praised by French physiocrats. Scientific reason and the humanistic spirit of western philosophy and culture, especially its ideas of science and democracy, spread into China through Yan Fu and other Chinese philosophers beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, and this contributed to the enlightenment of modern China.

From the above historical sketch, we can draw a conclusion: The conflict of different civilizations in world is always temporary, and it is not the driving force of cultural development. The peaceful communication and harmonious convergence of different civilizations in the world is the mainstream of mankind's progress, and an important driving force of cultural development. Mankind's historical development is due to a process of incessant exchange, convergence and innovation between different civilizations. Throughout the history of mankind, many civilizations have made distinctive contributions to human progress. The world today should avoid the danger of a clash of civilizations. Differences of ideology, social system, and mode of development should not become barriers to communication or reasons for antagonism. Peace and development are essential common interests and values for the whole of humanity. It is important in particular to respect the diversity of civilization and culture in order to have rational intercultural communication, to realize harmonious unity, and to promote the common progress of world civilizations.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, INTERCULTURALITY, AND IDENTITY IN DIVERSITY

The report of a UNESCO International Experts Group, entitled *The Multicultural Planet*, points out: "the future of all humankind cannot be characterized by unity without diversity, or diversity without unity. It is a challenge to all contemporaries – and above all, to the cultures that underpin their worldviews and values – to build such a world."[1] In the globalized world today, we must avoid forcing different civilizations to merge into a single civilization or to make cultures homogenous. We should maintain the existing diversity of world civilizations and cultures. Still, it is necessary to promote a dialogue among the various civilizations, to increase mutual understanding, to close some gulfs, to reconcile antagonisms, and to oppose a "clash of civilizations," so as to actualize existing civilizations and cultures as well as to achieve a globalization of humanity based on both the diversity and the identity of world civilizations. Rational intercultural communication is just one important channel to achieve this lofty goal.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius advocated "Harmony in diversity," which means that we should respect our differences and diversities, but seek harmonious coexistence through communication with each other in order to fulfill mankind's common interests and values. Civilizations and cultures have the characteristics of both diversity and identity. The kind of identity I wish to focus on is the dynamic identity residing in diversity. It can be found in two ways: one is the identity of national culture within a particular civilization; the other is that different traditions of civilizations and cultures may achieve a certain complementarity or positive culture, aiming at goals and values of common progress in their rational communication.

Rational intercultural communication should be bilateral and based on mutual understanding, including the mutual interpretation of "texts" in different cultures. This means that "indigenous culture" as well as "the self," and "alien culture" as well as "the other," are to be conscious of its counterpart as the "other," and to transcend the "self," by entering into the "other" in order to reflect one's own culture in the other. Both the "self" and the "other" mutually manifest themselves in the contrast. "Indigenous culture" and "alien culture" may be sublimated in a new interpretation of oneself. In such a dialectical intercultural communication, a certain "overlapping consensus" – a sort of positive interculturality – may come into being. That is, there will be a "consensus" containing difference, sameness in differentia, and a dynamic identity residing in diversity. Both "indigenous culture" and "alien culture" may respectively transcend themselves in mutual understanding and gain new, even innovative, knowledge.

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[1] *The Multicultural Planet*, Ervin Laszlo (ed.), p. 232, Chinese version (Beijing: Social Sciences Literature Publishing House, 2001).

A culture may not want to, or be able to, get rid of certain traditions. H. G. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics maintains that tradition is the confluence of prejudices kept by history. This is the premise of human activity of understanding. Yet human beings also participate in the evolution of their traditions through their creative understanding and interpretation. We may apply this viewpoint to say that the two different traditions – "Indigenous culture" and "alien culture" – attain a confluence and harmonization of their two horizons in their mutual understanding, and respectively promote their own evolution, through their intercultural communication.

Interculturality is an essential attribute and function of intercultural understanding and an effect of intercultural communication. On the one hand, it denotes a mediating role occurring in the interaction and interpenetration of the "Indigenous culture" and the "alien culture." It is similar to the rule of the "mean" in Confucianism. On the one hand, it means that two different cultures form an "overlapping consensus" in cooperative interpretation and mutual construction, and so realize an identity in cultural diversity. Intercultural communication interweaves the complicated relation of sameness and difference in the interaction and mutual interpretation of "indigenous culture" and "alien culture," through modes like complementarity and symmetry, or dissonance and asymmetry. As for lack of communication and extreme dissonance and asymmetry – both represent negative interculturality, and result in estrangement – even conflict – of different cultures. Seeking common points while maintaining difference – "harmony in diversity" – shows rational, positive interculturality as the true end of intercultural communication; that is, realizing the identity of diverse civilizations and promoting the harmonious coexistence and common progress of various civilizations.

Here, let us take an example. The philosophical doctrines of Confucius and Socrates profoundly influence Chinese and Western traditions to this day. Both reflect identity and particularity. Thus, both Chinese and Western philosophical traditions can understand each other, and can realize positive interculturality through intercultural communication.

Confucius (551-479 BCE) and Socrates (469-399 BCE) lived in virtually the same era, and each founded a new type of philosophy with ethics as its core. The doctrine of Confucius initiated the Confucian civilization existing today; the philosophy of Socrates provided the foundation of scientific reason and the humanistic spirit for Western civilization. We might find many similarities between them so as to reflect an identity of two traditions of philosophy and civilization. Here, I only briefly point out three similar points:

A Humanitarian Principle of Philosophy

"Benevolence" (Ren) is the central category that goes through Confucian

philosophical and ethical doctrines. It denotes a natural characteristic; "it is to love all men" and "to overflow in love to all" (*Confucian Analects* 12.22, 1.6). It means that goodness, kindness and fraternity represent true humanity. Benevolence contains the basic principle of being faithful to one's good nature and realizing reciprocity for others, as in his dictum "What you do not want to be done to yourself, do not do to others" (*Analects* 4.15, 15.24) which is a kind of golden rule. The principle of the "Golden Mean" gives a method for attaining benevolence. By the Mean (Zhong Yong), is denoted the fixed principle regulating everything under heaven and the correct way of meditating to achieve a state of equilibrium and harmony.[2] He held that, in practicing the rule of propriety, harmony is to be prized. However, for Confucius, harmony is not some absolute identity, but a complementary unity of diverse things, just as good cuisine consists of various ingredients.

"Goodness" (agathon) is the highest philosophical category of Socrates as well as a humanistic principle of his ethics; this is quite similar to Confucian "Benevolence." Goodness incarnates love, friendship, kindness and benevolence, and reciprocity, which make social life harmonious. "Know thyself"; Socrates expounded on this well-known inscription at the Temple of Delphi, emphasizing "sophrosyne" – and the very essence of "sophrosyne" consists in self-knowledge.[3] Sophrosyne not only implies modesty, kindness, and restraint of lust, but essentially means a kind of wisdom, encouraging everyone to know the nature of man and to examine themselves. In the general, Socrates, like Confucius, puts man in the central position in philosophy.

A Rationalist Epistemology and Theory of Morality

Both Socrates and Confucius hold that reason is the essence of the soul or mind, and that persons must apply their wisdom (i.e., rational thinking in study) to know the universal essence of virtue and to enhance their practice of virtue. Their teachings radiate the glory of reason and morality.

An Ethical Politics and the Social Ideal of Realizing Humanity and Universal Harmony

Both Confucius and Socrates said that morality is the foundation of politics. Rulers should be sages who govern states according to ethical principle, and who provide educated people with a principle of morality so as to build a harmonious and prosperous society benefiting ordinary citizens.

Due to their different historical backgrounds and cultural contexts, there are naturally differences between Confucian and Socratic doctrines – these are the elements reflecting the differentiae between Confucian and

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[2] *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 1.
[3] Plato, *Charmides* 164D—165B.

Western civilization. First, Confucian doctrine attaches importance to patriarchal hierarchy and to the consanguinity of the family; a state is considered an expanded family. Traditional Chinese ethics, as strongly influenced by Confucianism, has the characteristic of holism and an emphasis on community values. Socrates also emphasized public ethics and cultivating the virtues of the city-state, although without insisting on the central value of the family. Second, the constructive method of Confucian philosophical doctrine involves interpreting the meanings of categories in some classical texts through intellectual insight or intuition but also through dialectical reasoning (as implied in the *Book of Changes*); perhaps it could be called a method of classical hermeneutics. This influenced the traditional Chinese mode of thinking. However, Socrates applied his "dialectics" to an exploration into the definitions of virtue, and his discourses on other issues contain a strong measure of logical analysis.

As the sources of two great civilizations – of China and the West – both Confucian and Socratic philosophy and ethical doctrines have similarities and differences. This demonstrates that the philosophical and cultural traditions of every nation have both creative diversity as well as complementarity. Thus, one might increase rational communication by efforts to engage in mutual understanding and cross-fertilization, so as to pursue common cultural prosperity and social progress. Here, one of the key links consists in the attitude towards intercultural communication.

ASSUMING A POSITIVE INTERCULTURAL ATTITUDE

The intercultural attitude is an attitude where human beings focus on the relationships between "indigenous culture" and "alien culture" in their intercultural practical activity. A rational intercultural attitude should comply with an ethical principle of intercultural communication so as to make it successful and effective. In the context of globalization and the challenges of pluralistic cultures, taking a rational intercultural attitude is important, and studies of international ethics related to intercultural communication should be further deepened. Three basic ethical principles of communication might therefore be affirmed.

First, mutual respect. We live in a society where globalization and local context are connected to each other. Mutual respect of national cultural traditions is the primary premise of rational intercultural communication. Diverse cultures are equal; whether the country is a big one or a small one, all should respect the relevant cultural traditions of the other side and acknowledge their important role in maintaining the identity of that national culture. Only by adopting an attitude of mutual respect, which mutual intercultural understanding can do, can we have a peaceful coexistence of world civilizations instead of a clash of civilizations; dialogue instead of antagonisms; harmonious communication instead of repulsion and isolation. Only in this way can we truly realize "harmony in difference" as a form of positive interculturality.

Second, mutual toleration. In addition to respecting alien cultures, rational intercultural communication requires an attitude of tolerance towards that culture. Tolerance is its first requirement and constitutive factor, and it embodies positive interculturality as a virtue of communication. It denotes the bi-directional acceptability and the recognition of the differences of the other side; tolerating the "other" is equal to tolerating the "self." It also means not imposing anything on the "other" that the "other" cannot accept. It just implies the golden rule of Confucius: "What you do not want to be done to yourself, do not do to others." Mutual tolerance instead of revulsion may provide us with a ground for mutual understanding and communication, and engender a healthy and equal dialogue among various cultures and civilizations, instead of antagonism or conflict.

Third, mutual cooperation. This sort of cooperation not only means a coordination in the communicative behavior of one another, but also further denotes the active, harmonious interaction and interpenetration of "indigenous culture" and "alien culture" – a convergence of two horizons, mutual studying and using one another for reference; the mutual absorption of beneficial factors from the other, in order to enrich and develop its own culture and in promoting the common progress of civilizations. Of course, imbibing an alien culture is not some kind of mechanical transplant or graft; otherwise, it could cause rigidity or a rupture in the indigenous culture. Both sides should respectively bring the rational, beneficial factors of the other side into their own contexts, adjust and sublimate them, and make them useful for the development and innovation of their respective cultures, thereby realizing the truly positive interculturality and identity of diverse world civilizations.

Philosophy is the core of culture and the living soul of civilization, and it plays an important role in the process of world civilizations. In the age of globalization, one important role of philosophy – and its historical mission – consists in two mutually related features: first, strengthening philosophical studies on intercultural communication; second, promoting the rational communication of diverse philosophical traditions. We philosophers today must undertake the important responsibility of inheriting and developing world civilizations, and in promoting their common progress, through intercultural communication.

Chinese philosophical circles, including the Institute of Philosophy of the CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), have also been paying increased attention to intercultural studies on the different philosophical traditions in the world, and they have been undertaking a number of academic exchanges with philosophers of many countries, in both Asia and the West. In the last two decades, research in China on western philosophical traditions has far exceeded work done in the past, and it has attached importance to both grasping the integral and evolutionary process of philosophy from ancient Greece to modern Europe and America, and following studies of new trends and changes in contemporary western

philosophy. Scholars both in and outside of the Institute of Philosophy, CASS, have jointly written and published a voluminous *A History of Western Philosophy* (8 volumes, 11 books, amounting to over 6 million Chinese characters), which displays the understanding and interpretation of the whole of western philosophy from the academic horizon of Chinese scholars. Chinese scholars are currently conducting research on the history of the communication between Chinese and western philosophies, on the relations between traditional Chinese philosophy and the philosophical traditions of other Asian countries including Vietnam, India, Korea, and Japan, and on Islamic-Arabic philosophy. Such studies and exchanges have enabled various philosophical traditions to learn from each other – by appreciating the strong points and by recognizing their respective weakness – and have therefore allowed Chinese scholars to imbibe the finest fruits of other civilizations, and to rethink the process of world civilizations as revealed in both contemporary western and Asian philosophies.

Institute of Philosophy
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Beijing, China

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUILDING GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

TRAN NGUYEN VIET

Today, high speed technology and the multiple modes of cultural communication have become ever more systemized. The development of mass media has contributed to reducing the limitations of communication and interpersonal exchange across space and time. Yet these, together with other factors, have also led to the appearance of global problems; in turn, these problems have changed the circumstances of life. The problems caused by contradictions in the forms of social cooperation are the same as the conditions of their integration in space and time. The understanding of global problems in term of their consequences is influenced by political, economic and socio-cultural conflicts which require a global consciousness of the particular features of human existence. In addition, a new global conception of the world at the level of ideology requires a serious effort by every state, region, and, indeed, the whole world.

It is obvious that the influence of globalization on developing countries, including Vietnam, is increasing and has both positive and negative aspects – i.e., advantages and challenges. To understand these correctly, each country needs to pay attention to its individual and social consciousness.

First of all, political consciousness should be transformed to correspond with general trend of globalization. Even political institutions should be transformed in order to establish a new standpoint of international security and national sovereignty, and to apply international standards of law in social life. Vietnam should begin to build its own global consciousness, so that when it participates in the globalizing process, the Vietnamese people will have sufficient ability to cope with and, together with other peoples of the world, to resolve effectively the global problems which have been coming and which can be expected for the future.

Consciousness is the state of (human) mental life expressing subjective experiences of the external world, events and personal life. Contemporary philosophy has concluded that self-consciousness is a process in which the self realizes itself together with its knowledge of the world. In other words, self-consciousness occurs when the human person approaches both the external world and itself through its consciousness. Modern investigation of consciousness in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and other human sciences finds that

The individual self is a historical-cultural product. Thus, the Self creates a unity of consciousness which did not exist before. The unity of consciousness is defined neither through the operation of biology, nor through the special features of the brain or mental states. The unity is defined by the Self as the subject who has responsibility for its actions and deeds. Therefore, the unification of consciousness and Self is constructed in concrete historical–cultural conditions. The contemporary socio-cultural condition is a danger for the unification of the Self and the consciousness.[1]

First of all, the action of consciousness bears personality, but inside consciousness there is also the content of each person and social group. As one's needs and purposes shape a definite content of consciousness, there is a development of thought and idea within the subject. In such a context, consciousness does not come to bear personality, but sociality.

Social consciousness is necessary for the operation of separate social groups, but also of the whole of society. Nevertheless, the social system should operate stably when the content of social consciousness, on a broad scale, is generally reproduced in accord with that system. In the contemporary global context, the consciousness of a definite social community should not be simply reproduced but adapted to meet the needs of the general objective trend – this is communication and integration. The reproduction and reconstruction of a group or nation's social consciousness certainly must be enlarged from the previous small scale to become a global consciousness.

What, then, are the particular features of global consciousness?

A first fundamental feature of global consciousness is the reflection of the supremacy of human values above those of region, nation and class. It is necessary to distinguish the connotation of values in order to define the value of the whole.

The Russian *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, states that:

Value is a concept used to define, firstly, the active or passive meaning of a certain object, not according to its existential nature and qualitative aspect (meaning values with a tangible character); secondly, the aspect of norm, evaluation with prior decisions on the phenomenon of social consciousness (meaning subjective values). Tangible values consist of: the good and the bad in nature, natural choices and spontaneous decision; the value of consumable products of labor (general speaking, the necessary things,

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[1] *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (4 vols) (Moskva: Mysl' Publishing House, 2000-2001), p. 591 (in Russian).

useful for life); the good and bad sides of society that belong to social phenomena; the progressive or reactionary meanings of historical events; the cultural heritage of the past manifested in the form of the contemporary generation's property; the meaning of scientific truth; good and evil in human moral action; aesthetic features of natural and social objects as well as works of art. Subjective values consist of: social institutions, instructions and interdictions, purposes and projects reflected under the forms of conceptions of norms (good and evil, justice, beauty, the ugly, the meaning of history and the human role in decisions of ideals, norms, and principles of action).[2]

With this definition, which provides us with a more definite account of the concept of "value," we are led to two main questions: Is there a duality of value and of human value? Does every meaning become a value?

All phenomena occurring in social life that are evil or show social injustice or political reaction are considered as anti-values. However, sometimes for one people a phenomenon is considered evil, while for another people it is good, and vice versa. Therefore, defining what 'value' is should not start from some general explanation, but with s description of its benefit to human existence and to sustainable development and social progress. For us, a popular definition of value emerges from its positive meaning, not from its dual meaning. However, at any rate, the negative meaning continues and, more than ever before, global consciousness should orient itself to the value of humanity as a whole. The value of humanity as a whole is the most universal value, which ought to be respected by every one and every nation on the globe. It should be praised above national and regional ones.

If ignored, global consciousness would lose its value – but, of course, global consciousness must be created. The difficulty here is that the world community is still multi-racial, and its contradictions – caused by its multi-racial character – will never be thoroughly resolved. The issue is how to resolve the contradictions, which could become conflicts, and threaten human life on the planet.

Evaluating the value of humanity above national and regional values will uncover the noble ideal and purpose of human life. However, it is not easy to achieve it; it even seems to be an illusion in our complex contemporary world. Developing countries, where many matters such as human rights need to be realized, seem to lack the good will needed to resolve global problems. In addition, political and economical confrontations among superpowers are going on; a fierce contradiction

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[2] Vol. 5, published in 1970.

between the South and the North is in danger of becoming a dangerous conflict; there is tension in class and race relations in various countries and regions. Global consciousness cannot abolish all the objective contradictions, but at least it should put then aside to ensure constructive cooperation from all nations and states in resolving the global problems which threaten all of humanity.

There are often objective contradictions which do not depend on the will or consciousness of human beings. What is needed, then, is that all of us on this globe surmount these contradictions, discover the principles of unification, and seek the best solutions for achieving common consciousness on these global problems.

Unfortunately, the principle *"Better that the whole world die, than to lose justice!"* has passed away; ultimately, justice is what is just for all humans. Otherwise, in facing the present dangers, obeying this principle would be a sin. Justice, as with other categories regarding social life, is only relative. To make it absolute, or praise it more than human fortune, is inhumane. First of all, one must save the world as it is. This is the most important task to be undertaken by global consciousness. In this sense, recent global consciousness is sometimes called new political thought. Briefly speaking, global consciousness needs to become popular; it is not only for professional politicians.

The world is a perfectly organic whole. Hence, it is wrong to regard any bad individual action as so small and simple that it cannot be harmful to others. It is action which influences the relationships between humans and nature, man and society, among communities, and so on.

A second fundamental feature of global consciousness is that it needs to be readjusted fundamentally in the self-consciousness of each nation, state, and even individual. In the past, a universal political mentality or the feelings of the citizens of the world were often ignored or even rejected; now they have become an organic element of political culture.

That is why there is a new stage in the relationship between individualism and collectivism, which comes to be a social value considered as the practical foundation of human life. Therefore, the advantages of global collectivism are asserted more and more. This is opposed to individualism, which has predominated in nations and states in the past. Now, the inescapable concern is to save the world. Global solidarity, even in elements of consciousness, needs to include all of humanity. Such change has come to be a common concern of both individualism and collectivism. However, as we move in this direction, there should not be so much restrictive pressure of the collectivity upon the individual.

A third fundamental feature of global consciousness is characterized by the increasing standards of science. Obviously, global problems cannot be solved simply by "healthy thinking" or by skillfully avoiding the negative aspects of the application of the latest achievements of the sciences. The combination of complicated global problems can be resolved only by applying the entire synthesis of scientific knowledge.

Concretely, global consciousness needs to utilize the important conclusions of the interdisciplinary sciences. On this point, the following approaches can help:

First, one should not interfere with the development of complex organized systems (for example, the system of "nature-society"); it is better to understand how such systems develop naturally, and how these systems should operate smoothly. This idea was reflected in Taoist philosophy – that man should respect and strictly obey natural laws, and treat them as the supreme order. However, the theory of *"wu-wei"* (non action) proposed by Taoism should not be followed in the modern world, because, in the course of his existence, man has changed nature for his long term or short term benefits. Today, humans realize that the losses resulting from 'non action' are more problematic than the gains; in particular, 'non action' is more dangerous for global conditions. The need to promote the tendencies and evolution of complex organized systems is the reason why studying the self-organization of systems is the most important duty of the modern sciences.

Second, theoretically, complex systems always contain some contradictions in their manner of development. Therefore, after understanding the projects that may lead to an apocalypse – the New Testament even foretells a "doomsday of the world" – there is need to understand the application of progressive technical and scientific achievements, and to establish a project for continuous, sustainable development in accordance with human needs and without damage to nature.

In contrast to religious belief, scientific thought is founded on experiment and experience. The achievements of modern technology and the sciences allow us to have very accurate forecasts of various complicated organized fields and systems. But, for them to develop in a good sustainable direction for the benefit of humanity and nature, we require a regulation of our ways of thinking and doing, as world citizens facing global problems.

Third, in order to optimize the complicated systems and manage them, force should not be used, but rather linkages of chains of actions; small actions affect the complicated system weakly but accurately and effectively. Consciousness in general, and global consciousness in particular, should contribute to small actions, which are so precise as to exceed and go beyond individual consciousness as well as that of nations.

Global consciousness should come to a firm recognition that the role of philosophy in establishing global consciousness is not a small one. Philosophy is a world outlook – the synthesis of human views on the world in general, and their relation with the world in particular. The essence of philosophy is expressed through reflection on the general issues of the world and of humanity as a system. Therefore, it is clear that the role of philosophy in building global consciousness manifests itself in its two fundamental functions: world outlook and methodology.

The most important function of the world-outlook is the *humane* one. Philosophy not only serves to help man to have a correct understanding

of himself – namely, the meaning of his own life and his relation with the external world – but also to help him decide the direction of humanity and society, and indeed the whole world's action, in order to avoid mistakes in the relationship between society and nature.

The second important function of the world-outlook is the *socio-axiological* one. This is the function of constructing values – specifically, studying the conceptions of value, such as the true, the good, the beautiful and the just, and then proposing conceptions of our social ideal. According to P.I. Novgorodtsev (1866-1924), one of those who established the school of jurisdictional philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century, the source of the social ideal is the dynamic human personality. In "On Social Ideal," he wrote that "A certain principle of personality needs to relate to the whole of human thought; to the solidarity of the world ... The social ideal should be treated as the universal principle of freedom."[3] For us, this view should be considered as crucial on the key role of philosophy in establishing global consciousness.

A further important function is *cultural education.* Constructing personality and human culture as a whole is essential to the orientation towards *the true, the good, and the beautiful.* Philosophy can help man to avoid the superficiality and insularity of everyday thinking, and to comprehend correctly the contradictions and changes happening in the world, in order to find out a way to resolve them effectively.

Finally, another indispensable function is the *informative and reflective.* One of the most important duties of philosophy is to shape the world outlook in accord with the standards of the modern sciences, historical reality and human insight. As a science, philosophy is a dynamic and complex system of information, constructed to collect, analyze and handle information in order to discover additional new information.

Methodology also relates in fundamental ways to science by its function of suggesting, co-ordinating, and associating an epistemology-logic.

All scientific method exhibits an epistemology and logic. In relation to the methods of the other sciences, philosophical methodology has the task of establishing logical relationships among groups of methods. All sciences need logic, epistemology and a general understanding of the methodology of consciousness. Such a function is undertaken by dialectics as logic. It discovers the means for reflecting completely and accurately on objects in the world, which are continuously developing and changing.

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[3] P.I. Novgorodtsev, *On Social Ideal* (Moscow, 1991), p. 111. [For a related discussion, see Igor I. Yevlampiev, "Metaphysical Premises and Types of Liberal Ideology: Liberalism as the End and Liberalism as the Way," in the online *Proceedings of the XX World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, Massachusetts, 1998*; http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Meta/MetaYevl.htm -- Ed. note.]

In brief, the future of humankind is an important issue for a world outlook and methodology, and social forecasting is the model of thought for continuous human development; this is *the* philosophical insight on the future. Theoretical and factual foundations are essential for global consciousness. As humanity faces urgent global problems, philosophy is – more than ever – not only a specialist activity, but also an indispensable spiritual foundation for resolving problems.

Department of the History of Vietnamese Philosophy
Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

CHAPTER XI

RELATIONS AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

NGUYEN TAN HUNG

By indicating the essence of the contradictions between cultures and civilizations, the differences between religions and cultures, as well as the causes of confrontations among various religions, ethnic groups, and national communities, I wish to claim that the development of cultures and civilizations not only prevents the widening of conflicts between social communities, but serves as a condition for bringing nations and people closer. The appropriate solution to problems existing within the relations among cultures and civilizations in the context of globalization requires a philosophical approach, which will show both the positive and negative aspects of a process – acquiring the achievements of human cultures and civilizations and simultaneously preserving and enhancing the identity of national cultures.

THE NATURE OF CONFLICTS AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS

There often exist *certain conflicts* among different cultures and civilizations. The essence of these conflicts can be seen in the differences in their views on life, moral codes, customs, habits, faiths and so forth. Every nation tends to protect its own long-standing culture against the invasion of foreign cultures. For example, some international religious organizations insist *internationalizing* their religious organizations by fair means or foul, including despicable ways such as material bribery. Therefore, many countries have mapped out some effective measures to enhance their *national beliefs* and prevent religious invasions. Faced with the attack of harmful cultures on the life of communities through the Internet and tourism, Asian nations – including nations under the influence of Indo-Chinese and Islamic cultures – have worked out certain measures to deal with the negative influences from the West, especially those of "the sexual revolution."

At first glance, it seems that cultures and civilizations worldwide represent various religions and faiths: Western civilization is Christian, Indian civilization is Hindu, Chinese civilization is Confucian, Arabic civilization is Islamic, and so forth. Due to the existence of irreconcilable conflicts among these religions, there exist conflicts among different

civilizations which cannot be solved by peaceful means. Therefore, violence will necessarily occur.

Actually, *religions and civilizations are different.* Civilizations have often been closely linked to beliefs and religions, but that is true only in certain historical periods. Civilizations did not originate from religions but from the development of productive forces and science. In various countries and continents, human communities have built up their cultures and civilizations in the context of religions and beliefs, but these have not been the originating causes of their cultures and civilizations.

In recent centuries, people have realized clearly that the development of civilizations, both in the East and the West, can be distinguished from the presence of religious influences. The overthrow of religious domination occurred in the English and French Revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. These events liberated humanity from the so-called Dark Ages. Bourgeois and, later, socialist revolutions have gradually secularized states. Despite being under the influence of Hinduism and Islam, some Asian countries have also struggled for secular freedom. For example, India is resolute in building up a secular state; recently Nepal's parliament has limited the power of the King (who used to be known as the incarnation of the mighty Hindu god, Vishnu); in Saudi Arabia, people have risen up to demand the disarming of religious police (who often abuse their power).

Bloody conflicts between religions, ethnic groups, national communities, and so on, in our view, are not the clashes of civilizations (as S. P. Huntington claims[1]). Their real causes are egoistic political interests of various classes and parties, and obsolete economic and ideological conditions of some social communities.

In defending the egoistic interests of large economic corporations or certain social minorities, and regardless of the national interest, some countries, with their bombs and toxic chemicals, have brought immense suffering to many other nations. As a result, conflicts among different nations have occurred. As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels predicted in their *Communist Manifesto*:

> In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another will also be put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.[2]

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[1] S. P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, N^0 3, Summer 1993.

[2] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Ch. 2, in *Marx-Engels Complete Works* (Hanoi: The Political Publishing House, 1995), Vol. 4, p. 624.

On the other hand, living in socially obsolete conditions, people of certain religious faiths – even people of different sects within the same faith – and certain ethnic groups and communities are often short on *tolerance* toward people of other faiths, ethnic groups and communities. Many extreme political organizations have made full use of that fact to establish an army of the discontented who can be used for hostile and terrorist activities. On the contrary, people living in civilized societies tend to be more tolerant toward people with religious or ethnic backgrounds other than their own. Therefore, the development of culture and civilization will contribute to checking violent and hostile conflicts.

In our opinion, the real cause of conflicts and wars in the present world is not the clash of civilizations, but (1), the contradictions of political interests, which are expressed directly or indirectly in the form of economic interests of various classes, nations and parties; and (2), the extreme views and hostile actions of some political organizations. The development of cultures and civilizations not only prevents the widening of conflicts between social communities, but also serves as the condition for closing the gap between different nations.

RELATIONS AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION

Like any process, globalization has *both positive and negative aspects.* Therefore, there exist contradictory approaches to the role of globalization.

Some scholars reject globalization and identify it with capitalism or Americanization. There have been a number of anti-globalization demonstrations worldwide. Many authors use very critical terms to describe the negative consequences brought about by globalization: "Predatory globalization," "criminal globalization," "cultural hegemonism," and the like.

Richard Falk, a professor from Princeton University in the USA, points out (in his *Predatory Globalization: A Critique*) that globalization brings more and more negative outcomes to humanity.[3] John Gray, a professor of European thought at the London School of Economics (in his *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*), criticizes the American administration's effort to impose their delusions on other people.[4] Mark Findlay, the Vice Director of the Institute of Criminology and Head of the Law School at the University of Sydney, Australia (in his *The Globalisation of Crime: Understanding the Transitional Relationships of Crime in a Global Context*), deeply analyzes the consequences of globalization, specifically relating it to the increase in transnational crimes. According to

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[3] Richard Falk, *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (Polity Press, 1999), pp. 105, 135.

[4] John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London: The New Press, 1998), p. 222.

him, drug and weapons smuggling, prostitution, environmental destruction, terrorism, and so on, have not been limited to national borders but have expanded wider and wider so that they now constitute international networks.[5]

On the other hand, authors focusing on the positive aspects of globalization show that globalization serves as the condition for obsolete economies and cultures to democratize their politics and promote labor and the exchange of goods among nations around the world. People from one country can use and consume the products, foods, medications, and clothes produced by other nations. The whole world can share the same TV programs, movies, music masterpieces, and so on. It means that high-quality goods made in one country will have the chance to be available internationally.

Globalization in general and economic globalization in particular should be approached from a philosophical perspective, in other words, from a comprehensive and essential approach. Both the negative and positive sides of globalization should be investigated.

Globalization is a tendency following the laws of development of human society. Marx and Engels, in their theory of communism, saw globalization as a way to liberate humanity from local and national boundaries, to integrate world civilizations, and to enjoy all the material and spiritual achievements of humanity. As they wrote in *The German Ideology*,

> Only then will the separate individuals be liberated from
> the various national and local barriers, be brought into
> practical connection with the material and intellectual
> production of the whole world and be put in a position to
> acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of
> the whole earth (the creations of man).[6]

In cultural terms, globalization is a process of closing the gap between cultures, which have been quite different from each other.

Cultural globalization does not mean the elimination of national cultures in order to adopt a foreign culture which will serve as a 'standard' for all countries in the world. Actually, there exists no such standard culture for all nations. On the contrary, globalization is a widening of cultural borders from the local and national to the international. Globalization creates favorable conditions for a nation to introduce the unique features and products of its national culture to the world and, at the same time, selectively acquire the cultural goods of other nations in order to enrich its own traditional culture.

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[5] Mark Findlay, *The Globalization of Crime: Understanding Transnational Relationships in a Global Context* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 219.

[6] Marx and Engels, *Complete Works*, Vol. 3, p. 53.

Globalization is a process of formation, development and reinforcement of cultural unity at both the national and international levels. Simultaneously, it is also a process of diversification of subcultures of local and ethnic groups. As a result, globalization is, on the one hand, a process of sustaining, reinforcing, modernizing and promoting national cultures and, on the other hand, a process in which a nation acquires the goods of other nations to enrich its national culture.

Cultural identity consists in maintaining the longstanding cultural elements which have created the spiritual foundation for the existence and development of a whole nation. Therefore, these elements should be protected and cannot be replaced hastily by elements of foreign cultures during the process of economic and cultural integration. The material, spiritual, and cultural heritages should be preserved and honored, not only for the sake of a nation but also for the sake of all of humankind. It is evident that many people, including politicians, scientists, anthropologists, and the like from civilized nations, have been interested in studying, researching and enjoying the values of the traditional cultures of other nations, including those of less advanced societies. A culturally diversified world would really be an ideal and a good living environment for humanity.

Globalization is, however, a double-edged sword. It brings about many technological advances and other positive things, but it also carries with it a number of negative and harmful features.

In Vietnam, for example, there is music – that can be described only as "perverted" – which has been publicly broadcast, and even included in the "on request" programs of our local media. I would say that our students and young people are not interested in the lyrics when they listen to foreign songs. The music itself may be "beautiful," but the lyrics are rather "depraved." They tend to stir up and encourage short-lived love relationships, aiming mainly to satisfy merely sexual desire in a consumer-oriented culture. There also exists a countless number of pornographic websites on the Internet. Once they have indulged in these websites, some young people cannot or do not want to leave them. A wide range of pornographic images and videos have been distributed freely or commercially on the Internet. In recent years especially, one may find several websites in the Vietnamese language that celebrate sexual perversion, and where erotic stories promoting selfish lust are available. In response to this, there have been efforts to filter and prevent such products and documents, but given their wide presence throughout the mass media and the Internet, it is a great challenge to accomplish much.

In conclusion, the philosophical approach to relations among cultures and civilizations in the process of globalization shows us both positive and negative sides of the same process. The positive aspects of globalization in the development of national cultures should be considered and valued. Although contradictions among cultures and civilizations have not been the causes of the ongoing bloody conflicts in the world, the detection of the negative aspects of cultural globalization will help a nation

to focus actively on the positive features in the cultures and civilizations of other nations. This will help nations to enrich and develop their own cultures as well as to prevent negative elements of foreign cultures and civilizations from impacting seriously on their cultures.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE PRESENT PERIOD OF GLOBALIZATION

NGUYEN TRONG CHUAN

Today, humanity is witnessing huge and complex changes which impact deeply not only upon human beings and society, but upon nature as well. Rapid social changes have caused the sudden collapse of many things which were believed to have been well founded; even the new and not-yet-fully-formed have been replaced by the newer.

These changes, together with the strong growth and development of the world economy and the outstanding scientific and technological achievements of the era of globalization, pave the way for new developments in many areas of contemporary life which strongly impact not only national cultures but human civilization in general. Modern developments in the fields of information technology, mass media and transportation seem to make the Earth smaller, and have transformed it into "a Global Village." In this context, some think that only economics, modern science and technology can help human beings overcome difficulties, be emancipated from the challenges in their lives, and satisfy their everyday as well as their long-standing needs and desires. Philosophy, then, has had its day.

Is this true?

People know that the world today would have been very different without economic globalization and the development of modern science and technology. However, to say that this is also the solution to our problems is superficial. It is obvious that in our global age, humanity's achievements, especially in the fields of economics, science and technology, are the driving forces which promote rapid social development and closer ties among nations, as well as improve human power to discover and exploit nature. But individual human beings and societies as a whole face also unpredictable threats and risks because of the use and especially the abuse of the products of their own achievements. Globalization is, on the one hand, a great and undeniable achievement of science, technology and economic development. However, on the other hand, it also contributes to the wholescale destruction of nature and contains latent dangers for humanity.

Given the achievements of science and technology and the place of social practices, human beings are able to discover many solutions to contemporary problems. However, as Francis Bacon (1561-1626) said, what human beings know is insignificant compared to what they have yet to know. Humanity has to continue to look for solutions to long-standing

challenges as well as for answers to the very new questions raised by the process of globalization. Such questions are: what is the world? What is the status of human beings in this world? What is the meaning of human life in a world of competition and risk? Who can determine the destiny of humanity? Will human beings be able to escape catastrophes caused by their destruction of nature? Is it possible for individual human beings and nations to be self-determining in the context of the ongoing globalization and the tendency towards a deeper interdependence among nations worldwide? What is happiness in this unstable world? Why are some nations so rich while others are so poor? Will human beings be able to eradicate injustice and establish social justice and fairness? What will human life be in the future? How can we prevent the spread of pandemics in the age of globalization? Is it true that the evil is so deeply rooted in human nature that there can be no cure for it? How can tolerance prevail, so as to prevent or reduce inhuman mass violence? What are the limits of human freedom and what are the legal and moral responsibilities that human beings should have for societies and their fellow creatures? Can there be economic growth and scientific and technological development without causing harmful effects to the development of human beings, society, and nature? How can under-developed nations such as Vietnam avoid lagging further behind economically, stabilize social development, and catch up with the developed nations? How can we make optimal use of the resources and advantages brought about by globalization? How can we create driving forces for national development in the age of globalization without losing the national values passed down by previous generations? And so on.

Obviously, from the social perspective, we find many paradoxes; they are easy to discover but not so easy to resolve. Concretely, the world becomes ever richer in terms of the gross product and wealth it creates. With the vast scope of new knowledge, some societies become stronger in terms of material resources, while many other countries cannot escape being underdeveloped. Many people – not only those from underdeveloped countries but also from the wealthiest nations – have little access to the basic social services, live in poverty, or suffer from food-shortage. For example, according to a survey conducted in 2002 in the USA, about 33 million people – including 13 million children – or almost one in ten households, experience hunger or risk of hunger. 3.2 percent of US households (i.e., 8.5 million people including 2.9 million children) frequently skip meals or eat too little.[1] A half of the world population, some 3 billion people, lives on two US dollars a day and 1.2 billion people live on less than 1 US dollar a day. This situation is caused by the fact that 82% of the world's income belongs to 20% of the world richest, while 20% of world poorest have access to 1.4% of the world's income.

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[1] "Hunger and Poverty Facts," p. 1 (http://www.worldhungeryear.org/info_center/just_facts.asp).

So, speaking in Marxist terms, in our time the wealth of the world continues to be accumulated in one side of the world while the poverty grows on the other side. Generally speaking, in the world, the richest 20% receives 70 times more than the poorest 20%.[2]

Humanity is witnessing another paradox. On the on hand, the world is striving to build up and implement poverty-eradication programs in many underdeveloped and developing countries. But on the other hand, developed countries are creating poverty by mapping out protective policies, such as regulations to depress the price of agricultural products and materials originating from poor countries, and preferential tariffs for capital investment from poorer countries to richer countries in order to attract needed investment. This overexerts the very limited capital of poor countries Gradually and imperceptibly, such action has made poor countries ever poorer and more dependent on rich countries. In the present age of globalization, rather than encountering advantages and benefits, poor countries and peoples face an increasing number of threats, challenges, and injustices, and are not yet strong enough to escape many difficulties. That kind of situation cannot be overcome by the means of science or high technology, but only by social struggles – or, in other words, through social transformation, renovation and change in the world in the way Marx has affirmed.

It is also obvious that, as collected data have shown, in the past few decades nature has become increasingly destructive. One might say that nature has taken revenge on humanity because of its abusive, destructive and unrestrained exploitation of natural resources by the most advanced production methods and technologies. The environment has deteriorated and natural resources have been exhausted. Water resources are more and more the reason of conflicts among countries and regions. What is happening to man and his environment in the present age of globalization confirms what Marx predicted more than a century ago, namely that capitalism has destroyed its own foundations in humanity and nature.

The above-mentioned problems constitute a very small part of the problems faced by humanity today. But they are problems that philosophy cannot ignore; indeed, the solutions to these problems cannot be found without philosophy. This task of revealing the causes and finding out solutions for these conflicting situations and global paradoxes is beyond the scope and competence of science and technology. Philosophy and the social sciences are capable and responsible for dealing with that kind of task.

The solutions to the abovementioned problems will gradually open the way to redefining our attitudes and perspectives on contemporary life and to reorganizing individual lifestyles in response to new conditions and circumstances. The solutions to these problems, which may seem to be

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[2] I. Serageldin, "The Rice Genome: World Poverty and Hunger – the Challenge for Science," *Science*, Vol. 296. no. 5565 (5 April 2002), pp. 54-58. See http://www.sciencemag.org/ cgi/content/full/ 296/5565/54).

unrealistic but indeed are of utmost necessity to man and his fate, constitute the inescapable mission of philosophy. For Kant, philosophy must clarify the problems previously unrecognized by man. They "are problems intimately related to all human beings"; the ultimate end of philosophy is "nothing more than the whole destiny of man" because "all are only problems of man." In other words, philosophy must help man be aware of his status and live his life in a more human manner.

We can see, then, that the expansion of knowledge in general and of philosophical knowledge in particular constitutes the condition enabling humans to discover answers to their problems and serves as a foundation for scientific worldviews. Another important task of philosophy, which had pointed out by Marx but had not been worked out by pre-Marxist philosophies, is to change the world.[3] This means that the knowledge which humans have, can be a component of a comprehensive worldview only when it permeates life and is transformed into a belief and a driving force. It is to be implemented in human actions that help men define the purpose and ideals of their lives, and then to contribute to those changes that serve human life.

Similarly, in one's action, often one has to answer similar questions, such as how to achieve the best results, whether one's action is right or wrong, how one can find the truth, and so on. Since ancient times, philosophical knowledge has not only helped man enhance his cognitive faculty but also strengthened his capability for action. This is because, as Kant said, reason is not only the *best cognitive faculty* but also the *faculty which determines human action*; by providing answers to the abovementioned questions, philosophy plays a very important *methodological* role. Philosophy itself provides man with views, guiding principles and methods to conduct his cognitive and practical actions effectively. Descartes said that he would rather not look for the truth than look for it without a method.

In the present context of a globalizing world, crowded by overlapping and interlacing connections, the cognitive method of materialistic dialectics helps people perceive more objectively, comprehensively and concretely the spheres of social life in the contemporary world. This method also helps them avoid subjectivity, one-sidedness and rigidity, dogmatism, as well as inconsistency and vagueness. Philosophy helps people to *orient themselves correctly in their action, and reinforces their determination to act in order to achieve their goal in the best way* through providing a general perspective and a correct interpretation of the tendencies and changes in the world, society and themselves.

Globalization simultaneously brings about tremendous changes throughout the world, and creates opportunities for underdeveloped

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[3] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Complete Works* (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 1995), Vol. 3, p. 12.

countries to grasp, develop and integrate themselves into global politics and economics. In order to grasp the opportunities – and, more than that, to realize them in the context of the quickly changing world – a nation must have human resources that are of a high-quality and which can adapt quickly to novel circumstances. Such 'resources' cannot be taken for granted; people need to be provided not only with solid professional skills and knowledge but also with an appropriate worldview and values. Philosophy can help people to build up a rigorous yet flexible way of thinking, which can be used for self-reflection and for understanding both their potential capabilities and their limitations. This will enable them to better themselves, to grasp appropriately and correctly the objective situation, as well as to be able to deal with rapid social changes.

Philosophy also plays an important and yet multivariant role in the process of industrialization and modernization – and it has done so in Vietnam in the age of globalization. I would like to focus only on a few points. For example, in determining appropriate steps in order to achieve further development, we cannot ignore the need for a retrospective look, an analysis of the contemporary world and especially predictions concerning the rapid and sometimes contradictory changes characteristic of the age of globalization. To look into the past is to view and draw lessons from experience – both the experience of success and the experience of failure – in our country and others.

The way philosophy learns from experience is different from ordinary ways, for philosophy draws broader and deeper lessons, in order to find out what is necessary in experience, as well as to discern those factors determining the whole process. It also draws out what is specific in our experience and the particulars of the age in which we live in order to avoid mechanistic applications to Vietnam of measures employed in other nations. An objective analysis of the present tendencies of globalization reveals that, in order to develop, countries must be open to, and integrate into, the world. In practicing a policy of isolation and separation from the world, developing countries face the risk of deepening the gap with developed countries and so that they will never be able to catch up

On the other hand, in order to be successful in industrialization and modernization in the age of globalization, a nation must draw on shared human values of the past as well as on values of the modern age, without abandoning its national identity or violating its traditional values. Here we can see the crucial role of philosophy and the social sciences because the conclusions drawn by them are not only a summarization of historical values but also an analysis of the situation in the present world. If we examine the process of globalization, common human, social, global, democratic, ecological and moral values have been affirmed while, at the same time, national, class-bound, individual values have not been excluded. Family stability plays an important role in the maintenance of the stability of society; the erosion of the family in the process of industrialization – which is a common phenomenon in many countries – correlatively has

harmful effects. This is but one illustration of the importance of the preservation and promotion of traditional values as part of national development even in new conditions.

At the same time, in the age of globalization, as the process of industrialization and modernization begins, it is necessary to take into account not only its economic effectiveness, but also its possible ecological and, especially, its social consequences. This must be done in such a way that economic effectiveness does not eliminate social life and particularly that negative social consequences be reduced as far as possible. To foresee all negative consequences is a very difficult task, but we need to try to do so if we are not to pay very dearly for it later.

In other words, in order to carry out industrialization and modernization in our country in the age of globalization we need a philosophical approach rather than just an economic or technical one. We ought not to think that a high rate of economic growth and wealth will lead to an automatic reduction and elimination of social problems, especial social evils. Leaving everything to economic development, ignoring social problems and the preservation of traditional cultural values cause serious threats, not only to national values but even to the lives of ordinary people – to each family and to society – in the present and in the future.

So far, in both the national and global arena, philosophy has not lost its status. Philosophy not only helps people to acquire an appropriate view of the world, but also provides them with the ability to evaluate present changes as well as to suggest options, directions and solutions to contemporary problems. Philosophy reveals the paradoxes people are facing in the context of globalization and, at the same time, contributes to the solutions of those paradoxes. The function of philosophy consists both in explaining the world and in contributing to changing the world for the sake of human happiness and well-being.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

PART III

MULTIPLE TRADITIONS

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPIRITUAL TURN IN PHILOSOPHY

TU WEIMING

The Enlightenment can be perceived as a cultural movement, as an ideal for the human community yet to be fully realized, or as a mentality characteristic of the modernistic *modus operandi* throughout the world. The focus of this paper is the Enlightenment mentality, arguably the most powerful ideology in world history. Both socialism and capitalism grew out of the Enlightenment; so did market economy, democratic polity, and civil society. As the advanced economies move into the "knowledge society," the dominance of science – especially information and communication technologies – will be even more pronounced. Max Weber's prophetic view that modern society will be controlled by experts and managers seems self-evident, and the rise of technocracy in the military, governments, multinational corporations, social institutions, and even non-governmental organizations seems inevitable. Furthermore, the underlying values (such as liberty, rationality, human rights, due process in law, and the dignity, independence, and autonomy of the individual) are widely recognized as universal values. The rhetoric of the Enlightenment mentality, suggesting that there is only one option for the future of the human community, seems persuasive.

However, the Enlightenment mentality is also seriously flawed. Rooted in anthropocentrism, dictated by instrumental rationality, and driven by aggressive individualism, it is a form of secularism which suffers from inattention to religion and to nature. Without a fundamental restructuring of its worldview, the Enlightenment can hardly provide guidance for human survival, let alone for human flourishing. A comprehensive reflection on and critique of the Enlightenment, especially the pervasive mentality it has engendered throughout the world, is in order. Building upon the insights of feminists, environmentalists, postmodernists, communitarians, and religionists, I intend to offer a humanistic vision, both as a sympathetic understanding of the contemporary significance of "the age of reason" and as a judicious assessment of the blind spots of this de-natured and de-spirited mentality. The purpose is to explore the authentic possibility of a new world order based on a continuous and sustained dialogue among civilizations.

It is vitally important to note that in the *cultural tradition* of the modern intellectual, the Enlightenment mentality is so ingrained in the life of the mind that *traditional culture* has been relegated to the background, as merely a distant echo in the habits of the heart. Since the struggle to develop a full-fledged market economy, a publicly accountable democratic polity, and a vibrant civil society is far from complete, the political and cultural

elite in societies such as China is committed to the Enlightenment project. It is hardly ready to go beyond the Enlightenment mentality. Indeed, in its developmental strategy, it takes the traditional Western model as the point of departure. As the widely accepted rhetoric goes, for a developing society it is too much of a luxury to harken back to its cultural roots for inspiration. Yet, ironically, the spirit of the time demands that, for the survival and flourishing of the global community, it is imperative for intellectuals, including Chinese intellectuals, to go beyond the Enlightenment mentality. In a historical and comparative civilizational perspective, the surest and soundest way to accomplish this challenging enterprise is to tap all the spiritual resources available to the global community in order to formulate a humanistic vision which can transcend anthropocentrism, instrumental rationality, and aggressive individualism without losing sight of the liberating ideas and practices of the Enlightenment, as a movement, an ideal, and a mentality.

The upsurge of interest in the Axial-age civilizations symbolizes a "spiritual turn" in philosophy. The "epistemological" and "linguistic" turns have been successful in making the academic study of philosophy in the English-speaking world a truly respectable professional discipline. However, by consigning aesthetics, ethics, and philosophy of religion to the marginal position of analytical concerns, professional academic philosophers have, for decades, consciously or inadvertently confined themselves to the cocoons of technical competence. Not surprisingly, their style of philosophizing does not have much relevance to issues defining the human condition. As a result, very few philosophers have become public intellectuals, and for those who had an aspiration to perform public service, their voices were often overwhelmed by theologians, cultural commentators, social critics, and political economists. The time is ripe for a fundamental philosophical re-orientation. Comparative philosophy can play a significant role in this critical moment.

Historically, none of the major Axial-age civilizations in Asia – Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism – made a clear distinction between philosophy and religion. Virtually all philosophical contemplation is embedded in religious insight and cultivation. Indeed, without spiritual discipline, sophisticated intellectual reflection is impossible. The interplay between philosophy and religion, or more precisely the confluence of disinterested analysis and experiential understanding, is a defining characteristic of the Axial modes of thinking. Indeed, as philosophically-seasoned historians, such as the French academician, Pierre Hadot, have convincingly demonstrated, to the Greeks, philosophy was a way of life exemplified by spiritual exercises. This is also how the Harvard professor, Hilary Putnam, approaches Maimonides, Rosenzweig, Buber, and Levinas in his lecture course on "Four Jewish Thinkers." This is obviously true with major Islamic philosophers since Avicenna and Al-Ghazzali. Professor H. Nasr is a contemporary exemplar. It seems obvious that the revival and

flourishing of philosophy as a humanities subject in liberal arts education is in part predicated on its renewed attention to spiritual traditions. Philosophers in close collaboration or friendly competition with colleagues in religion can articulate a highly productive way of thinking in the 21st century. Needless to say, this is also a wholesome practice of returning to the core and source of the philosophical enterprise: self-knowledge.

A New Humanism, rooted in self-knowledge, and beyond the secular humanism of the Enlightenment mentality, is historically significant as the spirit of our time. It addresses the ideal of a universal ethic in the context of cultural diversity. At least eight general principles are involved:

(1) As a comprehensive and integrated anthropocosmic vision, it encompasses nature and religion in its humanistic concerns.

(2) It assumes that a concrete, living person is a center of relationships. As a *center*, the dignity, independence, and autonomy of the individual is an essential feature of the person; as acknowledging *relationships*, sociality is indispensable for personal identity.

(3) The concrete living person is rooted in body, home, community, world, and cosmos, and yet it seeks to transcend egoism, nepotism, parochialism, racism, and anthropocentrism to reach the highest level of self-awareness. This interplay between rootedness and public-spiritedness characterizes the richness and complexity of the human condition.

(4) Nature is, in Thomas Berry's felicitous phrase, "not a collection of objects" but a "communion of subjects." We cultivate a sense of reverence for all beings without imposing the exclusive dichotomies of body/mind and spirit/matter on our lifeworld. There is continuity and consanguinity among all people and all things.

(5) Our life, in its lived concreteness, embodies self, community, nature, and Heaven in an ethic of care and responsibility.

(6) Humanity as the core value "embodies Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things" in its sensitivity and consciousness.

(7) Although cultural diversity is taken for granted, our quest for "harmony without uniformity" enables us to be an integral part of the "great unity" (the human community) in which all people are recognized as global citizens.

(8) Global citizenship signifies primarily a political idea, but it is suffused with spiritual values and grounded in nature. The humanism that sustains the world order is informed by spiritual and naturalistic values.

Global citizenship, predicated on the anthropocosmic vision, is neither a utopian idea nor wishful thinking but a common aspiration. Indeed, it is a practicable idea with profound ecological, ethical, and religious implications. In this vision, all four dimensions of the human experience – self, community, nature, and Heaven – are incorporated in a holistic approach to the lifeworld. Integration of the body, heart, mind, soul, and spirit of the person; fruitful interaction between self and community; sustainable and harmonious relationship between the human species and

nature; and mutuality and mutual responsiveness between the human heart and mind and the Way of Heaven are standards of inspiration for the human community as a whole. They are not abstract ideas but defining characteristics of the necessary path for human survival and human flourishing. This path is diametrically opposed to closed particularism. It also rejects abstract universalism.

The belief that there is a single way to establish a world order is impractical and dangerous. It is likely to generate tension and conflict detrimental to international peace. Unilateralism is ill-conceived in both theory and practice. It fails to understand that economic globalization enhances as well as homogenizes cultural diversity. The imposition of secular humanistic ideas on the rest of the world, without understanding and appreciating other core values that are equally desirable and necessary for cultivating global citizenship, is short-sighted and misinformed. Liberty without justice, rationality without sympathy, legality without civility, rights without responsibility, and individual dignity without social solidarity cannot bring about an enduring world order nurtured by a richly textured culture of peace. All five core values in the Confucian tradition – humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trust – are relevant for universal ethics. Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and other spiritual traditions, especially indigenous religions, also offer rich resources for global citizenship. Only through a "dialogue among civilizations" can a thick description of universal ethics emerge. Dialogue as mutual learning is the best practice.

Ordinary human experience tells us that genuine dialogue is an art that requires careful nurturing. Unless we are intellectually, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually well prepared, we are not in a position to engage ourselves fully in dialogue. Indeed, we can relish the joy of real communication only with true friends and like-minded souls. How is it possible for strangers to leap across the civilizational divide to take part in genuine dialogue, especially when the "partner" is perceived as the radical other, the adversary, the enemy? It seems simple-minded to believe that civilizational dialogue is not only possible but also practicable. Surely, it will take years or generations to attain the maximum realization of the fruits of dialogue. Yet, as a minimum condition, the benefits of dialogical relationships at a personal, local, national, or inter-civilizational level are readily available and fully recognized in our ordinary daily existence.

If these common experiences are conscientiously cultivated and universally shared, we can learn to transform common sense into a good sense of guardianship for global public goods. Ecological consciousness is an obvious example. Our sense of urgency, dictated by our concerns for and anxieties over the sustainability of the environment and the life prospects of future generations, enables us to take not only an anthropological but also a cosmological attitude toward all our resources – mineral, soil, water, and air. Through education, this ecological sensitivity can encourage the positive forces of globalization to enhance the material, moral, aesthetic,

and spiritual well-being of those underprivileged, disadvantaged, marginalized, and silenced by current trends of economic development. Dialogue among civilizations also encourages wholesome quests for personal knowledge, self-understanding, individual identity, group solidarity, and communal trust.

We have learned from a variety of inter-religious dialogues that *tolerance* of difference is a prerequisite for any fruitful communication. Yet, merely being tolerant is too passive to lead us beyond self-indulgent egoism. We need to be acutely aware of the presence of the other before we can actually begin communicating. *Awareness* of the presence of the other as a potential conversation partner compels us to accept – as an undeniable fact – our co-existence with an ever-expanding network of human relationships. This leads to the *recognition* that the other's role (e.g., belief, attitude and behavior) is relevant and significant to us. In other words, there is an intersection where the two of us are likely to meet to resolve divisive tension or to explore a joint venture. Once the two sides have built enough trust to see each other face-to-face with *reciprocal respect*, a meeting of their hearts and minds becomes possible. Only then can a productive *dialogue* begin. Through dialogue, we can appreciate the value of learning from the other in a spirit of *mutual reference*. We may even *celebrate the difference* between us as the reason for expanding both of our horizons.

Dialogue, so conceived, is neither a tactic of persuasion nor a strategy of conversion but a way of generating mutual understanding through sharing common values and creating a new meaning of life together. As we approach civilizational dialogue, we need to suspend our desire to sell our ideas, to persuade others to accept our beliefs, to seek their approval of our opinions, to gain agreement on what we cherish as true, or to justify our deeply held convictions. Rather, the purpose is to learn what we do not know, to listen to different voices, to open ourselves up to multiple perspectives, to reflect on our own assumptions, to share insights, to discover tacit agreements, and to explore best practices for human flourishing. A salient feature of civilizational dialogue is inter-religious communication.

The advent of modernity has fundamentally transformed virtually all religions. Max Weber defines modernization as rationalization. A distinctive marker of rationalization is secularization. Unlike the premodern, the overwhelming majority of contemporary societies are managed by secular governments. In the political process of the modern West, religion is perceived of as a matter of the heart and therefore as a private affair inappropriate for public debate. Educational institutions are wary about religious advocacy, and they jealously protect their neutrality in religious disputes. But this situation is undergoing a fundamental transformation with substantial consequences for politics and the civil society at large.

In this new situation, religious leaders are obligated to become bilingual. The new human condition dictates that religious leaders become

proficient in two languages: one specific to their faith fellowships and one for global citizenship. Similarly, experts and professionals should also feel obligated to become bilingual. One is the expert language relevant to their profession and the other is the language of the public intellectual. They must be able to address themselves to two overlapping communities. Unless they are capable of rising beyond their own interests, they cannot properly situate their expertise or professionalism in a knowledge economy and society. The comparative advantage of religious leaders is that, having been seasoned in the language of global citizenship, they can bring the ecumenical language of the heart to public discourse. In so doing, they can help to create a new ethos of communication, networking, and negotiation, with a profound significance for market economy, democratic polity, and civil society.

Thus, one of the necessary conditions for shaping a world order through dialogue among civilizations is that religious leaders assume their responsibility as public intellectuals. The term "intellectual" first appears in nineteenth-century Russia. On the surface, it does not seem to have any antecedent in the Hindu, Buddhist, Judaic, Greek, Christian, or Islamic traditions. The Hindu quest for union of the real self with the cosmic reality, the Buddhist salvation as delivery from worldly attachments, the Jewish covenant with God as the source of all values, the Greek search for truth through the contemplative life of the mind, the Islamic devotion to Allah, and the Christian faith in the Lord in Heaven presuppose the existence of a spiritual sanctuary essentially different from, if not diametrically opposed to, the world here and now. The engagement in and management of worldly affairs has been, until recently, often relegated to the background either by choice or by default.

The notion of the intellectual, as we understand it today, is not the functional equivalent of the guru, monk, rabbi, philosopher, priest, or mullah. The minimum requirement for an intellectual – politically concerned, socially engaged, and culturally sensitive – is fundamentally at odds with a person passionately devoted to the service of a higher reality beyond the mundane concerns of the secular world. Surely, all spiritual traditions are necessarily intertwined with the ordinary lives of their devotees. But, in all of the aforementioned religions, the rupture of the chain of being by privileging the "Pure Land" or the "Kingdom of God" outside of the daily routine of human existence is undeniable.

The return of the study of religion to liberal arts education has significantly enriched the humanities and social sciences in modern universities. The continuous presence of spiritual sensitivity in economic, political, and social discourses can also be immensely meaningful for human flourishing. However, religious leaders must be able to address the global community as concerned global citizens. The UN Millennium Conference of religious leaders in the year 2000 was a disappointment because the overwhelming majority of the participants used the forum to preach the superiority of their distinctive approaches to life and salvation rather than to articulate a shared vision of spirituality indispensable for

peace on earth. The time is ripe for religious leaders to become engaged in a joint venture to bring the spiritual dimension to economic, political, and social discourses. Public intellectuals should become religiously attuned in their consideration of critical global issues. Today, major international organizations have already become more sensitive to religious matters. For example, religion has featured prominently in the recent annual meetings of the World Economic Forum at Davos. Even the World Bank is not immune to religious input in their regular programs. The preparatory work of the UN Secretariat for the 1995 Social Summit initiated a process whereby ethical and religious dimensions were integrated into discussions of development. This "good practice" features prominently in the final report of the Copenhagen Seminars devoted to multidisciplinary inquiry on social progress. Obviously, by becoming public intellectuals, religious leaders can help bring religious concerns to bear on policy discussions of economic, political, and social issues. Furthermore, they can sensitize other public intellectuals to become "attuned" to religious voices. UNESCO's decade-long commitment to inter-religious, comparative philosophical and cross-cultural dialogue is promising in fostering a new humanism inspired by an anthropocosmic vision.

Decades before the rhetoric of the clash of civilizations became prevalent in international politics, religious scholars and leaders had already been involved in inter-religious dialogue. Those seasoned in religious discourse are acutely aware of the great potential for peace or violence in virtually all religious traditions. As sites of contestation of powerful forces, religions are never neutral. They are confluences of dynamic processes of human self-realization and concentrations of creative energies for human self-transcendence, but they are also instruments of mass destruction and vehicles of persistent violence. Without harmony among religions, the chances for a culture of peace are slim. Our quest for universal ethics, a common ground for peaceful existence among divergent cultures, must take inter-religious dialogue as a point of departure.

The world order evolving from a dialogue among civilizations is time-consuming and painfully difficult. Yet, as the politics of domination is replaced by the diplomacy of communication, interaction, negotiation, and conversation, a dialogical civilization based on tolerance, recognition, respect, mutual reference, and mutual learning is emerging. The anthropocosmic vision underlying this new humanism is a way of life and a worldview indispensable in our troubled and promising age.[1]

Harvard University
Cambridge, MA, USA

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[1] An earlier version of the paper, under the title "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality: An Anthropocosmic Vision," was presented at an international symposium on Civilizations and World Orders, organized by the Foundation for Sciences and Arts in Istanbul, June 12, 2006.

CHAPTER XIV

ON 'CORRELATIVE THINKING' AND THE IDEA OF ORGANIC HOLISM IN EAST ASIAN THOUGHT

YOUNG-BAE SONG

INTRODUCTION

The fundamentals of western metaphysics lie in the anthropocentric view of the world, according to which only humanity is the 'measure of all things'; humans have always set themselves as the subject of 'history' (*Geschichte*) and have manipulated nature for their own interests. Their privileged position toward all things is therefore legitimized. Particularly since the beginning of the modern era, nature has been considered only as a 'passively displayed object' (*res extensa*), awaiting the hands of human being to be utilized in any way at any time for humans. Under such a metaphysical dichotomy of subjective spirit (humans) and objects (matter or nature), the *authentic* value of each being in the world has been completely ignored and nullified – and all the more so in our current technology-based society. Today's so-called scientific method and technologies are increasingly flourishing. Contemporary science perceives nature as merely providing the raw materials for the benefit of humanity and classifies it only in numbers and facts. In consequence, modern technology based on such science enables humans to arbitrarily interfere with the order of nature and artificially change it. As a result, humanity has achieved an industrial society of unprecedented abundance. Technology in the 20th century introduced a brand new source of power called nuclear energy, which was capable of polluting and even destroying the entire earth – and, in the 21st century, we have the new era of cybernetics. It is "a technology applying the principles of living organisms to machines for the purpose of overall research in areas like communication, control, information processing and etc."[1]

    Humanity's instrumental reason has, until now, completely neglected the philosophical pursuit of the *authentic* meaning of *humanity* or cosmic *life*, and has been engrossed only in abstract numerical calculations. Thus, we have now decoded almost all the secrets of all life forms, including ourselves, and are on the verge of the era of cloning and gene manipulation. This change implies that in today's digital civilization, with

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[1] Ki-sang Lee, "Zonze yok uneuroseoeu kisul:", in: *Heidegger Cheohakgua Dongyang sasang* [*Heidegger's Philosophy and East Asian Thought*] (Seoul: Cheokhak gua Hyunsilsa, 2001), p. 330.

the further development of cybernetics, "a new type of human will appear that is organically integrated with machines,"[2] i.e., the birth of 'cyborgs.' "In the future, if biotechnology and chip production technology can be successfully combined to produce a computer in the form of artificial nerves or a biochip... [It will be able to] infiltrate inside humans by becoming one with the human body through the means of transplantation. This will, in the end, bring about the infiltration of humans by computers that are more intelligent than humans, and thus transforming humans into post-humans."[3]

The advent of '*cyborgs*,' made possible on the basis of excessive anthropocentrism and the antagonistic dualism (dichotomy)[4] of spirit and material, man and nature – the result of not merely trying to rule or destroy nature (objects) but also completely demolishing even the dignity of human lives by treating the human lives themselves (subjects) as only a source of exploitable data – is nothing but a total destruction and alienation of each being's values by modern western natural science and technology. Can we escape this tragedy? Has philosophy (which is no longer capable of controlling positivistic science) lost its importance altogether? If it is not to be so, we must search for another possibility that can serve as an alternative to the metaphysics of dualism and anthropocentrism. Such a possibility is provided by the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Long ago, Heidegger raised a critical question about the contradictoriness of contemporary technology threatening contemporary society itself.

> Yet when destining reigns in the mode of Enframing, it is
> the supreme danger. This danger attests itself to us in two
> ways. As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns
> man even as object, but does so, rather, exclusively as
> standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is

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[2] Jinwoo Lee, "Do cyborgs also feel alienation? The self and the identity in the digital age." (Kpr.). Cited from Ki-sang Lee, 2001, p. 340.

[3] Jongkwan Lee, "Cyber Civilization, Post-humans, the fate of humans," p. 152; cited from Ki-sang Lee, 2001, p. 341.

[4] Cf. "According to such critics, Western humankind is particularly anthropocentric. Regarding humanity as the source of all meaning, purpose, and value, humans justify doing anything they want with the natural world. Western humanity also thinks in terms of dualisms and binary oppositions, such as mind versus body, reason versus feeling, man versus nature, male versus female. Those possessing the "privileged" properties (mind, reason, man, male) allegedly have the right to dominate those possessing the "inferior" properties (body, feeling, nature, female). In an attempt to gain godlike security and power for humankind, modern Western ideologies call for transforming the earth into a titanic factory, thereby threatening to destroy the biosphere on which all life depends." (M. E. Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and deep ecology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon [Cambridge University Press, 1993], p. 240).

nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail; that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems, as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself. ... *In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter itself, i.e., his essence.*[5]

Here, Heidegger argues, in contemporary technological society nature around us can have a meaning only as a resource for producing consumable objects for fulfilling human greed. Also, as humans have reached "a precipitous fall" (i.e., the excessive situation called the "cyborg era"), they lose the sense of loss of human essence by treating the human itself as an article of consumption. Heidegger concludes that the birth of such a tragedy, called *the forgetfulness of being (Seinsvergessenheit)*, is ultimately due to western metaphysics being based upon *dualism* and *anthropocentrism*, and he raises a ontological metaphysical question which will enable us to replace it.

Like Heidegger's critique of contemporary technology, this paper will discuss *correlative thinking* and the idea of *organic holism* found in East Asian thought, from the perspective of *deep ecology*, searching for a new horizon of contemplation which will replace dualistic and anthropocentric western metaphysics. In section 2: "Zhuangzi's trans-anthropocentrism and his idea of organic holism," we will try to briefly outline what Zhuangzi's arguments are. Then, in section 3, we will briefly look into the organic holism found in traditional Chinese medicine. The main principle of Chinese medicine is based on maintaining the harmony of *yin* and *yang* (the cosmic dual forces) as well as of *wuxing* (the five factors of relationship, namely, the relationship of mutual aid and control) – in other words, keeping the holistic balance of mutual support and suppression among the individual parts belonging to an organic entity. Then, continuing to section 4, we will note some implications found in Zhuangzi's philosophy for the metaphysical meaning of *correlative thinking* and *the organic holism of life*. Our introspection concerning this value-inverted phenomenon – i.e., the phenomenon of a humanity that, from a self-centered and egoistic obsessive craving for the entities outside the self (fame, ideology, wealth, beauty, longevity, etc.), struggles and raises conflicts every day, and spends all its spiritual energy in the tragic competition of

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[5] M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, English translation (Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), pp. 26-27.

survival – is needed. Zhuangzi speaks of freedom and the recovery of an active and vivacious life. Finally, in the conclusion, we will reevaluate Zhuangzi's philosophical message along with Heidegger's ideas of *"letting things be* what they are" *(Gelassenheit)* and of breaking through the *forgetfulness of being (Seinsvergessenheit)*. Heidegger states that, in modern technological society where instrumental reason reigns over everything, we have forgotten the hidden 'being' which makes every being exist; or to put it in another way, ontological western metaphysics has forgotten its vitality. Under such circumstances, we should carefully examine the values of East Asian correlative thinking and its view of the organic holism of life as a kind of deep ecology for the twenty-first century, the age of ultramodern technology.

ZHUANGZI'S TRANS-ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND HIS IDEA OF THE HOLISTIC WORLD-ORGANISM

Correlative Thinking and the Idea of Trans-anthropocentrism through Endless Changes

For Zhuangzi, every being and event in the universe *(tiandi* 天地) is undergoing endless change (i.e., everything is interrelated under the infinite activities of cosmic life).

> [*Everything is in change.*] Simultaneously with being alive, one dies, and simultaneous with dying, one is alive, simultaneously with being allowable, something becomes unallowable and simultaneously with being unallowable, it becomes allowable. If going by circumstance that's it then going by circumstance that's not, if going by circumstance that's not then going by circumstance that's it. This is why the sage does not take this course, but opens things up to the light of Heaven... What is It is also Other, what is Other is also It.[6]

Under such endless change, 'Other' becomes 'It' and 'It' becomes 'Other.' Since 'Other' is the origin of 'It,' 'Other' cannot exist without 'It,' and vice versa. Moreover, Zhuangzi believes that what is in 'existence' *(you* 有) or in 'non-existence' *(wu* 無) cannot be an independent, substantial

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[6] Zhuangzi, chap. 2; *Chuang-tzŭ : the seven inner chapters and other writings from the book Chuang-tzŭ,* tr. A.C. Graham (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2001), p. 52.

In the following, only the chapter number is mentioned if the citation comes from *Zhuangzi.* My own changes in the translation are indicated in *italics.*

entity. Therefore, what there is in 'existence' or in 'non-existence' can only be correlative to the life span of an entity recognizing it.[7]

> Little wits cannot keep up with great, or few years with many. How would we know that this is so? The mushroom of a morning does not know old and new moon, the cicada does not know spring and autumn; their time is too short. South of Chu there is the tree Mingling, which grows through a spring of five hundred years, declines through an autumn of five hundred years; in the remotest past there was the great tree Chun, with eight thousand years for its spring and eight thousand years for its autumn; it is only nowadays that Pengzu [with eight hundred years] is uniquely famous for living long, and is it not sad that common men should think him insurpassable?[8]

For an ephemeral mushroom, a month is 'non-existence' (*wu*) but, for a cicada, it is in 'existence' (*you*). For men, a life span of 800 years is extremely long, but for trees, it is not much different from the lifetime of an ephemeral mushroom. Zhuangzi says that cognition is merely a perception in relation to the cognizing entity.

> You can't tell a frog at the bottom of a well about the sea because he's stuck in his little space. You can't tell a summer insect about ice because it is confined by its season. You can't tell a scholar of distorted views about the Way because he is bound by his doctrine. ... Of all the waters under heaven, none is greater than the sea. The myriad rivers return to it ceaselessly but it never fills up; the drain at its bottom endlessly discharges but it never empties. Spring and autumn it never varies, and it knows nothing of flood and drought. Its superiority to such

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[7] The idea of *correlative thinking* originates in the text of *Laozi*. Cf. chap. 2: "To have and to lack generate each other. Difficult and easy give form to each other. Long and short offset each other. High and low incline into each other. Note and rhythm harmonize with each other. Before and after follow each other." (*Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, tr. Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001), Ivanhoe tr., p. 159; ch. 39): "What is honored has its root in what is base; What is lofty has its foundation in what is lowly. This is why barons and kings refer to themselves as, "The Orphan," "The Desolate," or "The Forlorn." Is this not a case where what is base serves as the foundation *of what is honored*! Is it not?" (*Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, tr. Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001), pp. 178-179.

[8] Ch. 1, tr. Graham, p. 44.

streams as the *Yangzi* and the Yellow river cannot be measured in numbers. Yet the reason I [i.e., the Overlord of the Northern Sea] have never made much of myself on this account is because I compare my own form to that of heaven and earth and recall that I received my *qi* [i.e., *cosmic force of life*] from *yin* and *yang*. Amid heaven and earth, I am as a little pebble or tiny tree on a big mountain. Since I perceive of myself as small, how then can I make much of myself? May we not reckon that the four seas in the midst of heaven and earth resemble the cavity in a pile of stones lying in a huge marsh? May we not reckon that the Middle Kingdom [i.e., *China*] in the midst of the sea is smaller than a *grain* in a huge granary? When we designate the number of things there are in existence, we refer to them in terms of myriads, but man occupies only one place among them. The masses of men occupy the nine regions, but wherever grain grows and wherever boats and carriages reach, the individual occupies only one place among them. In comparison with the myriad things, would he not resemble the tip of a downy hair on a horse's body?[9]

From the perspective of an infinitely large universe, if the "four seas" are only as big as "the cavity in a pile of stones lying in a huge marsh" and "China" is not even as big as "a grain in a huge granary," then the humans living in a place as tiny as grain are very small, insignificant beings. Thus, the cognition of human beings can never be the absolute standard either.

Zhuangzi also says that human life is nothing more than one of the numerous lives coincidentally formed by *qi* (the cosmic force of life).

Man's life is the gathering of *qi*; when it gathers he's deemed alive, when it disperses he's deemed dead, and if even death and life are deemed adjuncts, is there anything I could still see as a misfortune? Therefore the myriad things are the One. As much of it as we find beautiful, is deemed daemonic and precious, as much of it as we find ugly is deemed foul and rotten. The foul and rotten is transformed back into the daemonic and precious, the daemonic and precious is transformed back into the foul and rotten.

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[9] Ch. 17; Mair, pp. 153-154. *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu*, tr. Victor H. Mair, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

Hence, it is said, 'Pervading the world there is only the one '*qi*'.[10]

If this is true, human life is a mere phenomenon coincidentally formed by the cosmic force of life (*qi* 氣) in the endless changes within the universe, and there is no way a man can avoid his death when this cosmic force of life scatters. If a man anthropocentrically thinks that, he was born as a man only by coincidence, and tries to remain a man eternally, this is because he has not fully grasped the principles of nature. In the following metaphor, Zhuangzi says that such an adherence is ominous.

> That hugest of clumps of soil [i.e., *Earth*] loaded me with a body, had me toiling through a life, eased me with old age, rests me with death; therefore that I found it good to live is the very reason why I find it good to die. If today a master swordsmith were smelting metal, and the metal should jump up and say "I insist on being made into an Excalibur," the swordsmith would surely think it metal with a curse on it. If now having once happened on the shape of a man, I were to say "I'll be a man, nothing but a man", he that fashions and transforms us would surely think me a baleful sort of man. Now if once and for all I think of heaven and earth as a vast foundry, and the fashioner and transformer as the master smith, wherever I am going why should I object?[11]

By understanding a human life as the mere gathering and the scattering of *qi* (the cosmic force of life), Zhuangzi puts human beings on equal footing with all other beings in the world. Thus, his idea of ‘correlative thinking’ opens a new perspective, transcending anthropocentrism.

The Idea of the Holistic World-organism

For Zhuangzi, the accumulation and the development of ‘instrumental knowledge’ (*zhi* 知) are nothing more than minor improvements of the means of oppressing and restraining the lives of not only human beings but also of all other beings.

> If the ruler does lust after [*instrumental*] knowledge and lacks the Way, the empire is in utter disorder. How would we know that this is so? If there is too much knowledge of

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[10] Ch. 22; tr. Graham, p. 160.
[11] Ch. 6; tr. Graham, pp. 88-89.

bows, crossbows, bird-snares, stringed arrows, triggered traps, the birds are disordered in the sky. If there is too much knowledge of hooks, baits, nets and basket traps, the fish are disordered in the water. When there is much knowledge of pitfalls, springs, snares, traps, gins, the animals are disordered in the woodlands. When we have too much of the vagaries of cunning and deception, of wrenching apart 'the hard and the white' and jumbling together 'the same and the different', the vulgar are perplexed by disputation. Therefore, if the world is benighted in utter confusion, the blame rests on the lusters after [*instrumental*] knowledge. ... [O]f the very insects which creep on the ground or flit above it, not one is not losing its nature. How utterly the lust for [*instrumental*] knowledge has disordered the world! Since as far back as the Three Dynasties [*in the archaic age of Chinese civilization*] this has been happening.[12]

In the so-called Spring and Autumn and Warring States (*Chunqiu Zhangguo* 春秋戰國) period when Zhuangzi lived, the technologies of production had been relatively developed, and thus the market economy became very active and cities flourished. But there were also endless wars and social chaos, and continual reformation followed, which inevitably accelerated economic and social conflicts among people of different classes. Also, the legalists tried to carry out unprecedented legal interference in the lives of the common people, in order to build up a centralized monarchial state – which must have made liberal scholars feel seriously threatened.[13] In the past, they could have lived their lives comparatively freely in small autarkic communities. For these philosophers, the most important things were the preservation of individual life and the attainment of spiritual liberty. The principles and institutions of maintaining a large, strong society meant for them nothing than a secondary means to achieve the goal of enjoying the freedom of individual life. But

Po Yi died for reputation at the foot of Mt. Shouyang, and Robber Zhi died for profit on the top of East Ridge. What the two men died for was not the same, but in damaging

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[12] Ch. 10; tr. Graham, pp. 209-210.

[13] About the differing attitudes of philosophers concerning the dramatic changes of society in the *Spring and Autumn's and Warring States'* period, see Young-bae Song, "Zezabeakgaeu Dayanghan zenjaenglongua geu cheokhakzeok munze dusik (I), in *Sidaewa Cheokhak* [*Times and Philosophy*], No. 4, Seoul, 1992, and Young-bae Song, "Zezabeakgaeu Dayanghan zenjaenglongua geu cheokhakzeok munze dusik (II), in *Dongyanghak* [*East Asian Studies*], No. 29, Seoul, 1999.

life and injuring nature there was nothing to choose between them. Why must it be Po Yi that we judge right, Robber Zhi that we judge wrong? Everyone in the world is a human sacrifice. When there is sacrifice for Goodwill and Duty, the vulgar call you a gentleman; when it is for riches, they call you a knave." But if these two died for the sake of entities outside the self (*waiwu* 外物), then "in the damage to life and harm to nature Robber Zhi was another Po Yi, and what does it matter which was the gentleman and which was the knave?[14]

Zhuangzi rebukes these ideologists as shameless for believing in various ideologies rather than the dignity of human life and, thus, only worsening social problems.

Confucians and Mohists sprung up in all their variety. From that time on, becoming friendly or hostile they doubted each other, becoming stupid or clever they cheated each other, becoming good or bad they blamed each other, becoming trustworthy or faithless they vilified each other, and the world fell unto decay. Ultimate Power ceased to be shared, and our nature and destiny were frayed and smudged. The whole world lusted after [*instrumental*] knowledge and *common people* were in turmoil. From that time on we have hatcheted and sawed to get things in shape, inked the carpenter's line to trim them, hammered and chiseled to sunder them, and the world has been jumbled in utter chaos. The fault was in meddling with men's hearts. ... In the present age, the condemned to death lie back to back, the shackled in cangues [*wooden collars*] and stocks are elbow to elbow, there is always a mutilated man somewhere in sight, yet it is just now that the Confucians and Mohists start putting on airs and come flipping back their sleeves among the fettered and manacled. Alas, it passes belief, their impudence and shamelessness passes belief![15]

Towards these shameless ideologists – who incessantly insisted that only 'my ideology' which comes from 'my standpoint' is absolutely "correct," and 'your ideology' is "wrong," – Zhuangzi states that the original source of all beings, namely, *Dao*, cannot be revealed in such a way.

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[14] Ch. 8: tr. Graham, p. 202.
[15] Ch. 11, tr. Graham, p. 213.

The great Earth blows out *qi*, the cosmic force, by name the 'wind'. Better if it were never to start up, for whenever it does ten thousand hollow places burst out howling, and don't tell me you have never heard how the hubbub swells! The recesses in mountain forests, the hollows that pit great trees a hundred spans round, are like nostrils, like mouths, like ears, like sockets, like bowls, like mortars, like pools, like puddles. Hooting, hissing, sniffing, sucking, mumbling, moaning, whistling, wailing, the winds ahead sing out AAAH!, the winds behind answer EEEH!, breezes strike up a tiny chorus, the whirlwind a mighty chorus. When the gale has passed, all the hollows empty, and don't tell me you have never seen how the quivering slows and settles!

... Who is it that puffs out the myriads which are never the same, who in their self-ending is sealing them up, in their self-choosing is impelling the force into them?[16]

Zhuangzi's comment about all kinds of sounds, like "hooting, hissing, sniffing, sucking, mumbling, moaning, whistling, wailing," which come from different hollows of different sizes can be understood as a metaphor for the different ideologies of that time. Each sound that we hear is a 'true sound' only in its own hollow, and it can never be the universal *true* one for all the other different hollows. In fact, the one that made the various sounds out of the innumerable hollows is the invisible wind, and all the kinds of sound that we hear are mere unreal images that the invisible wind produced. The images expressed are only temporary, and the *Dao* – the very cause behind all these images (or phenomena) – is hidden like the invisible wind. Therefore, "the *Dao* that can be described in words is not the constant one (*changdao*)."[17] When we stick to our small achievements (*xiaocheng* 小成), like the Confucians or Mohists who assumed their own understanding to be the absolutely true one and denounced others' assertions as the false ones, the "*Dao* will be concealed."[18] Zhuangzi explains as follows.

As for the *Dao*, it is something with identity, something to trust in, but does nothing, has no shape. It can be handed down but not taken as one's own, can be grasped but not seen. Itself the trunk, itself the root, since before there was a heaven and an earth inherently from of old it is what it was. It hallows ghosts and hallows God, engenders heaven,

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[16] Ch. 2, tr. Graham, pp. 48-49.

[17] *Laozi*, ch. 1.

[18] "道隱於小成." (ch. 2).

engenders earth; it is farther than the utmost pole but is not reckoned high, it is under the six-way-oriented but is not reckoned deep, it was born before heaven and earth but is not reckoned long lasting, it is elder to the most ancient but is not reckoned old.[19]

The *Dao* is the ultimate ontological cause of all things – even of ghosts, gods, etc. – and is in existence before all natural things, and even before nature itself; it has "no shape" (*wu*) and, since it "does nothing (i.e., does not strive actively to do some particular thing with purpose)" (*wuwei*), it can never be perceived or described in words. Therefore, *Dao as a holistic Cause intrinsic to all things,* cannot "do something (i.e., strive actively to do some particular thing with purpose)" (*youwei*) in the way that other particular beings which are active (or alive) as distinct individuals (or parts) within the holistic world-organism. Only by "doing nothing" can *Dao* be the universal source of life, producing, raising, completing, and extinguishing all things (or "parts") existent within the world-organism. Zhuangzi says "heaven is clear by [*Dao's*] 'doing nothing,' and the earth is stable by [*Dao's*] 'doing nothing,' It is because these two 'doing nothings' are combined, that all beings in the world flourish. Because heaven and earth [i.e., *nature*] does nothing, it makes everything work."[20] *Dao*, like Aristotle's *anima*, is the universal, fundamental source of life that produces, develops and circulates all beings in the world-organism:

> [*Take a human body for the example of a holistic organism!*] Of the hundred joints, nine openings, six viscera all present and complete, which should I recognize as more kin to me than another? Are you people pleased with them all? Rather, you have a favourite organ among them? On your assumption, does it have the rest of them as its vassals and concubines? Are its vassals and concubines inadequate to rule each other? Isn't it rather that they take turns as each other's lord and vassals? Or rather than that, they have a genuine lord present in them.[21]

Here, Zhuangzi takes the human body (composed of various organs like the "hundred joints," the "nine openings," the "six viscera," etc) as an example of a holistic organism in order to explain the 'doing nothing' of *Dao* as the *holistic Mover* intrinsic to all things in the world-organism. According to Zhuangzi, each organ in the human body (and each being in

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[19] Ch. 6, tr. Graham, p. 86.

[20] "天無爲以之清，地無爲以之豐，故兩無爲相合，萬物皆化.... 故曰: 天地無爲也，而無不爲也." Ch. 18: "*zhile* (Ultimate Joy)"

[21] Ch. 2, tr. Graham, p. 51.

nature) has its own function; each 'being' has its own 'doing'. But the 'doing' of the heart can never be replaced by the 'doing' of other organs. In other words, insofar as an organ (a being) has to "do something" as a part of a holistic organism, it is never possible for this part (e.g., the brain or the sky, etc.) to take over the 'doing' of another (e.g., the heart or the earth, etc.). In this sense, the activity of one "part"(or "being") can be neither ontologically above ("king") nor below ("servant" or "concubine") of the other parts (or beings). But this "doing something" (*youwei*) of the parts of an organic entity must always be activated by *Dao*, the very holistic Cause which cannot be confined to any "organ" (or "being"). In short, without *Dao* as the holistic Mover, no beings ("organs") could ever become alive. Hence, *Dao* as the holistic Mover intrinsic to all "parts" (or "beings") cannot but '*do nothing*' (*wuwei*). In contrast with *Dao*'s doing nothing, all individuals (or organic parts) that do something (*youwei*) are equal in ontological terms. Concerning the relationship between *Dao* and individual parts Zhuangzi says: "Who can join with others without joining with others? Who can do with others without doing with others?"[22] On these phrases Guo Xiang (252-312 CE) comments as follows.

> The functions of hands and feet are different. What the five viscera are responsible for is not the same. If all joints work well in harmony without interfering with each other, this means *joining with others without joining with others*. If the inner and outer affairs are well accomplished without helping each other, this means *doing with others without doing with others*.[23]

Here, Joseph Needham "suggests that in the whole universe the *Dao* needs no consciousness to bring about all its effects." If the *Dao* which is beyond our perception 'does nothing' but is intrinsic to all beings existent in the world-organism and is the essential, fundamental cause of their every operation, this idea of Zhuangzi is evidently "a veritable organic philosophy."[24]

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[22] *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, tr. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), Ch. 6, p. 86.

[23] *Zhuangzi jishi* (*The Complete Commentary of Zhuangzi*), p. 265.

[24] J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 51-52.

ON CORRELATIVE THINKING AND THE IDEA OF ORGANIC HOLISM IN THE PRINCIPLES OF CHINESE MEDICINE

The Principles of Yin *and* Yang *and Organic Holism in* The Book of Changes

The fundamental principle of the *Book of Changes* can be summed up in the nature of correlative thinking, based on the principles of *yin* and *yang*, which are symbolized by the *qian* 乾 and the *kun* 坤 hexagrams. According to correlative thinking, two opposing qualities like *yin* and *yang*, heaven and earth, movement and rest, strong and soft, male and female, auspicious and ominous, etc. can switch corresponding to the various situations where man has to choose her/his action. Thus, the constant switching of two opposing qualities which are distinctly expressed cannot be separated from each other and are always in gear. Nothing in the world remains unchanged. In short, the world is alive; it is no more than an organic, holistic entity. Thus, the idea of the holistic world-organism, which is developed in *Zhuangzi*, is also deepened in *The Book of Changes*, and takes its place as one of the essential traits of Chinese philosophy.

> Heaven is lofty; earth is low. (Their symbols) *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤, with their respective meanings, were determined (in accordance with this). Things low and high appear displayed in a similar relation. The noble and mean had their places accordingly. Movement and rest are regular qualities (of their respective subjects). Hence comes the definite distinction as the strong and the weak. (Affairs) are arranged together according to their tendencies, and things are divided according to their classes. Hence were produced what is good [or lucky] and evil [or unlucky]. In the heavens there are the (different) figures there completed, and on the earth there are the (different) bodies there firmed. (Corresponding to them) were the changes and transformations exhibited (in the *Book of Changes*). After this fashion a strong and a weak line were manipulated together (till there were the eight trigrams), and those eight trigrams [i.e., *qian* heaven; *kun* earth; *zhen* thunder; *sun* wind; *kan* water; *li* lightning; *gen* mountain; *dui* lake] were added, each to itself and to all the others (till the *sixty*-four hexagrams were formed). We have the exciting forces of thunder [*zhen*] and lightning [*li*]; the fertilising influences of wind [*sun*] and rain [*kan*]; and the revolution of the sun and moon, which give rise to cold

and warmth. The attributes expressed by qian constitute the male; those expressed by kun constitute the female.[25]

The idea of a holistic world-organism is, then, clearly expressed in *The Book of Changes*, where all phenomena as well as their transformations in both nature (e.g., the growth, development, and extinction of all beings) and the human world (e.g., good or ill luck, fortune or misfortune etc.) are explained on the ground of the combinations (or variations) of two opposed but interrelated principles of *yin* and *yang*, that is, of dual cosmic forces incorporated into 64 hexagrams. Afterwards, in the third century BCE, the theory of *wuxing* (五行, the fivefold way of relationship) was added to this and, by the second century BCE, correlative thinking and the idea of organic holism expressed by the view of 'yin-yang and the fivefold way of relationship' had already taken a central place as the metaphysics of Chinese culture itself.[26] Chinese medicine based upon such a Chinese metaphysics grasped the organic phenomenon of the human body and sought to cure its diseases by inducing itself to spontaneously restore the balance. Consequently, the Chinese view of organic holism became more elaborate.

The Structural Identity between Microcosm and Macrocosm and the Mutual Induction between Man and Nature

As Zhuangzi said, the Chinese believe that birth and death depend upon 'gathering and scattering' of *qi*, i.e. cosmic force of life. Wang Chong 王充 (27-97 CE) in the East Han Dynasty also said, "men are born by receiving '*qi*' and grow by harboring it."[27] And Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-364) said this even more clearly.

> Men live in the middle of the '*qi*,' and the '*qi*' is in the middle of men. From heaven and earth to all things in the world, there is not a single entity which lives without depending upon the '*qi*'.[28]

Because men and nature are all the same, moving by the gathering, scattering, and flowing of the '*qi*', men are essentially the same with nature

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[25] Zhouyi, *Xici-zhuan shang*; *The I Ching: The Book of Changes*, tr. James Legge (New York, Dover Publications, 1963), pp. 348-349.

[26] About this theme, Cf. *Lüshi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), *Liji* (禮記), *Chunqiu Fanlu* (春秋繁露), *Huainanzi* (淮南子), etc.

[27] Cf. *Lunheng* (論衡), "*Mingyi* (命義)", "人稟氣以生, 含氣以長."

[28] Cf. Paopuzi (抱朴子), "Zhili (至理)", "大人在氣中, 氣在人中. 自天地至於萬物, 無不須氣以生者也."

in structure. As a result, men were regarded as the 'microcosm' compared to the 'macrocosm'. This theory of structural identity between man as microcosm and nature as macrocosm reaches its climax in *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露 by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (180-118 BCE).

> The roundness of the human head resembles the heaven; the hair resembles the [numerous] stars; breathing with the nose and mouth resembles the wind and the energy... Since the heaven has built up human body on the ground of the number of one year, 366 little joints match with the number [of one year], and 12 big joints match with the number of months. The five organs of our body match with the number of *wuxing* (五行) elements, and four limbs match with the four seasons. The blinking of our eyes matches with day and night. And that our body is strong for a while and then soft for a while matches with winter and summer... These phenomena [of the heaven] are all implicitly attached to the human body and survive as one with men. The things of the same class match each other and can be united as one body, so the calculable things match in numbers, and the incalculable ones match in class. [The human body] obviously matches with the heaven and corresponds to it all the same.[29]

Furthermore, Dong Zhongshu insists that owing to the structural similarity between the human body as a microcosmic organism and the heaven (i.e. nature) as a macrocosmic organism, they not only match each other in number but also can they be inducted each other through the intercommunication of the same '*qi*' that things of the same class have in common.

> The experimental proof of this is extraordinarily clear. Try tuning musical instruments. The *gong* 宫 note or the *shang* 商 note struck upon one lute will be answered by the *gong* or the *shang* note from other stringed instruments. They sound by themselves. This is nothing miraculous but the Five Notes being in relation; they are what they are according to the Numbers (*shu*) (whereby the world is constructed).
> (Similarly) lovely things summon others among the class of lovely things; repulsive things summon others among the class of repulsive things. This arises from the

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[29] *Chunqiu Fanlu* (春秋繁露), ch. 56, "renfutianshu 人副天數.", pp. 327-328.

complementary way in which a thing of the same class responds – as for instance if a horse whinnies, another horse whinnies in answer, and a cow lows, another cow lows in response. ... In the heaven (i.e. nature) there are the *yin* and the *yang*; in men also the *yin* and the *yang*. If the negative *qi* arises in the nature then it also arises in men, and if the negative *qi* arises in men then the nature also must correspond in answer. The principle of mutual induction is only one. If a man who truly understands this principle wants the heaven to rain, he invokes the negative *qi* [of men/earth] thus invoking the negative *qi* [in the heaven]; if he wants to stop the rain, he invokes the positive *qi* and initiates it. Hence making it rain is no mysterious thing.[30]

The Principles of Chinese Medicine based on the Principles of the Yin-Yang and the Wuxing or Five Elements

Whether it be the whole universe or an individual thing, if a holistic entity can identify itself as an organism, it must be able to maintain the balance and stability of its own biorhythm. The endocrinal system of the human body has the ability of promoting its functions as well as the ability of repressing them. If the process of repressing reaches a certain point, it must turn back and switch to another. In short, the human body maintains its balance and stability by means of incessant feedback between the promotion and the repression of various functions, thus persistently sustaining life. Chinese medicine explains this kind of complicated feedback process through the principle of the *yin-yang* and the *wuxing* (Five Elements, or the fivefold way of relationship) among the innumerable parts (or organs) of a holistic, human body.

When the functions of our body get too active, nutrition runs out and we get a fever. This is normally explained as a surplus of positive (i.e., *yang*) *qi* . On the contrary, when one's functions get repressed too much and the body gets cold, it is normally because of surplus of negative (i.e., *yin*) *qi*. "Therefore when the negative *qi* is predominant, the positive gets sick, and when the positive *qi* is predominant the negative gets sick." If we often feel tired and weak, it is because the outside is cold and our body is lacking positive *qi*. In this case, we have to supplement the positive *qi* of our body. When there is not enough negative *qi*, however, we often lack blood in our body, our face easily gets yellow, we lose weight and our bones get warm. Also, the five elements are in a relationship of mutual support and suppression. The fivefold relationship between tree (*mu*), fire (*huo*), earth (*di*), metal (*jin*), and water (*shui*) is that, if one is adjacent to another they

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[30] *Chunqiu Fanlu*, ch. 57, "Tonglei xiangtong," pp. 331; Cf. the translation of the first part cited in J. Needham, pp. 281-282.

mutually support, but the ones in every other place mutually suppress. If you constantly rub wood, it becomes fire. This is tree giving birth to fire. When the fire dies out, the ash remains, so this is fire giving birth to earth. Metal comes from the earth, so this is earth giving birth to metal. When the metal is melted, it becomes liquid, so this is metal giving birth to water. This is the fivefold way that the five elements mutually support. On the other hand, if you skip every other one, the earth is cultivated by wooden tools, so this is tree suppressing earth. A dike keeps water from overflowing, so this is earth suppressing water. Water extinguishes fire, so this is water suppressing fire. And fire melts metal, so this is fire suppressing metal. This is the fivefold way that the five elements mutually suppress. This fivefold way of the mutual-support-relationship (*xiangsheng*) and of the mutual-suppression-relationship (*xiangke*) of the five elements can also be applied to our physical organs. The liver which is responsible for circulation and excretion resembles a tree stretching in all directions, so it has the character of the tree. When the heart gets warm, the blood goes up and the face gets red. This is like fire, so it has the character of the fire. Our stomach and spleen are like earth. If there is no earth, then nothing can grow, and if there is no stomach and spleen to digest the food we eat, then it is hard to sustain life. Therefore the stomach and the spleen which are essential for sustaining our lives have the character of the earth. As sound is made from vibrating metal, so is our voice made from the vibration of our lungs, so the lung has the character of metal. And finally, the water we drink is excreted through the bladder, so the kidney has the character of water. However, *such five elemental characters of physical organs have more significance in the relationship of mutual support and suppression rather than as independent substances*. Chinese medicine holds that a human body is healthy only when this relationship of mutual support and suppression among our physical organs maintains a harmonious balance and stability inside and outside with the natural environment. But if the function of the tree (*liver*) becomes exceedingly vigorous, then fire (*heart*) – which must control it – cannot operate properly. In that case, the function of the tree 'mounts' on earth (*stomach* and *spleen*) and significantly suppresses its function while hampering metal's (*lung*) function of controlling the tree itself. In contrast, if the function of the tree gets exceedingly weak, metal 'mounts' on it and suppresses its function which, at the same time, makes the earth hamper the tree's controlling function. In these ways, Chinese medicine sees that if the natural relationship of mutual support and suppression between five elements breaks various symptoms of illness appear. Therefore, the meaning of treatment in Chinese medicine involves actually restoring the broken balance between the positive and the negative *qi* and in the fivefold way of relationships among the five organs. Chinese medicine understands the maintenance of human life (i.e., the holistic, organic activities of life) from the point of correlative relationship of natural *qi* .

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAY OF *CORRELATIVE THINKING*

*Zhuangzi's Spirit of the 'doing-nothing' (*wuwei*) beyond 'doing-something' (*youwei*)*

An organic life, activated by the process of the correlative relationship of dual cosmic forces and the five elements – whether it be a human life (*microcosm*) or the universal life (*macrocosm*) – can be understood as a *holistic entity* engaged in a kind of holistic, living action. This action is fundamentally different from the innumerable *individual* operations of parts (or "organs") — but necessary for sustaining a whole organism. Since this holistic act of life is the fundamental basis of a living organism – unlike the *specific act of a part* (or organ) – it cannot have any particular activity or function. In other words, it can never be confined to a partial 'doing something.' Therefore the act of '*Dao*' must be a holistic one (i.e., '*doing-nothing*'), because it transcends the 'doing-something' of all individual parts. Strictly speaking, however, it is ontologically intrinsic to all these 'doing-somethings,' so that it can be practiced by all beings and at the same time surpasses them. Hanfei (ca 280-233 BCE) explained the ontological and metaphysical *ground* of making all beings exist as themselves with the help of the concept '*Dao*,' derived from *Laozi*. He defined it as "the very Cause making all beings as what they are."[31] This is the very reason why the act of *Dao* – the universal and metaphysical ground of all beings, distinguished from the 'doing-something' of all individuals – can only be called 'doing-nothing.' Thus, behind all perceptible acts (namely, the 'doing-something'), there is always the 'doing-nothing' of *Dao* as the metaphysical ground (or source) of all living beings. And from the viewpoint of *Dao*'s 'doing-nothing,' the various phenomena of all beings and their functions and roles are all equal, although their differences appear to be enormous. The infinite variety of appearances is no more than a phase in the infinite process of changes in the world. No one thing can be fixed or considered as the absolute, because there is nothing that does not change.

> Observed in the light of *Dao*'s [*doing-nothing*], things are neither noble nor mean; observed in the light of an [*individual*] thing's [*doing-something*], it is noble and others are mean.... A big girder can be used to destroy mighty walls, but it cannot be used to plug a tiny hole, which is to say that [the usages of] implements are different. A *Qiqi* or a *Hualiu* [names of famous horses] can run a thousand leagues in a day but for catching rats they're not as good as a weasel, which is to say that

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[31] *Hanfeizi Xinjiaozhu* 韓非子新校注 ch. 20: "Jielao," p. 411, "道者、萬物之所以成也。"

creatures have different skills. An eagle-owl can catch fleas and can discern the tip of a downy hair at night, but it cannot even see the hills or mountains during the day, which is to say that beings have different natures. Then how can you assert [like Confucians or Mohists] that if we accept what is right [to only one standpoint] then all wrong things will disappear [by themselves], and if we accept the social stabilization [according to only one standpoint] then all social disorders will disappear? This [*absurd*] assertion is to misunderstand the principle of heaven and earth and the natures of all things. It would be like making heaven your teacher and ignoring earth, like making *yin* your teacher and ignoring *yang*. The un-workability of this is clear! Still, if one goes on talking like this and does not give it up, one is either stupid or deceptive. The emperors and kings of old had different modes of abdication, and the rulers of the three dynasties had different modes of succession. He who acts contrary to the times and contravenes custom is called a usurper; he who accords with the times and conforms to custom is called a disciple of righteousness. ... [Viewed in the light of *Dao*], the myriad beings will be equally regarded; there being no long or short among them. *Dao* has neither beginning nor end, but [*individual*] beings have life and death. Not being able to stay as their [*unchanged*] completion, they are now empty, now full, without stability in form. The years cannot be back, nor can time be stayed. Dissolution and generation, fullness and emptiness – whatever ends has a beginning.... The life of beings is like the cantering and galloping of a horse. They are transformed with each movement, they change with each moment. What are we to do? What are we not to do? Just let beings evolve by themselves [like *Dao*'s *doing nothing*].[32]

As you can see, Zhuangzi claims that the dogmatism endorsed by ideologists (like Confucians or Mohists, etc.) who take their own standpoint as absolute, was a struggle to denounce the values of others as the wrong ones. According to him, such kinds of dogmatism, which do not show proper concern toward others, must be either human "foolishness" or "deception." Hence he is strongly against all kinds of dogmatism or a kind of 'instrumentalism' promoted by one "special" being (i.e., a radical anthropocentrism), according to which humans see themselves as the measure of all other beings and manipulate them to human benefit. To him, this is no more than a form of ideological violence toward other beings – to

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[32] Ch. 17; cf. tr. Mair, pp. 155-158.

both men and natural things. Every 'being' cannot but be just 'doing-something' (*youwei*), with its specific role given to it within the continuing process of the cosmic, eternal life, and it as a particular 'one' cannot stay [*unchanged*] (i.e., as an *unchanging measure* of all other things). Therefore, "The years cannot go back, nor can time be stayed." "Dissolution and generation, fullness and emptiness — whatever ends has a beginning." This is to say that the 'growth and development' (i.e., 'doing-something') of each individual 'being' in endless, cosmic time and space cannot exist independently separated from the 'doing-nothing' (*wuwei*) of incessantly moving and changing *Dao*. 'Life' changes to 'death,' and 'existence' changes to 'non-existence,' and vice versa. Thus, if one is an 'authentic man 眞人' who truly realizes the worth of his existence, even if he be handicapped, his spirit will not be hampered by the handicapped body[33]; even if he were dying from a fatal disease – no matter how miserable and painful it was – his spirit would not be enslaved by the disease (pain).[34] Since the endless changing phenomena of '*doing-something*' carried out by the myriad of beings in the world arise unavoidably within the realm of *Dao*'s 'doing-nothing' and beyond the boundary of human control (or interference), the emancipation and the realization of the 'authentic man' can only be possible by accepting such changes based on 'doing-nothing' of *Dao*. Zhuangzi speaks about the 'authentic man' as follows:

> Who can take '*nonexistence*' as his head, life as his spine, and death as his buttocks? Who knows the oneness of life and death, of existence and nonexistence? ...Supposing that my left arm were transformed into a chicken, I would consequently go looking for a rooster that could call out the hours of the night. Supposing that my right arm were transformed into a crossbow, I would consequently go looking for an owl to roast. Supposing that my buttocks were transformed into wheels and my spirit into a horse, I would consequently mount upon them. What need would I have for any other conveyance? Furthermore, that we get [life] is due to one time and that we lose [it] is the compliance [to *Dao*]. If we are complacent in [life] and are compliant [with death], sorrow and joy cannot affect us. This is what the ancients called 'emancipation.' Those who are unable to emancipate themselves are bound by 'things external' (*waiwu* 外物) [to the inner mind].[35]

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[33] Cf. many episodes addressed in *Zhangzi*, ch. 5: "dechongfu (Symbols of Integrity Fulfilled)."

[34] Cf. many episodes addressed in: ibid, ch. 6: "dazongshi (The Great Teacher of Prime Importance)."

[35] Ch. 6: "dazongshi (the Great Teacher of Prime Importance); cf. Mair (tr.), pp. 57-58.

Zhuangzi considered instrumental devices such as ideology, ethics, wealth, power, etc. (which we feel necessary while living in human society) as "*things external* [to the inner mind]," and which are consequently differentiated from the authentic 'life' we gained from heaven (i.e., nature). Since human beings are obsessed with looking for "things external" and have forgotten the authentic meaning of their existence, he was of the opinion that human life and freedom was being destroyed and devastated day by day – in short, alienated from their original, authentic meaning. He came to the conclusion that the tragedy of human beings is that their meaning has been derived from this extremely alienated reality, where means and ends for them are *de facto* inverted.

> In our strife and friction with things [*externals, like ideology, reputation, wealth, beauty, long life etc.*], we gallop forward on our course unable to stop. Is this not sad? We toil our whole life without seeing any results. We deplete ourselves with wearisome labor, but don't know what it all adds up to. Isn't this lamentable? There are those who say that at least we are not dead, but what's the good of it? Our physical form decays and with it the mind likewise. May we not say that this is the most lamentable of all? Is human life really so deluded as this? Am I the only one who is so deluded? Are there some individuals who are not deluded?[36]

Zhuangzi also comments on the 'authentic men' who were able to escape from this tragedy (or 'alienation'), and who have succeeded in fully realizing the authentic meaning of their lives.

> The *authentic* man of old knew neither fondness for life nor aversion to death, was neither elated by going forth nor reluctant to return. Causally he went and causally he came. He neither forgot the beginning [*of his life*] nor sought what *its* end would be. Happily he received and forgetfully he returned. This is what is meant by not detracting from *Dao* with [*human*] mind, [and] not assisting heaven [i.e. *nature*] with the human. This is what we call an *authentic* man. Such being the case, his mind was forgetful, his visage calm, his forehead beamingly broad. Austere as autumn, warm as spring, his joy and anger were in touch with the four seasons. He was compatible with all things but no one knew his limits.[37]

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[36] Ch. 2: "qiwulun (On the Equality of Things)"; Mair (tr.), p. 14.
[37] Ch. 6: "dazongshi (the Great Teacher of Prime Importance)"; Mair (tr.), p. 52.

The 'authentic men' Zhuangzi speaks about are the ones who have already surpassed the norms and limitations intrinsic to the tiny world of human society, and who have become one with the infinite changes of nature. The free spirit that authentic men are looking for is no other than the infinite freedom that is in unity with the endless changes in all things of this world.

> Who can associate in non-association and cooperate in non-cooperation? Who can ascend to heaven and wander with the mists, bounding through infinity, forgetting themselves in life forever and ever without end?[38]

As you can see here, the idea of 'organic holism' presented in Chinese medicine and in Zhuangzi's thought, contains no dichotomy of 'man' (*spirit*) and 'nature' (*matter*) or 'subject' and 'object'. Rather, in the light of *Dao* as 'doing-nothing,' they are 'coordinative.' Consequently, there is no man without nature, and there is no nature without men, and human freedom can only be realized by escaping from the shallow horizon of the 'doing-something' and by being united as the oneness with the 'doing-nothing' of *holistic Dao*. Since mankind is no more than a single species among the myriad of beings in nature, the egoistic dogmatism which justifies the manipulation of nature on behalf of human beings cannot be accepted either by Zhaungzi's thought or by the principles of Chinese medicine. Also, Zhuangzi believed that the free spirit of human beings can be cultivated through the sincere recognition of "external things" as only useful means (or instruments) which had been invented with the goal of serving human dignity. In other words, he was of opinion that the true freedom of human beings could be realized to such an extent that the natural activities given by heaven (i.e., nature), could not, in fact, be hampered by the limitations which instrumental knowledge usually imposes upon all beings in the world, including humans themselves. For Zhuangzi, the reversed way was always to a tragic end. This kind of philosophical thinking can only be justly understood under the unique cosmology of the Chinese – completely different from a Western one – which perceives the nature's generation and transformation as an "organismic progress" in the sense that "all the parts of the entire cosmos belong to one organic whole and that they all interact as participants in one spontaneously self-generating life process."[39] Moreover, the parts which contribute to the holistic activities of this organic cosmic life influence each other and maintain a 'correlatively equal relationship' while carrying out their respective functions. Of course, in such an organic cosmos "there can be no parts wrongfully present;

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[38] *Ibid.*; Mair (tr.), pp. 59-60.
[39] Frederick W. Mote, *Intellectual Foundation of China* (McGraw-Hill Inc., 2nd ed, 1989), p. 15.

everything that exists belongs, even if no more appropriately than as the consequence of a temporary imbalance, a disharmony."[40]

CONCLUSION

The Significance of 'Correlative Thinking' and Organic Holism in the 21ˢᵗ Century

Although nowadays some people have started to worry about pollution or the destruction of the natural environment, they are still bound to the anthropocentric worldview. But 'deep ecology' proclaims "that only a transformation of Western anthropocentrism and humanity-nature dualism can save the biosphere from destruction."[41] This deep ecology can be said to be derived from Heidegger's critique of traditional metaphysics. According to Heidegger, Plato initiated 2,500 years of dualistic metaphysics in the West by conceiving of *'being'* as "the "eternally present, unchanging blueprint, form (*eidos*), or model" as distinct from the realm of becoming in the empirical world. After this, the Romans were concerned primarily with finding "the metaphysical ground ... which *'causes'* things to come into being," and so this dualistic metaphysics was established firmly in the West. Within such a metaphysical tradition, for medieval theologians the very "cause" of all created being was God the creator who rules over them. And, in modern times, "beginning with Descartes, Western humanity began to encounter entities as objects for self-certain rational subjects" (i.e., as being "capable of being represented – measured, quantified, known – by the subject").[42] Traditionally, the "being of an entity" has been defined "as its ground or substance, that which provides the *'foundation'* for the thing." "Plato called this foundation the eternal form of things; Aristotle, their substance; medieval theologians, their Creator."[43] But the *'being'* of things for modern men cannot but mean what is discernable by *calculating instrumental reason*. In this way, this metaphysical "being" has dominated Western metaphysics, as "a kind of superior entity, an eternal foundation, ground, cause, or origin for things".[44] This is to say that Western metaphysics classifies all things into "those possessing the *privileged* properties (mind, reason, man, male)" and "those possessing the *inferior* properties (body, feeling, nature, female)"[45] – and so it can be considered as a typical example of "subordinative thinking" which ontologically justifies unfair discrimination between the entities.[46] The consequences of such a

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[40] Mote, p. 21.
[41] Zimmerman, p. 260.
[42] Zimmerman, p. 249.
[43] Zimmerman, p. 243.
[44] Zimmerman, p. 243.
[45] Zimmerman, p. 240.
[46] Liu Junchan (2), p. 525.

subordinate relationship are clearly expressed in the blindness of natural science and technology in modern times.

> Modern science forced entities to reveal themselves only in accordance with theoretical presuppositions consistent with Western humanity's ever-increasing drive to gain control of everything. While during the industrial age the achievement of such control could be described as a means for the end of improving the human estate, during the technological era – which may be said to have commenced with the horrors of World War 1 – humanity itself has become a means to an end without purpose: the quest for power for its own sake, which Heidegger described as the sheer '*Will* to *Will*'.[47]

The blindness of the human will, which drives contemporary science and technology, not only regards the earth as "a mine to be exploited as much as possible" and as '"a source to be extorted," but has also identified the search for "secret usefulness" of every object (including humans) with the "metaphysical premise" of "today's scientific research."[48] Now that the environment is being destroyed by men, men *should* protect it. However, it has become virtually impossible for men to protect either the environment or humanity itself from the science and technology which only considers objects as the material resources for producing goods. The truth is that, in this cyborg era, the human spirit is being devastated even more drastically than nature. With the development of genetic engineering and the discovery of somatic mysteries, the utility of the human being has increased dramatically, and thus men have been reduced to mere "beings without any protection (*Schutzlosen*)."[49] This is the biggest tragedy that we face in the cyborg era. In order to escape from this tragedy, Heidegger talked about his ontological metaphysics as a replacement for a Western metaphysics which justifies the way of *subordinate thinking*.

Heidegger finds the essential cause of such tragedy in the "*forgetfulness of being (Seinsvergessenheit)*" in Western metaphysics which can be in turn identified with 'dualism' and 'anthropocentrism' based upon 'subordinative thinking.' All entities including humans have forgotten the ontological foundation that makes them what they are. Heidegger argued that "for something '*to be*' means for it to disclose or to present itself. For this 'presencing' [*Anwesen*] or self-manifesting to occur, there must be a clearing, an opening, an emptiness, a nothingness, and an 'absencing' [*Abwesen*]. Human existence constitutes the openness necessary for the

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[47] Zimmerman, p. 249.

[48] Ki-sang Lee, 2001, p. 318.

[49] Cf. M. Heidegger, "Wozu Dichter?," in: *Holzwege (Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6), pp. 273-276. Citation in Sun-il Lee, 2000, p. 123, footnote 14.

presencing (being) of entities to take place."[50] Therefore, living in this time of technology, where machines control men, means that men must experience 'nothingness' (*Nichtigkeit*), thus realizing that they are 'mortal entities.' Thus men have to arrange the clearing of the self in which "entities (including thoughts, feeling, perceptions objects, others) appear."[51] By accepting the limitations of human beings and by arranging the self-clearing, Heidegger hoped to overcome anthropocentrism. Humans should no longer rule over all entities and should "let things be what they are" (*Gelassenhiet zu den Dingen*). It means that men must admit themselves as mortal entities existing within the '*Fourfold*' (*das Geviert*) – i.e., living together with God, heaven, and earth, and also embracing them as communicative partners. They are no longer mere instruments for fulfilling their desires, but parts of a beautiful, poetic, artistic union in which they can disclose themselves as what they are. Hence Heidegger says that men could say "yes" to the "inevitable utilization of technological objects"; but men must say also "no" to them if they involve "disturbing and contorting the essence of humans."[52] This is to say that "we consider technological objects no longer as something absolute but as something dependent upon the superior being. Hence we let them remain as themselves."[53] Men must no longer rule over objects but must be able to truly artistically communicate with them on 'correlatively equal' terms.

In contemporary technological society, where scientific technology indiscriminately rules over both men and nature to the point that man-made machines are ruling over men, what we really need is not the continuing expansion of our power but rather an ontological union of men and men, and further, of men and nature. If we are to listen to Heidegger who says that such union can be achieved through aesthetic activities, we also need to listen to Zhuangzi. He speaks about the communication of sublime spirits with nature in the fundamental horizon of *Dao*'s 'doing-nothing' beyond the world of 'doing-something,' where agents of 'doing-something' stand mutually hostile to each other and act according to their own self-centered fixed ideas. Zhuangzi insisted on throwing away all these fixed ideas or *anthropocentric* measures (which ideologists of various schools proclaimed as absolute on the basis of their 'doing-something'), because he has realized how ephemeral are assertions of their 'absolute' truth amidst the infinite flow of cosmic changes. Furthermore, according to Zhuangzi's philosophy and the principles of Chinese medicine, if activities or functions of any one part within an organic body become excessively developed, then it becomes impossible to control them, and the dominance dictated by them over other parts and functions exceeds the permitted limit. This kind of dominance results in a form of illness. As a result of this, the living organism will no

[50] Zimmerman, p. 243.

[51] Zimmerman, p. 242.

[52] Cf. Ki-sang Lee, 2001, p. 346.

[53] Ki-sang Lee, 2001, p. 348.

longer find its stability and balance, and will eventually die. In this era of the cyborg, Zhuangzi's emphatic voice warning about the negative effects of anthropocentrism seems to touch some people's hearts more earnestly than Heidegger's appeal for "letting things to be what they are." Zhuangzi explains his philosophy as follows.

> [*Myriad things are*] obscure and formless, ever transforming and inconstant. Are we alive? Are we dead? Do we coexist with heaven and earth? Do we go along spiritual intelligence? How nebulous! Where are we going? How blurred! Where are we aiming? The myriad things being arrayed all around, there is non fit for us to return to — a portion of the ancient techniques of *Dao* lay in these practices. Zhuang Zhou heard of such usages and delighted in them. With absurd expressions, extravagant words, and unbounded phrases, he often gave rein to his wisdoms but was not presumptuous and did not look at things from one angle only. Believing that all under heaven were sunk in stupidity and could not be talked to seriously, he used impromptu words for his effusive elaboration, quotations for the truth, and metaphors for breadth. Alone, he came and went with the essential spirits of heaven and earth but was not arrogant toward the myriad things. He did not scold others for being right or wrong, but abode with the mundane and the vulgar. Although his writings are exotic and convoluted, there is no harm in them; although his phraseology is irregular and bizarre, it merits reading. His fecundity is inexhaustible. Above he wanders with the creator of things, and below he is friends with those who are beyond life and death and without beginning and end.[54]

Zhuangzi's philosophical approach of speaking not only about the free spirits of men in union with nature beyond rightness and wrongness, but also about the meaning of life and death within the infinite changes of cosmic life, is clearly different from that of Western anthropocentrism. What we need today in this high-tech era is the wisdom to listen to the voice of organic holism in union with nature beyond anthropocentric instrumentalism.

Seoul National University
Seoul, Korea

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[54] Ch. 33: "tianxia (all under heaven)"; Mair (tr.), pp. 342-343.

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CHAPTER XV

THE CLAIM OF TRUTH AND THE CLAIM OF FREEDOM IN RELIGION

TRAN VAN DOAN

POWER, TRUTH AND FREEDOM

The "Third World" and socialist countries have often been accused by the West of abusing human rights. One of their alleged "crimes" is especially controversial: the violation of religious freedom.[1] As expected, they completely rejected such condemnation, as do a great many Western thinkers. However, this reply falls on deaf ears. Worse, it is ignored, paradoxically, by the accusers as well as by the accused. In fact, there is almost no difference among the powerful rulers, be they in the "first" or the "third" world. They set the standard for "truth" and "justice," at least in their own countries, and claim the rights for themselves. For the ruling classes, freedom serves as a pretext, and not as a true concern. The remark of Mr. Jiang Zemin, the former President of China – echoed by the rulers of many countries – that China has a different conception of human rights, and that freedom is fully respected there, actually follows the same logic of power (the reverse of Bacon's logic of knowledge): he who has power has the right to decide! The ruled have no other choice but to dutifully obey the ruler's criteria of human rights imposed on them against their will, simply because power is not in their hands.

Rulers know well that knowledge and power are twin brothers, and that justice and human rights are subject to their whim. Sadly, truth and rights do not stand on the side of the weak. Justice for the poor and oppressed is only a beautiful slogan (or an opium, to recall Marx's remark about religion) used to console them. Blaise Pascal's ironic remark that "justice is for everyone, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer,"[2] may sound too pessimistic, but it is often true. This "naked truth" about power is applicable to all men, regardless of race or geographical origin. So, the answer is quite simple: if power determines truth, then acquiring power is essential. Truth serves rather as a means and not the end.

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[1] In the case of socialist countries, Western human rights watchers have cited the lack of a certain freedom of religion as the main offense against human rights.

[2] "The justice of God must be vast like His compassion. Now justice to the outcast is less vast ... than mercy towards the elect." Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, tr William Finlayson Trotter (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1940), p. 233.

Bacon's attempt to elevate knowledge (truth) to the same rank as power has been distorted. Knowledge is taken, not as a noble ideal, but as a tool against humanity. Similarly, the Enlightenment's spirit has been corrupted: neither the force of judgment (Kant) nor the idea of freedom makes history – only power (the power of the people in the case of the French Revolution) can do this. That means that rulers have successfully transformed "the force of knowledge" into an effective weapon to eliminate the rights of the ruled, and suppress their freedom, and to impose upon them the "Western" criteria of truth and "moral" standards. Gun-boat diplomacy, artillery power, the modern technologically-equipped army (products of belief in knowledge-as-power) and (Western) truths and morals are now used to consolidate and expand the power of the ruling class.

Rousseau, surely, is neither the first nor the last thinker to draw attention to the hypocrisy of the rulers. Socrates might have had the right to claim the title of thinker *par excellence*, with his critique of the Sophists and his total devotion to truth. One may say with some confidence that both Socrates and Rousseau (in contrast to Galileo and Descartes), with their relentless critique and non-compromising attitude, set a good example for intellectuals. As we see, true philosophers, social activists and, above all, theologians have often raised their critical voice against the rulers' rampant abuse of human rights.[3] They mistrusted the "truth" proclaimed by the rulers. They challenged knowledge (ideology) that claims to be final. In their view, those who pretend to possess absolute truth (total knowledge) are the worst offenders against human rights and freedom. Racism, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism – to list just a few of the most recent ideologies and practices – are united by the belief in a certain "truth": truth about the superiority of a certain race (the Aryan race in the case of Nazism, and of the Han race in the case of feudal China), of a certain nation (the British empire, Napoleon's France), of a certain class (aristocracy in the past and the upper class today). So, in the eyes of Western intellectuals, the claim of truth is nothing but a fabricated idea, used as justification for the atrocities the rulers commit.

From this perspective, the West's condemnation of the "Third World" and the angry response of the latter amount to a bitter fight – not for truth, justice and freedom, but for power. This is not the kind of battle between Cain and Abel, much less between the bad and the good. That is a war fueled by an uncontrolled lust for power. So the accusers should be as embarrassed as the accused. The self-proclaimed prosecutor turns out to be the most outrageous violator. Are they blatant liars? Or are they sincere and

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[3] Note that the most ardent critics of Western culture (and religion) are theologians. Among the pupils of Friedrich W. Schelling's class on religion, one finds the name of Bakunin, Kierkegaard, and Engels. Marx belonged to the "Doktorklub," the majority of whom were theologians (Bauer, Stirner, Feuerbach, and others). Today, the so-called theologians of liberation remain at the front battling against imperialist suppression and capitalist exploitation.

of good will? No doubt, they simply belong to the same class as the accused, and have the same insatiable ambition. And they both claim truth for themselves.

On such a model, one can make sense of similar controversies in our present world. The burning and dreadful conflict in the Middle East, just like the tension between the North and the South, cannot be understood without a thorough investigation of the relation of power and truth. Truth is not claimed *in se*, but out of the conviction that it has a role in acquiring, consolidating and preserving power. Absolute truth justifies a lasting power. Against such dogma, we stick to our belief, and regard it as a "sacred mission" to defend our religion or ideology. Freedom is therefore understood as the right to believe in our own truth, and to liberate us from "un-truth." Freedom even means the "duty" to engage in convincing others of our truth (through missionary work). In a loose description, freedom expresses our "free" will to take whatever measures necessary to achieve our goal, including violence and dictatorship. In this context, we can understand the reason why "fighters for freedom" have resorted to means contrary to freedom and human rights. The acts of suppressing, murdering, terrorizing, enslaving, intimidating, chiding, etc., are "justified" by "belief" and 'truth." Freedom, therefore, means emancipation from the yoke of others, but not from our own yoke. We understand now the paradox of freedom and truth: freedom contains in itself an element of un-freedom, and "our" truth contains in itself an element of anti-truth.[4]

This paradox is vivid in human activity. On the pretext of defending freedom of expression, for example, a great part of the Western media has severely wounded religious feeling and belief—not only in the Islamic world, but all in religious communities.[5] In the name of truth, rulers forcefully condemn intellectuals to silence. They deny and even testify against truth. So, it is not a question of whether freedom of expression (a human right) is compatible (or incompatible) with the exercise of religious freedom (also a human right), but a question of truth-claims and freedom-claims, which must be carefully dealt with.

I am trying to approach the problem from an indirect or oblique perspective. I will not follow the traditional approach by beginning with a definition of truth or freedom, but with a critique of the human illusion of

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[4] Such a paradox has been brilliantly analyzed by Horkheimer and Adorno. See Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. John Cumming. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

[5] The furor of Islamists against Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and the recent outrage against Danish cartoons are cases in point. No doubt, both Islamic believers and the cartoonists were certain of their own truth and both appealed to human rights (freedom) to justify their acts and their abusive language defending their truth. In the case of Dan Brown's *The da Vinci Code*, the question is whether one can abuse the freedom of expression to distort religious truth.

being the inheritor of God's truth and God's nature (freedom). I will argue that it is neither our yearning for freedom nor our belief in God, but rather our illusion of truth-possession, our arbitrary identification of truth with freedom, as well as our artificial separation of truth and freedom from life, that is the cause of conflict. This means truth and freedom *in se* are not the cause of conflict. Conflict is rooted in our lust for power, and expressed in our claim of being inheritors of truth and possessors of freedom.

To prove the tenability of this view, I will examine the process of turning from truth-in-life to truth-as-life. Such a radical turn has been made possible thanks to philosophers like Plato and the Neo-Platonists. They conceived of *freedom in terms of truth*. As *free* men, they were firmly convinced of their "own" truth. The claim of truth-possession is, thus, identified with a claim to freedom. My investigation into the concept of freedom in religion yields the same result. The original understanding of freedom as a part of human nature that makes man what he is has been distorted in philosophy into a pure theory of freedom as an *unconditioned free state*. This means freedom cannot be understood apart from life. So when the Jews understood freedom as the emancipation from the state of slavery, they regarded the true man as a free man. A slave is not a man, and slavery means un-freedom. Such a concept of freedom does not intrinsically contain the concepts of finitude and dependency. Man is limited by death and by his dependency on others. But he feels nonetheless free because he is a true human being, and a true human being is always aware of his finitude and his dependency. Therefore, the idea of God's providence does not include the feeling of un-freedom. The believer in God never feels or regards himself as a slave but, rather, as God's son. He enjoys his freedom even if he knows his limits.

Based on such considerations, we can see how one might approach the view of "the clash of civilizations" (to use Samuel Huntington's language). In my own view, the clash among different peoples is not rooted in difference of cultures or civilizations, but rather in the belief of the superiority of a particular culture (i.e., in a strong belief in a certain system of values as the truest and highest ones, and especially in our illusion of being the sole possessor of such truth and such freedom). So any solution to such a conflict would be possible only if human beings were willing to free themselves from the utopia of being the sole possessors of – to use Kant's language – the "kingdom of truth."

THE TURN FROM *TRUTH IN LIFE* TO *TRUTH AS LIFE*

The main reason for conflict among religious worlds, and even among scientific communities,[6] is most probably rooted in our illusion of being the sole possessor of truth. That happened to the Medieval Christian Church,

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[6] Following Thomas Kuhn, the author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

the Enlightenment protagonists, and the religious fundamentalists today. Conflict becomes deadly when our desire transcends our own finitude, when we entertain the illusion of being our own creator. The "philosopher-king" of Plato, the "philosopher" of Hegel, the "superhuman" of Nietzsche and the "proletariat" of Marx, all created more troubles than solutions simply because of the claim of being the possessor of the "final truth." To be sure, such an illusion is constructed on and cemented by the formal logic of truth with its corollaries: the principle of identity and the principle of non-contradiction: the true must be the same, and consequently, truth is universal and necessary. The mathematical formula of truth, $1=1$, has been taken as the most obvious and irrefutable way of expressing judgment in all sciences, including human sciences. Descartes and the German rationalists expanded and applied this mathematical formula to the whole of the human sciences (moral science, in the case of Kant). It goes more radically with a bizarre principle of either-or (that Søren Kierkegaard has attacked in his *Either-Or*) and its logical law of "the excluded third" (excluded middle). So the conclusion of one true God is drawn from the premise of one truth. If our God is true, then your gods must be false; if our ideology is true, then all other ideologies must be false.

It is not a mistake to take truth as the objective of sciences, but it would be questionable to believe it as the αρχη and the τελος, the alpha and the omega (i.e. the total sum of human life).

Let us begin first with the claim of truth as the unique objective of life, and the sole principle determining our thinking and actions. To many of us, the idea of a philosophy was clear in Homeric tradition: a tradition centered on life. The turn begun with Thales who, in his search for the origin of life, identified the characteristic of life with life itself: the most original life must be the truest (i.e. the most universal and necessary) one. Truth and life seem to be the same. Other Greek philosophers followed suit and went much more radically. The Pythagorians abstracted from human life and identified numbers as the origin of universe. (They may be quite correctly regarded as the predecessors of Galileo. The last described the universe in terms of mathematical structure.) In a word, one may say that Pre-Socratic philosophy exhibits, in a certain sense, a constant search for truth, by means of arguments based on truth itself. Truth and not life is now the objective of our quest.

It was Socrates who gave a final and decisive imprint on truth as the unique objective of philosophy. By insisting on truth implicit in life, Socrates embraced the view that truth is the most valuable treasure. Indeed, true to his view, he sacrificed his own life for truth. Truth is also the objective of the business of scientific research. It is the essence of science indeed. And it is the securest means to safeguard truth and life.

But what is truth? This question, the most important one, has not been satisfactorily answered so far.[7] When Socrates chided the Sophists for mistaking truth with opinion, and especially for having claimed truth for themselves, he had clearly opted for the view that truth can be acquired only by means of a constant search and critique (in the form of *dialogue*). Now the problem is, if truth can be acquired only by a permanent process of investigation, then any acquired truth is purely temporal. The newly acquired truth would replace the once-believed one. Following Hegel, we might say that temporal truth appears real, but it is the reality of a certain people in a certain age (i.e. an incomplete, partial truth). Hegel, however, still believes in an eternal truth which he identified with reason. In his view, the true kernel determining the *Zeitsgeist* and the *Volksgeist* must be the rational.[8] But the kernel (the rational) is either unknowable (as *noumenon* in Kant) or incompletely known because the rational emerges in a constant and infinite process (Hegel). So truth known by us cannot be grasped *in toto*. We know only a part of it. Karl Popper radically developed this view to the edge of rationalism and to the brink of a possible collapse of Platonian truth: no truth is final.[9] Any claim of having a final truth would contradict the essence of truth. In this Socrates' way of philosophizing, what we may grasp is not truth but reality (i.e. a temporal and spatial aspect of truth). We know a certain *facet* of truth but not truth in its totality.[10]

The question of "What is truth?" is still unanswered. It was left open by Socrates and his followers. His closest disciple, the ambitious Plato, attempted to fulfill the mission of his master by claiming to arrive at a final, irrefutable answer. He proved that truth is universal and necessary. It is the substance of all substances. In a word, it is divine. Despite the warm reception of the Neo-Platonists (like Plotinus, Philo, and Clement of Alexandria) who found in God the absolute Truth, such an answer, unfortunately, leaves more irresolvable puzzles. Nietzsche is neither the first nor the last who rebelled against such view with his satirical declaration of the death of God. The non-existence of God is interpreted as the non-existence of truth, just as His death means the end of Plato's truth. Without an absolute truth, Nietzsche plunged into a certain form of nihilism: the bottomless abyss. He was full aware of the negativity of such thinking. Nihilism does not shed any new light on truth. In contrast, truth appears now as non-truth. The question of "what is truth?" has not been answered. It

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[7] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 44; see especially *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit* and *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*.

[8] Hegel, *Vorlesungen ueber Rechtsphilosophie*, Einleitung. "Was vernunftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernunftig."

[9] Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1963).

[10] Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 150-1.

is simply dismissed as non-sense: "Was sind denn diese Kirchen noch, wenn sie nicht die Grüfte und Grabmäler Gottes sind?"[11].

The turn from *truth in life* to *truth as life* has been unmasked by Heidegger. He is not the first but is surely the most eloquent opponent of Plato's truth and even of Nietzsche's nihilism.[12] Traditional truth in terms of representation, or of correspondence (*adaequatio intellectus et rei* of Thomas Aquinas), or of agreement, or of identification (positivism), or of "coherence" and "pragmatics" could not reveal the true essence of truth, because it is detached from the *Ursprung* of truth (i.e., life).[13] Traditional criteria of truth have been based on fact, or phenomena, or similarity, but not on their source and their *dynamic force*.

So, if truth is not life but only an essential aspect of life (authenticity), then it is not the question "What is truth?" but "What is life?" that must be the objective of philosophy. In Heidegger's harsh critique, philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche have scratched where there it no itch. Ontology must be anthropology,[14] and therefore, truth cannot be separated from human life. The investigation of life and its basic characteristics casts a new light on human beings in terms of freedom and on truth itself. Kant's insistence on autonomy as the essence of morals (i.e., on freedom) does not contradict his faith in truth as the foundation of morals. Only in the context of life can truth be grasped in freedom, and can freedom manifest itself in truth. In Heidegger's interpretation of truth as αληθεια, truth no longer plays the role of God or the a-temporal and non-spatial mathematical formula, but reveals itself freely in the world. *Erschlossenheit, Entdecktheit, Unverborgenheit* (uncovering, self-revelation), etc., are the essential characteristics marking the nature of truth.[15] In this sense, Heidegger regards the essence of truth as freedom.[16]

Heidegger's radical interpretation of truth in the sense of self-revelation is, of course, not new. However, it is interesting to note that even if Heidegger has tried very hard to dismiss the role of God as *custodis, providentia* or the *philosopher* (see Hegel) in favor of God as *artis ingenius* (like Nietzsche), he still follows the same logic of religion: only the like-God being can reveal itself. Only the like-God being possesses the *power of self-existence*, and the *power of self-determination*, i.e., *the power of a creator*. It is in this sense that Heidegger regards freedom as the essence of

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[11] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft,* Der tolle Mensch, 125. ed. Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser, 1960).

[12] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Guenther Neske, 1961), Vol. 2, pp. 31 ff.

[13] *Sein und Zeit,* 44a.

[14] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* Einleitung; Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik,* (1929); and *Nietzsche* (1961), vol. II.

[15] *Sein und Zeit,* 44b.

[16] In *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,* Heidegger clearly wrote: "Das Wesen der Wahrheit ist die Freiheit."

truth. Like the Epiphany that expresses the self-revelation of God's true nature, freedom displays the essence (i.e. the condition and nature) of human existence. If Epiphany is a process of God in the World then, analogically, Being is in a constant process of self-emergence.[17] So Being's epiphany expresses not only its autonomy but, all the more, its freedom: to be the self and, at the same time, the other (the different). It is in this sense that Heidegger may be right to claim that the essence of truth is freedom, and that the postmodernists have understood science in particular and human beings in general.[18]

FREEDOM AND TRUTH IN RELIGION

I would argue that Heidegger's interpretation of truth does not stem directly from Nietzsche's thought (as some postmodernists may insist), but is rooted in a religious source.[19] Earlier religious thinkers never separated truth and freedom from life. Truth in religion is not a formula, or a criterion, or a means, but the most authentic aspect of life, just as freedom is not what is given to us but an essential part of human life which makes humans like God. There is no formula of truth in religion. There is no unique way leading to God. And, of course, there is no image that can depict precisely and truthfully the Godhead. Here is the reason why God forbids idolatry. In this sense, Heidegger's interpretation of Being's authenticity does not follow the pattern of traditional criteria of "certainty" and "clarity" (e.g., of Descartes). Authenticity refers to what essentially constitutes life. As such, it gives light to what Christ means by truth. Truth cannot be separated from the Way and from our Life: *Christus via, veritas et vita est.* (John 14:6).

Truth and Life

One clearly finds here the closest, almost inseparable, relationship between truth and life, truth and the way to life. These ideas are the most important concepts in virtually every religion; not just in Christianity. These ideas determine the behavior, thought, and even aspirations of believers. There is no contradiction here between freedom and truth, truth and life. In this perspective, Alfred North Whitehead rightly wrote:

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[17] Cf. Karl Rahner, *Geist in Welt* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1939).

[18] See Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002); See also Robert Magliola, *Derrida on the Mend* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1984). A similar idea has been found also in Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-meme comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), in the chapter on "Ipseité et l'alterité, pp. 367 ff.

[19] A similar interpretation has been found in the works of Heidegger's pupils. See Karl Rahner, *Geist in Welt,* op. cit., Raimundo Panikkar, *Kultmysterium in Hinduismus und Christentum,* and John Caputo, *Heidegger and Thomas Aquinas,* just to mention a few.

> A religion, on its doctrinal side, can thus be defined as a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming the character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.[20]

Of course, "system of general truths" here does not mean the system of truth built on purely mathematical form. Truth can be known only through its effect on life. This means truth is considered as truth only if it is "sincerely held and vividly apprehended." Needless to say, this kind of understanding of truth is found in many religious traditions, Eastern as well as Western. Let us take a look in the history of Christianity to see how such a truth is conceived.

According to Waldemar Molinski,[21] truth (in Hebrew, *emeth*) originally meant "to be firm, reliable, faithful or fidelity" (2 Sam 7:28; Ps. 119:160), "sincerity and constancy" (Ps 132:11), "loyalty of the people to God" (Jos 24: 14; 1 Kg 20:3; Is 38:3; Ps 26:3; 86:11). The meaning of truth as the correspondence between assertion and reality (3 Kg 10:6; 22:16) or the identification of "law as truth" (Job 4:6; 13:6; Ecclesiasticus 27:9) comes only second. Similarly, truth in the *New Testament* means, firstly, "fidelity and reliability of God" (Rom 3:1-7), "human sincerity" (2 Cor 7:14; Phil 1: 18; 3:8; 4:4; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Jn 1), or "the quality of the genuine and obligatory which attached to the gospel" (Eph 4: 21; Gal 2:5, 14; Rom 2:8; 2 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7). Truth is taken to be "the word of God" (2 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7), and the sense of "authoritative doctrines" (1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 18; 3:18; 4:4) comes second. The interpretation of truth as "to fulfill the laws of God" (2 John 4; 3 John 3f) follows the interpretation of the divine law as love. So, in John's Gospel, truth is understood as the most necessary act of love, "the reality of salvation which sets man free" (John 8:32).

Such an understanding of truth was the basic teaching in early Christianity[22] until St. Augustine who, under the influence of Neo-Platonism, explained truth in terms of reality. He combined the Johannine *Logos* with the Plotinian *Nous* (*Confessions*, VII, 9). In other words, he linked 'truth as life' to the divine (contemplative) truth. In *De Trinitate* (VII, 3), he stated that the (God) Son is the truth since He is the Word who reveals the (God) Father. As such, Augustine understood truth as eternal reality. In *De Libero Arbitrio*, he clearly conceived of truth as absolute, eternal and changeless (II, 15, 39). Drawing from such a premise, he argued that truth is not created but only discovered by us (*De Vera Religione*, 39,

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[20] Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (1926), (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1960), p. 15.

[21] See Waldemar Molinski, "Truth" in *Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Herder, 1970), Vol. 6, pp. 308-318.

[22] Clement of Alexandria, for example, taught that God is the norm for the truth of beings (*Protrepticus*, VI, PG VIII, col. 173).

72). Truth is the ultimate objective of our life, and our search for truth determines the movement of thought.[23]

From St. Augustine on, Christian philosophers (Boethius, St. Anselm of Canterbury,[24] and especially St. Thomas) have interpreted truth as the "primordial opening out of being" (*ens et verum convertuntur*) and, at the same time, as the function of the judgment (*adequatio intellectus et rei*).[25] St. Thomas identified God as the first Truth and the foundation of all truth,[26] while Duns Scotus, by distinguishing the ontological from the logical truth, described God as the source of ontological truth. To prove God's existence, one has to rely on logical truth, however.

Now, we discover a gradual change from the concept of truth as life (ontological truth) to that of the source of life (God), and finally to that of so-called logical truth. Modern philosophers, such as Descartes, went farther. Descartes conceived God as the warrant for logical truth (*Meditationes*, III). He argued that man cannot be the origin of his infinite ideas (i.e., truth) (*Discours de la méthode*, 2, 14). So it is God who is the source and the warrant of truth. However, Descartes insisted on the *clarity and distinctness of an idea* as the essential characteristics of truth – something which exists only in pure thinking (*Meditationes*, III, 4).[27] Such a truth loses its source in life and is squandered in "the world of purely thinking." Descartes' radical interpretation of truth in terms of logical truth gives way to a modern way of understanding of truth as purely logical, and consequently, truth is detached from life.

Freedom and Life

A similar turn is found in the human understanding of freedom. The original meaning of freedom in religious tradition as the *true* image of God (*imago Dei*) has been often interpreted as a restricted freedom: the freedom of the created. Such an interpretation inclines one to the view that only the total, unrestricted freedom of the Creator can be called *true* freedom. Freedom here is understood as the free act towards any possible purpose. But this

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[23] Molinski, p. 308.

[24] According to Molinski, p. 309, "Boethius refers truth to judgment, while St. Anselm of Canterbury analyses the relation of logical truth to ontological truth. Logical truth is an effect of the *summa veritas*, mediated by created things (*De Veritate*, ch. 19). This means that the ontological connection is under the rule of truth as the *rectitutido sola mente perceptibilis* (ch. 11)."

[25] Cf. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 59; *De Veritate* I, 2.

[26] Molinski, p. 310: "God is the Transcendental Truth means that being has an intrinsic relation to spirit and hence to the spirit-soul, and also that spirit is ordained to being" (*De Veritate* I, 1). St. Thomas combines the Aristotelian notion that the soul is "all things in a certain fashion" with the notion of the truth of things (Aristotle, *The Soul*, 431: *Metaphysics*, 993 b)

[27] Molinski, p. 311.

kind of understanding of freedom, in fact, surpasses the original meaning of freedom: freedom towards a fixed purpose (i.e., *imago Dei*).

Now the question is, if human freedom cannot overstep its limit (human nature) and surpass its own purpose (to become perfect *like* God), then so-called *positive* freedom (i.e., freedom to) and *negative* freedom (i.e., freedom from) must be understood in the context of human nature and human activities – in the context of human life. This means that freedom expresses the human attempt to overcome the conditions that restrain, diminish or dismiss the fulfillment of human life, and at the same time, displays the human drive to fulfill one's life. So the question here is twofold: What conditions do we need to overcome?, and What kind of life can fulfill human nature? The answer to these questions is essential to our understanding of freedom.

What conditions do we have to overcome or do we have to be free from? The answers given by different religions, philosophers and politicians show the different approaches to the problem. In Christianity, it is sin that limits human capacity of self-fulfillment. In Buddhism, craving for wealth, pleasure power, and continued existence are the main causes of unhappiness. To Marxists, it is the unjust social structure. It is clear that a kind of freedom in terms of emancipation, or liberation is implicit in each of these answers: liberation from slavery, escape from the yoke of *samsara*, and emancipation from class oppression. That is what we often identify as negative freedom, the *libertas a coactione*.[28]

Such freedom does not, however, solve the inner contradiction of freedom: freedom can be gained at the cost of another's un-freedom. There is hardly any demarcation between individual freedom and individual interest. If freedom means to pursue one's own interests freely, then conflict is a logical result of freedom. And to solve conflicts requires the restriction of another's freedom. The others here are the powerless. So the belief that freedom is the most desired, or the ultimate, objective of human beings would not make sense, or makes little sense, to the majority of people. The belief in freedom as "freeing from" would turn to be an illusion so long as power is still in the hands of a few.

Aware of this sad fact, John Stuart Mill proposes an understanding of freedom from its positive aspect. He writes: "The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way."[29] He concedes the fact that such freedom is possible only if we can become our own master. To be our own master means self-realization. But Mill does not discuss the question of how to be aware that one is master or of how to become one's own master (i.e. how to realize oneself). Kant and the German ideologists refer to the idea of autonomy and the consciousness of the self,

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[28] Cf. Max Mueller, "Freedom," in *Sacrmentum Mundi*, Vol. 1, pp. 352-361; See also Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 122 ff.: "The Notion of "negative" Freedom."

[29] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*. Quoted by I. Berlin, op. cit., p. 127.

while Marx sees force (labor) as the *conditio sine qua non* that makes man autonomous. In other words, to be the master demands, first, self-consciousness and, secondly, the force of self-subsisting and self-developing. But self-consciousness cannot be found in the ego alone, just as a kind of Robinson Crusoe could not happen in our present society. So the insistence on the equality of liberty of all human beings seems to be rather a wish, or a pure idea in the brain of (German) ideologists. Aristotle was not completely wrong when he discovered the existence of the ruling class thanks to slavery. He was, however, wrong because he did not foresee human evolution, thanks to human labor. The master knows how to use effectively his own force and the labor of his slave to realize his good life, while the slave just works for his master and not for himself. Despite his unwillingness to treat the problem from point of view of German philosophers, Mill still regards positive freedom in terms of human self-realization.[30]

For my purposes here, I will not delve into Mill's arguments, but start with his insight of freedom as a means for and an expression of self-realization. So, the focus of our discussion will be whether self-realization could fulfill the human quest for ultimate happiness (i.e., whether positive freedom could be humanity's most desired end), and whether such an objective is also that of religion.

The fact that freedom can be understood and appreciated in a certain kind of life, and that human life can be fulfilled thanks to other elements (and factors) relating to life, points to the truth that it is life and not freedom or truth that is the final end of human beings. So, one may argue that freedom makes sense only if it fulfils life, or makes it perfect. If this is so, then the final question for us should be What kind of life is the perfect life? Negative freedom expresses the human aspiration for not being restrained by the conditions which may jeopardize, limit and destroy life. Positive freedom points to the human desire to achieve what we consider as the fulfillment, the perfection of life. In religion, the freedom to fulfill and to perfect life can be termed as a transcendental freedom (*libertas transcendentalis*). The desire of transcending the *status quo* and ascending towards the highest stage (i.e., "being over and above"[31]) the present life is, without doubt, the kernel of any serious religion. It is the religious spirit that motivates human beings to seek a perfect life. Such transcendental freedom is seen in human active participation (or engagement) in the absolute world of God. Thomas Aquinas describes such an act of transcendence as

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[30] Actually, the idea of positive freedom has been a mark of the Greek culture. The Greeks refer to the idea of self-possession, being completely present to oneself, total self-sufficiency as *Autarky*, while the Romans understand liberty as *dominium in actu suos, dominium super se ipsum.*" Max Mueller, p. 353.

[31] Mueller, p. 354.

participatio quaedam infiniti. Only with this kind of transcendental freedom can negative freedom and positive freedom be understood.[32]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

My objection to the claim of freedom-possession is based on my rejection of the claim of truth-possession. Against such claims, I took Heidegger's insight about truth as a self-revelation (i.e., a *free state of self-presentation*) to show that the human pretension of being able to grasp truth in its *totality* is the product of pure imagination. The uncontrolled lust for power, advocated by Nietzsche, seductively pulls human beings into the hallucination of being God or a demi-god. So truth-possession and freedom-possession – the property of the Creator – have been falsely claimed by these "supermen." This absurdity has been the hallmark of many "imperialist" ideologies and cultures. Thus, the source of the "clash of civilizations" (to use Huntington's terminology) is not the difference of races and cultures, but our claim that truth and freedom are for us only.

Reflecting on truth and freedom must, therefore, begin with a deeper reflection on life. Descartes' mathematical truth would not have contradicted the logic of life if he did had not separated life from truth. Kant's plea for freedom in the sense of autonomy would not have contradicted human transcendent nature if he had conducted a more thorough investigation into the limits of reason. However, there is still a difference between Descartes and Kant. Descartes remained content with his discovered truth, which he did not bother to expand to life *in toto*; Kant, however, put the question of "Was ist der Mensch?" at the center of his investigation.[33] Man cannot be understood in a single, static aspect. It can be apprehended only in a dynamic and infinite process of self-realization.

Whitehead's insight, at the beginning of the twentieth century, of the correlation between mathematical truth and religious truth is striking. One can be a good mathematician and a religious man[34] because there exists no internal contradiction between truth and life. The same holds for the relation between truth and freedom. Both are rooted in life. Wittgenstein's pondering about the origin of mathematics, just as Heidegger's relentless quest for truth and freedom, lead to a similar conclusion: mathematics is inseparable from life, just as truth and freedom are only the most expressive forms of authentic life. Edmund Husserl's objection to the so-called "mathematization of the world" (in his *Die Krisis der europäischen*

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[32] Mueller, p. 353.

[33] Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 804f; B 832f.; Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1951), p. 187.

[34] Whitehead, p. 14. "But as between religion and arithmetic, other things are not equal. You *use* arithmetic, but you *are* religious. Arithmetic of course enters into your nature, so far as that nature involves a multiplicity of things. But it is there as a necessary condition, and not as a transforming agency."

Wissenschaften) has forced rationalists to reflect again on the legitimacy of "mighty reason." Actually, in Husserl's view, truth would lose its sense if it were separated from life. Truth would reduce the meaning of our flourishing life if it were determined by rational criteria which are fully neutral concerning life.

In short, it is time to rethink truth and freedom in terms of life, and not the reverse. To be truthful means to be loyal to life; and to be loyal means to be faithful (as seen in religious belief). Our faith cannot be demonstrated by a set of criteria built on formal truth, but by our "truest" feelings, by our deepest sense of life. Similarly, to be free does not mean to be completely detached from others, but to strive to fulfill true human nature without restriction or coercion by "untrue" forces. Here, freedom does not mean a completely free state, but rather free from the untrue forces which deform or destroy life. In this sense, Marx's concept of liberty in the sense of liberation from the (social, economic, political) conditions that make humans alienated (or reified) does not, actually, count against the religious understanding of freedom: freedom means a liberation from the state of slavery, and a condition to restore humanity and well as to fulfill it. It is in religion that one finds freedom in its full sense: a liberation from the negative forces that restrict or hinder human transcendence, and a positive striving for the ultimate purpose.

National Taiwan University
Taipei, Taiwan

IS DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE POSSIBLE? A REVISION OF MARX'S CRITIQUE OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE[1]

HUANG YING-HUEI

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to search for a form of distributive justice that can be applied to newly emerging market societies like China and Vietnam. I wish to show that Marx's critique of distributive justice, the core concept of market-oriented society, does not imply a demand for the abolition of justice in general. In contrast, Marx aims rather at reconstructing distributive justice in a manner that is fair (or reasonable) to all members of the community.

Justice, in a widely accepted sense, is understood in terms of equality:[2] equality of rights, equality of duty, equality of living and working conditions, and so on.[3] Such an understanding of justice is, generally speaking, becoming the consensus for all today, even for the hard-core communists. One rarely encounters any opposition to it. I do not contest such view, even if I still doubt that equality is the only factor that allows us to decide the just or the unjust, or whether it could make our world better. My question focuses on our understanding of equality: which kind of equality – the quantitative or the qualitative, the rational or the non-rational – would best represent justice? Since equality is well known in distribution, it is distributive justice that captures our attention.

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[1] The main idea of this paper was originally presented at the *Sixth AACP International Conference on Asian Cultural Heritage and Globalization*, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand, 18-20 August 2004. It has been rewritten for the *Conference on The Role of Philosophy in the Global Age*, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, 1-2 June 2006. The author expresses his profound gratitude to Prof. Tran Van Doan of National Taiwan University for guiding and correcting this work.

[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1131a10 -1131b24. See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 119.

[3] Arthur M. Okun, *Equality and Efficiency* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1975). See also John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), and Douglas Rae, *Equalities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981). See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, p. 344.

We know that Aristotle's division of justice into the universal and the particular, and again the particular into the distributive and the remedial,[4] has been often sidelined by British political theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill and, especially, by economists like David Ricardo and John Adam Smith. They intentionally dismissed the universal as purely theoretical morals, and downgraded the particular, regarding it as a mere means of distribution. It is clear that the inner and inseparable relation among these diverse forms of justice is cut off, and what remains is only of a particular character. Obviously, in their view, justice is impartial and equally applied to all. It is a "universal means" but no longer the end. Justice is now understood in terms of "fair" (to use John Rawls's language) distribution, or "just" distribution, or "right" distribution of resources, and the reasonable distribution of wages, prices and exchanges (commutative justice), and products.[5] In other words, distributive justice has been taken as (1) the mere means to regulate production and to distribute resources as well as (2) an effective instrument of labour-division and rewards, and (3) as the ethical principle to settle conflicts of interest.[6]

Doubtless, one bypasses the acute problem of distributive justice, raised by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, that distributive justice would become unjust without a universal moral principle.[7] This was well known to

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[4] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V, 1131a; also *Politics* VII, 1238b.

[5] Marx understood distributive justice in its broadest sense, including commutative and distributive as well as corrective justice, e.g., rights for civil damages. K. Marx, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms* (1875), Introduction.

[6] John Stuart Mill, *Mill's Utilitarianism reprinted with a Study of the English Utilitarians*, by J. Plamenatz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).

[7] This is evident in the work of Thomas Aquinas: As Frederick Copleston writes: "The part is ordered to the whole ... [leads to the idea of subordination] of the individual to the State.... But St. Thomas also insists that he who seeks the common good of the multitude seeks his own good as well, since one's own good cannot be attained unless the common good is attained.... [R]ight reason judges that the common good is better than the good of the individual." (Copleston refers the reader to *Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 55ff.) F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, p. 418.

On justice, Aquinas writes: "*justice is a habit* which makes a man "capable of doing what is just, and of being just in action and in and in intention" (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 1, Obj. 1); "Justice is the same as rectitude" (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 1, ad Obj. 2)

On injustice: "Secondly we speak of injustice in reference to an inequality between one person and another, when one man wishes to have more goods, riches for example, or honours, and less evils such as toil and losses, and thus injustice has a special matter and is a particular vice opposed to particular justice (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 59, 1, resp)

"The common good is the end of each individual member of a community, just as the good of the whole is the end of each part. On the other hand the good of one individual is not the end of another individual: wherefore legal justice

Karl Marx, as can be seen in his critique of classical economics and, especially, "vulgar economics."[8] However, Marx went much farther than Aristotle, too far indeed, by radically dismissing any form of distributive justice. In his view, any form of justice is just a means of the bourgeois world.[9] As a consequence, he opted for a radical abolition of the bourgeois system of justice and rights.

My paper approaches Marx's critique of distributive justice with a reluctant attitude. If justice is understood in terms of distribution, and if distribution is the master's mere means to pocket the interests for himself, then Marx may be right. However, if distribution is a rational means and is needed to regulate and to make our life easier or better, then any objection to distributive justice would be sheer rhetoric. Any objection to rational means would be absurd for a man of rational spirit like Marx. So, we will argue that Marx in fact unconsciously takes the view that he rhetorically rejected. That means that Marx actually did not reject the idea of distributive justice, but pleaded for a more reasonable distribution based human needs instead of on capital or on the products (commodities), or on its resources. The root of evil lies, not in distribution, but in the hands of those who dictate its policy, form and means, i.e., the ones who command economic resources.[10] In a word, the problem is rather structural and encompassing relating to the questions about the reason, the objectives, and the method of distribution. The power of deciding such policy is usually in the hands of those who command the market and dictate the line of production – i.e., those who orient the market, not for the sake of satisfying

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which is directed o the common good, is more capable of extending to the internal passions ...." (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 9, ad Obj. 3.)

Aquinas, "Further, it belongs to justice not only to distribute things duly, but also to repress injurious actions, such as murder, adultery and so forth." (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 11, obj 3). Referring to Cicero (De Officio, i.7), Aquinas writes: "beneficence which we may call kindness or liberality, belongs to justice" (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 11, Obj 2). Referring to Augustine (De Trinitate xiv, 9): "The act of justice is not to render to each one his own, because justice is the act of succoring the needy. (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 11, Obj 1) Referring to St. Ambrose (De Officio, i, 24): "It is justice that renders to each one what is his, and claims not another's property; it disregards its own profit in order to preserve the common equity." (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, IIae, 58, 11, sed contra)

[8] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (1857), pp. 96-97.

[9] Karl Marx, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms* (1875), *Marx-Engels Werke* (MEW) 19, 21.

[10] Karl Marx, *Capital III*, p. 830. In his critique of vulgar economics, Marx wrote, "the enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world in which Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre do their Ghost-walking as social characters, and at the same time directly as mere things." See also Roman Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's Capital* (London: Pluto Press, 1977), p. 29.

human needs, but for the accumulation of capital. So, distribution will be made so that the rich, powerful class will become richer, and its ultimate reason is capital itself. Distribution will be calculated so that these purposes can be reached.

In this sense, Marx's critique of distributive justice must be seen not as his objection to a *right, reasonable* distribution, but to all external and internal factors that make any just distribution impossible, and to the arbitrary fabrication of human needs. In this context, Marx's critique of justice is rather a demand for a true justice, i.e., the *rights* of the social man.[11] Such a humanist view is, doubtless, rooted in Aristotelian ethics, and partly in St. Thomas Aquinas's insistence on the inseparability between morals (universal justice) and laws (particular justice), i.e., distributive justice.

To argue for this view, this essay consists of two main parts: the first is a brief account of distributive justice as defended by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas; the second part discusses Marx's critique of these views, and his own view of justice. From the perspective of a more balanced historical account of justice, I add a concluding section in which I argue for the need for a revaluation of distributive justice in terms of a reasonable calculation of human basic needs and ability. That is what Marx had proposed in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) with the motto of "From each to his ability, to each according to his needs." [Note that such view has been confusedly declared in the *Manifesto* (1848), and, perhaps vaguely, in his *Paris Manuscripts of 1844* and *The German Ideology* (1845).] In the *Manuscripts*, Marx traced the reasons of human alienation back to the unequal division of labour, unjust distribution of land, and unreasonable calculation of wages and labour force.[12] Regrettably, his rhetorical attack on capitalistic forms of alienation, and his hasty identification of justice as one of these forms, gave the false impression that he radically objected to any idea of justice, as well as all of its forms.

THE NEGLECTED *DIKE* (ΔΙΚΗ) AND THE MISUNDERSTOOD *JUSTITIA*

Such an impression is, of course, not entirely unfounded. We know for sure that justice is one of the most misunderstood concepts in politics and economics. Ever since the times of ancient Greece, no single definition of

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[11] Note that in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights*, Marx unmistakably points out the malicious linking of "right" to "the rights." Actually, the German term *Rechts* means at the same time "right (correct, just), "law" and "the rights."

[12] Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, MEW, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil, 463 ff.; *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1845/6); MEW 3, 33. See also Istvan Mezaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation, Fourth Edition* (London: Merlin Press, 1982), Introduction, pp. 11-26.

justice has been universally accepted. To the Sophists, disagreement about justice is all that they could agree upon. The main reason is that justice cannot be thought of separately from human interests, needs and abilities. The majority of philosophers, Eastern and Western alike, have to acknowledge that human beings are born selfish and live of their own interests. Hsun-tse, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and others remind us of what human nature is. Men from their nature are in a constant state of war (Hobbes). Struggle for life is their ultimate end (Darwin). In a word, human nature is evil (Hsun-tse). So, it seems to be true that like other "virtues," justice is "invented" and taken by men to serve personal interests indeed. The satirical remarks of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and of Anatole France about justice as a whore – i.e., an abused means to 'making the rich richer, the poor poorer' – reflect only a part of people's indignant reaction against it.[13] Aristotle himself was quite aware of this *hubris* when he deliberately tried to discard instrumentality from justice, and when he treated it as a virtue *par excellence*, an *arete* (αρητε) unlike other *aretai* (αρηται).[14] Following Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas considered justice as a divine command, equal to love,[15] the most basic virtue of Christianity.

Let me begin here with a rather philosophical approach to the problem of justice, as seen by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. We know that ever since Homeric times, when the idea of the state (πολισ) appeared, that justice has been a main theme of debate. Striving for excellence is the objective of the Greek in a Homeric society. However, this could be achieved and accepted only if competition is executed in *fairness*. Precisely for this purpose, *dike* has been *designed* by the Greeks. *Dike* does not mean only custom, but also sound judgement, fair punishment. It was understood by the Greeks in the same context, as the right (correct, true), rights, laws and morals. Therefore, *dike* has been applied to the daily life of the Greeks. Alasdair McIntyre has interpreted the Aristotelian *dike* in this sense.[16] In his

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[13] See Tran Van Doan, "On Justice" in *Politics and Morals* (Taipei: Students Bookstore Publishing House, 1988), pp. 133 ff.

[14] [Referring to Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V. 1], Aquinas writes: "In this sense the Philosopher declares that the most excellent of the virtues would seem to be justice, and more glorious than either the evening or the morning star." (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Q.58, art 12; Engl. Tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province). David Ross, a noted expert on Aristotle has elaborated a table of virtues treated by Aristotle. However in this table, Ross has deliberately excluded justice from it. There is a virtue of righteousness put in the column of means, but it is far from justice. See W. David Ross, *Aristotle*, Second Edition (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 203.

[15] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, ad 6: "Just as love of God includes love of our neighbour, as stated above (Q.25, a.1), so too the service of God includes rendering to each one his due."

[16] Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "some conceptions of justice make the concept of desert central, while others deny it any relevance at all. Some

understanding, Olympic games had to be performed in accordance with the rules, and the winners would be the ones who obey these rules.[17] The same standards have to be applied to performance under the same standard conditions. Appropriate allowances have to be made where someone performs under conditions either more difficult or easier than the standard conditions. The beginner as well as the advanced performer must be judged in appropriately different ways. These constraints are expressed in formulas used to define justice: *each person and each performance has to be accorded what is due to him or her*. So merit and desert are accorded or bestowed on equal terms, but not the right degree of proportionality. That means that the content of *dike* can be known only in terms of merit and desert, i.e., in the forms of *dikaiosune* (δικαιοσυνη). MacIntyre correctly points out that *dike* and *dikaiosune* are the expressions of some unitary order informing and structuring human life.[18]

The point now is, if justice is judged by the yardstick of merit and desert, and if these really ought to determine human life, then we have to face other more fundamental questions of what merit is, what desert is, who determines the criteria of merit and desert, and who has the opportunity (capacity) to get this merit? The last two questions of 'who determines merit, and who has the right (opportunity, chance) – i.e., who deserves to get – merit,' in my view, might have been the focus of Marx's critique.[19]

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conceptions appeal to inalienable human rights, others to some notion of social contract, and others again to a standard of utility. Moreover, the rival theories of justice which embody these rival conceptions also give expression to disagreements about the relationship of justice to other human goods, about the kind of equality which justice requires, about the range of transactions and persons to which considerations of justice are relevant, and bout whether or not a knowledge of justice is possible without a knowledge of God's law." See *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 1.

[17] Alasdair MacIntyre comments in *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1983), p. 33: "One who excels is one who wins under condition of fairness... Moreover, someone who is genuinely excellent has to impose the constraints of fairness upon him or herself, if only because to know how to judge oneself or others excellent, which is part of excellence, involves fairness in judging."

[18] MacIntyre, p. 33.

[19] For examples of Marx's critique of equal distribution, see his comments: "Egality is the concept used by the bourgeois (to control the property, or to own land):" "Die Assoziation, auf Grund und Boden angewandt, teilt den Vorteil des großen Grundbesitzes in nationalökonomischer Hinsicht und realisiert erst die ursprüngliche Tendenz der Teilung, nämlich die Gleichheit, (*Ökonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, MEW, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil, 508).

The reason for Marx's critique of egality due to its "unrecht": "Die Teilung des grundeigentums einhergeht mit dem Prinzip der Konkurenz, die

They point to the same question of the power-holder (ruling class): those who have the power, rule. They make laws. They have the rights to bestow on themselves merits (rewards) in accordance with their own laws. It is clear that such merits are basically unjust since they are based on the inequality of the initial conditions of the "haves" and the "have-nots." The poor, the powerless and the under-privileged would have no chance to compete with the rich, the powerful and the privileged.

In this context, Marx would not object to Aristotle's view of distribution if it were grounded on a real equality – say, the equality of labour force and of basic needs: each person has to be accorded with what is due to him. Each ought to get what he or she is due. Marx doubts, however, that there is an equality of social conditions and criteria determining the content of "what is due to," i.e. resources.[20] Marx's doubt is backed by historical and social facts. Customs, merits and deserts are subject to change by people – and more often by the rulers – of different ages and in diverse societies. They are understood and estimated differently. But the rights to interpret and to command belong surely not to the people but to the rulers.

Let me take "virtues" as an example to clarify this point. The same act of loyalty, the highest virtue (and hence, merit) among the Chinese, seems to be a sign of weakness of personality to many Americans (who favour individual independence). The rituals, widely respected as sacred in

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ueber kurz oder lang die *Akkumulation von Kapital durch einige Eigentuemer und folglich das Wiederaufheben von Ungleichheiten nach sich zieht.* Gleichheit kann demnach nur ein leeres Wort sein so lange Konkurrenz besteht, d.h. die *Moeglichkeit fuer einige Individuen oder einige soziale Kraefte, ihr Vermoegen auf Kosten der anderen zu vergroessern.*

Die Gleichheit ist demnach die Hauptkategorie, durch die die Bereiche Oekonomie und Ideologie miteinander verbunden sind: "Die Enstehung des Gleichheitsbegriffs laesst sich in all seinen Facetten rekonstruieren..., in der oekonomischen Praxis (Aequivalentform), in der buergerlichen oekonomischen Theorie (Tausch) zwischen gleichen Warenproduzenten) und schliesslich in der jurisristen und moralischen Ideologie (G. Labica, De l'égalité, in *Dialectiques*, No. 1 / 2, 1973.9)

Das gleiche Recht ist hier daher immer noch dem Princip nach — das bürgerliche Recht... Es ist daher ein Recht der Ungleichheit, seinem Inhalt nach, wie alles Recht. (MEW 19, 20f.)

"The evaluation of an adequate theory of distributive justice must be capable not simply of absolute idealization (that Marx has) (i.e. of telling us what the ideal is), but also of *relative evaluation* (i.e. of telling us which of several possible alternatives is to regarded as the most satisfactory). (Nicholas Rescher, *Distributive Justice* [Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966], p. 598)

[20] The now famous saying of Marx in *Kritik des Gothaer Programms* (MEW 19, 21): "To each according to his capacity (merit), from each according to his needs" (Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen), basically repeats the same content of Aristotle's view on distribution.

religious communities, may be regarded as worthless or silly in scientific communities. Thus, one may say, the controversy over understanding virtue, obviously, is seen not in virtue *in se*, but virtue *per se* (i.e. its instrumentality), and especially, in the rights of interpretation. With the rise of science and its domination, myth and sacred rituals are dismissed as nonsense, while in contrast, such rituals would be considered as sacraments in a country still governed by clerics. So, the more fundamental question is whether there are some universal criteria or conditions determining merit and desert, or whether these criteria are artificially fabricated at the whim of the rulers (i.e., the power-holders).

Actually, depending on the meaning of 'excellence,' striving for it may require some conditions that only some may have, and that ordinary men and the under-privileged class could never possess. Physically, only the fittest (strongest, fastest) persons can achieve the "excellence criteria" of higher, stronger and faster, as required by the Olympic game.[21] However, in a certain society, the criteria of excellence may be completely reversed. The weakest may be the most deserving. So we see in the Christian teachings which Nietzsche attacked. So also in the value of democracy which is widely taken for granted today. That means that merit and desert are socially understood and esteemed.

So, our main question here is not "what is" but "who determines" the criteria of excellence? If the conditions and criteria of excellence are man-made, then merit and desert are not natural. They are artificially made at the whim of the rulers. Such practice has been widely seen to be rampant in every society at any period so far. Merit and desert are, therefore, a kind of social acknowledgement, just as honour and recognition are. Pericles was among the first Greek philosophers who acknowledged this fact. In his view, striving for excellence is not only a matter of honour and reputation but also profit, wealth and the like.[22] Even if the Sophists desperately attacked Pericles' idea by denying the relationship between the standards of right action, on the one hand, and the wants, satisfaction, and preferences of individual human beings on the other,[23] they can hardly deny the fact that human desires, satisfactions, and preferences provide an empirical basis for morality.

To avoid this embarrassing result, Aristotle had attempted to divide justice into the universal and the particular: the universal belongs to the substantial characteristics of human beings, while the particular aims at serving a certain society's or a certain individual's interests. It is in this last

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[21] Most Olympic rules are unfair, for example, for people of an average height. How can Southeast Asians compete with the people of the North in the game of basketball, for example?

[22] Pericles, *Funeral Oration*, II, 44,4.

[23] MacIntyre, p. 74.

category that Aristotle includes so-called distributive justice.[24] So, let us take a closer look into the last kind.

According to Aristotle, particular justice consists of (a) distributive justice and (b) remedial justice. By using distributive justice, the State distributes goods to its citizens. The distribution obeys the rules of geometrical proportion, i.e., according to merit.[25] Remedial justice is subdivided into two types, (1) that dealing with voluntary transactions (Civil Law) and (2) that dealing with involuntary transactions (Criminal Law). Remedial justice proceeds according to arithmetical proportion. Aristotle added to these two main divisions of particular justice, the commercial or commutative.

The division of justice into the universal and the particular, and again, the particular into the distributive and the remedial is not only for the purpose of clarity, but, much more, for a deeper understanding of its "non-social" and social nature. His intention is clear, but is often misunderstood, due to the unmarked line between the social and the non-social. So, despite his effort, justice has been never taken seriously as a virtue *par excellence*. In contrast, it is downgraded into a mere means, and assigned with a humble job of settling disputes of interests.[26] As a pure instrument at the hands of the rulers, justice serves their interests, making the "rich richer, the poor poorer." The poor and oppressed, in their turn, have to build their own version of justice to console them. Rousseau is among a few thinkers of the Enlightenment who attempt to unmask the hypocritical artificiality of such an understanding of justice. Justice loses its universal claim. It remains as a particular means for a particular society or community.

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[24] In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Five, Aristotle understands justice as (a) what is lawful and (b) what is fair and equal (*to men dikaion ara to nomimon kai to idon, to o adikon to paranomon kai to aniron*, 1129a 34). The first kind of justice is regarded as "universal," and is practically treated as an equivalent to obedience to law. Frederick Copleston explains this kind of justice in the sense of ideal virtue, "which extend[s] over the whole of life and enforce[s] virtuous actions." Thus, "universal justice is more or less conterminous with virtue, looked at in its social aspect at any rate." See F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 83.

[25] Note that at the time of Plato and Aristotle, only a few of the Greeks qualified as citizens. Thus, Greek citizens regarded themselves as shareholders in the State who are far from the conception of citizen as taxpayer today. Aristotle himself in his *Politics* conjectures that an ideal State would consist of three great classes, the artisans at the bottom, the Auxiliaries or military class over them, and the Guardians at the top. But it is the Guardians who are regarded in the strictest sense as true citizens of the *Polis* state, since they directly participate in the affairs of the State.

[26] Aristotle made clear that justice is not really a means as the other virtues are. If it is treated as a means, then it is so only in the sense that it produces a state of affairs standing midway between that in which A has too much and that in which B has too much. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1133 b 30-2.

Here I am concerned, in particular, with Aristotle's claim of distributive justice in geometrical proportion. The question is whether such distribution could do justice to all involved partners, say, of a firm or of a group of businesses; and whether distributive justice could be effective in dealing with distributing interests and settling the interest-conflict of the partners involved. These questions lead further to another more banal, but more fundamental question of judgement or revaluation of merit: is it the president of a company or a humble worker who deserves more merit and thus gets more reward? Is the teaching of a professor worthy or worthless?

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE[27]

Let me return to the understanding of distributive justice from the point of view of merits, and the distribution of merits in geometrical form. The main controversy here is about our understanding of merit and about the "geometrical" form. Basically, justice based on merits presupposes the idea of inequality, and not equality, as its principle. On the one hand, as seen in Aristotle's analysis, merits are not universally and neutrally conceived, but can be recognized only in relation to human needs and interests. An artist's merits could hardly be recognized by a member of the working class, but may be well received by the higher classes. A peasant's merit would not be highly esteemed, since his products are abundant, and therefore their market values are low or insignificant. So, it is evident that the value of products is determined by the market, and not by their own values, or by the value of labour. On the other hand, if merits are judged by human achievements, would we give merits to the son of a rich family who has achieved high grades, while bypassing the son of a peasant or a simple worker for their less "valuable" products? Obviously, it would be "unfair" to follow this

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[27] On Marx's critique of distributive justice: "First, his materialist analysis led him to deny any fundamental explanatory role to juridical notions in general. Second, in his criticism of capitalism, conceptions of justice and rights play no major role. He does sometimes turn bourgeois conceptions of justice and rights against themselves in what I have called his internal criticism, but his most radical attacks on capitalism are offered from a perspective external to the concepts of justice and rights. Third, for Marx, conceptions of communist justice and rights are simply not needed either to evoke or explain revolutionary motivation or as basic normative principles for the new society toward which that struggle is directed. Thus, for Marx talk about rights and justice is obsolete in all these senses." Allen E. Buchanan, *Marx and Justice: The Radical Critique of Liberalism* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield Adams, 1982), p. 75.

To Marx: consumption is double: the individual consumption of the people in a given society, but also productive consumption (which is defined as the consumption which satisfies the needs of production to consecrate the universal use of the concept of need (objects of production, and the instruments of production) – constant capital and variable capital.

kind of logic, since those who are in better social, financial and even geographical conditions generally score higher grades. Merits, then, become their "properties."

The above analysis indicates that merits are judged not only from products, or from labour, or from achievement alone, but rather from a system of values which are often and arbitrarily dictated by the ruling class or by the market. That means the structure of social classes, the ideology of labour-classification, the distribution of resources at the initial stage, and so on, and not the labour force would automatically determine the result and, as such, the merits. In the market, it is the market itself and not the human factor that decides. Capital, land, instruments would automatically generate new capitals (interests, surplus values), i.e., new values. The landowner could get as much even when he does nothing. So it is capital. In these cases, it is absurd to refer to capital or land as the deservers of merits. There is less agreement and more disagreement about merits here.

Even from the point of view of human capacity, merits are often the results of human products which are again determined by talents and by the "genes one (he) was fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to inherit."[28] That means there is no equality. Inequality is factual and natural. Here is the reason why a man like Milton Friedman would argue for inequality as the source for progress and even for justice.[29] If inequality is as natural as it is necessary for economic growth, then the ideal of equality preached by the bourgeois is simply a void, senseless concept.

In what follows, then, I will present Marx's discussion of unjust distribution, just to prove that Marx's analysis makes sense only if a total revolution could take place, a revolution which replaces the old structure with a more reasonable one and which produces a complete system of new values. Otherwise, his ideal of an equal society – i.e., a classless society (dictatorship of the proletariat) – would be a utopia.

Equality and Inequality

Marx was critical of bourgeois equality, because he found inequality to be the backbone of the bourgeois society. The division of social classes, either in accordance with inherited genes (aristocrats), or inherited property (landowners), or talents, and then the division of work (labours), is based on inequality. As such, equality is rather an invention of the bourgeois class for their advantage. The claim that one may realize equality by unequal distribution of products, interests, profit, and so on is impossible.[30] The

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[28] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 166.

[29] Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, p. 166.

[30] Milton Friedman, for example, argues that only through inequality can equality be achieved. He wrote: "Differences of money income offset differences in other characteristics of the occupation or trade. In the jargon of

falsity of such a claim is seen not in the singular or particular case (which Friedman had taken and analysed),[31] but in the whole structure of the capital oriented market. Landowners, capitalists and the like do not possess any talent (or ability). They never work, i.e., produce (in the proper sense of labour). What they possess are land and capital which they may have inherited, or may have acquired, not by means of their own labour but by exploitation, theft, fraud, or mostly by force and an unreasonable system of laws. These last factors determine the market. As I have noted, the merits (bonuses, rewards) can be hardly justified by products (achievement) if the initial conditions are unequal. Let us change the notion of merit into that of profit: one finds in such a kind of activity a similar logical pattern. Most profits do not come directly from labour, but from an arbitrary exchange of labour and salary, wages and interests. Surplus-value is what Marx means by an accumulation of capital through exploitation, and not directly from our own labour force. Hence, it is clear that the structure of a capitalist society has been constructed on an unreasonable mode of exchange, an unfair distribution and a peculiar mode of production, not for human needs but for profits.

   Therefore, it would be a paradox to claim equality in distribution in a society of unequal structure. Here is the reason why Marx relegated the idea of equality to the rank of sheer rhetoric, used by capitalists or the bourgeois to propagate their ideology and to pocket more profit. From this point of view, Marx diagnosed the ineffectiveness of distributive justice. In his view, the belief in equality comes from a wrong diagnosis of the cause

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economists, they are 'equalizing differences' required to make a whole of the 'net advantages,' pecuniary and non-pecuniary the same." Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, p. 162.

[31] Friedman gives three examples to demonstrate the validity of his claim that equality can be reached only by means of inequality. All three examples are rather particular. One example is that different men of different tastes or ability would earn different salaries: "One man may prefer a routine job with much time off for basking in the sun to a more exacting job paying a higher salary; another man may prefer the opposite. If both were paid equally in money, their incomes in a more fundamental sense would be unequal." The point Friedman often bypasses is, in all the given examples, the men involved enjoy a certain freedom in choosing the job, or accepting a salary, or determining a career. The fact is that the absolute majority of the worker-class and even peasants have no other choice but to accept the assigned job.

   According to Elie Halevy, Political Economy is "a science whose goal is knowledge of the phenomena and (if the nature of those phenomena allows) the determination of the laws, which concern the distribution of wealth and its production and consumption, in so far as the latter phenomena are linked to those of distribution. Wealth means, technically, everything which is capable of utilization *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, ed. A. Lalande (1928), I, p. 187. See also Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading "Capital"* (London: New Left Books, 1970; rpt. London: Verso, 1997), p. 160.)

of injustice. Injustice begins first, not with the disproportional distribution, but with an artificial and unjust relation between landlord and renter, capitalist and worker. The unjust is deeply hidden in the social system of values and the real social structure.[32]

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[32] Marx regards the relation between capitalist and worker as unjust. See G.A. Cohen, 'Freedom, Justice and Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 126 (March-April), 1981; G.A. Cohen, Review of Wood, *Mind*, Vol. 92 (July, 1983); Z.I. Husami, "Marx on Distributive Justice," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 8.1 (1978), pp. 27-64.

See also Marx: *Grundrisse*: "The theft of alien labour [i.e. of surplus value or surplus labour] on which the present wealth is based" (p. 705).

Capital: the surplus product is "the tribute annually exacted from the working-class by the capitalist class. Though the latter with a portion of that tribute purchases the additional labour-power even at its full price, so that equivalent is exchanged for equivalent, yet the transaction is for all that only the old dodge of every conqueror who buys commodities from the conquered with the money he has robbed them of." (p. 582)

Cohen: "since, as Wood will agree, Marx did not think that by capitalist criteria the capitalist steals, and since he did think he steals, he must have meant that he steals in some appropriately non-relativist sense. And since to steal it, in general, wrongly to take what rightly belongs to another, to steal is to commit injustice, and a system which is 'based on theft' is based on injustice." (Cohen 1983, p. 443)

Grundrisse: 'The recognition [by labour] of the products as its own, and the judgement that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper (ungehoerig) - forcibly imposed - is an enormous awareness (enormes Bewusstsein), itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell to its doom as, with the slave's awareness that he cannot be the property of another, with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a mere artificial, vegetative existence and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production." (tr. Martin Nicolaus [Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973], p. 463)

"At the centre of Marx's *theory of production is the exploitation of one class by another*. The corresponding extraction of surplus labour yields a *distributional relationship between classes*. But it is one that can only be understood in its quantitative and qualitative dimensions by reference to the *relations of production*.

The basic distributional relationship is between capital and labour, each represented *in the form of revenue by profit and wages*. Accordingly, a distributional analysis of capitalism views it as a conflict over exploitation as expressed in an inverse relationship between profit and wages. ... *The distribution between profits and wages* is then derived from the *relations of production*. Wages are advanced as a precondition of production, and *profits, as the form of surplus value in exchange*, are the result of production, it self a conflict between capital and labour over the labour process. Consequently, *distributional relations under capitalism are the result of a conflict over production in which the classes are not situated symmetrically*." (Ben Fine,

Evidently, Marx's view differs radically from Aristotle's view. And, frankly speaking, Marx is right here. Since Aristotle had conceived of society as a class-based society, he would certainly have found nothing unreasonable with such relations. Furthermore, in Aristotle, the mode of production is agricultural or maritime, and as such, land as well as shipping should be the main sources for profit. As such, it would be "natural" when profits and wages are determined by the owners of land and or ships. Similarly, as a class society, we find the logic of a master and slave relation. So, this kind of relation does not really obey the law of justice.

Marx vehemently objects to such a view. In his view, the claim that a class society as natural is false, and consequently, discrimination against other classes is malicious. Class society is not natural; it is only the illegitimate son of oligarchy that the masters (the rulers) use to justify their rights, and the so-called laws aim rather at cementing their power and defending their interests.

Now Marx may make some strong points here, but it would be premature to dismiss the existence of class society. Right or wrong, one has to face a crucial question. Suppose that a classless society (the proletariat) exists. What kind of relations does it have? Which kind of laws do we need? Does it not mean that we have to return to Aristotle's concept of justice? *Note that justice is possible only for those of equal status.* Is it possible to make consistent the equality of membership with that of distribution, regardless of the disproportion of investment, capital, land, human capacity and instruments of production? If so, then the relevance of Aristotle's concept of distributive justice must be recognized.

Before tackling this problem, let me return back to Marx's critique of distributive justice. Marx's main objections to bourgeois justice can be summarized in two main arguments: first, any kind of justice (including distributive justice) is unjust, so long as the class relation is false; second, justice is impossible so long as the production relation is still manipulated by capitalists. These two factors make any distribution unjust.

Distribution and Distributive Justice

The distribution mentioned by capitalists is to be strictly understood as the distribution of products. It is quasi-independent of the process of production. The products (commodities put on the market) are given value, not by the long process of production, but by demand, i.e., from the real or artificial needs of customers. In modern times, human needs are mostly

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"distribution," in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. T. B. Bottomore (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 131.

And in fact, aside from sheer rhetoric, philosophers and especially, jurists, economists and politicians have always taken *justice as a mere mean to secure or to render to each one his (her) own*. It is this general account of justice that prevails in history.

artificial. They are fabricated and trumpeted so that the customers have a false impression about their absolute necessity. To obtain more profits, prices are often fixed not by labour, or by real needs, but rather by the insatiable desire for profit by those market-commanders. The so-called market-law, which claims to be constructed on the proportionality of demand and needs, supply and needs, commodities and consumers, quantity and quality is, in fact, artificially and arbitrarily constructed for the sake of profit-maximizing.

In this sense, the value of a commodity determined by expected profits, and profits do not reflect the real value of the product. The real value of a product can be calculated from (a) the demand of customers, (2) the long process of production, and (3) the costs of materials and labour; profits (or the value fixed by the market) or surplus-values, then, are extracted based on the low cost of labour, cheap materials, (automated) means of production, and the process of production.

Of course, products cannot be made without other factors – the tools, human labour, as well as effective modes of production (division of labour e.g., mechanical and automated production). So, in a wider sense, the distribution of products also consists in (1) the distribution of the instruments of production, and (2) the distribution of the members of the society into the different kinds of producers.[33] Such a distribution process leads to a web of entangled relations, the so-called process of production.[34] However, the whole process of production and its relation to other factors are often sidelined or bypassed by capitalists. What they want are the products. Value is calculated by the degree of maximal profits. And as such, distribution is simply reduced to product distribution.

As Marx rightly observed, distribution is not only limited to that of products, instruments, conditions, and so on. It also extends to the distribution of all that belongs to human life. That means distribution includes the distribution of needs and of necessary conditions that any human needs for survival and for a decent life. That means that the central problem determining justice would be the just distribution of human needs: "To each according to his [or her] needs," as he puts it in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. In this sense, against the definition of classical economics, Marx holds the view that economics have to deal primarily with material needs. Marxist economists like F. Simiand echoed Marx's view:

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[33] Marx, *Grundrisse*, Introduction, p. 17; Althusser and Balibar, *Reading "Capital"*, p. 167.

[34] See Marx, *Capital*, III, chap. 51: "The so-called distribution relations, then correspond to and arise from historically determined specific social forms of the process of production... The view which regards only *distribution relations as historical*, but not *production relations* is... solely the view of the initial, but still handicapped criticism of bourgeois economy."

What makes a phenomenon economic? Instead of defining
that phenomenon with respect to wealth [richessese - a
classical term in the French tradition, but one that could be
improved on], I believe it would be better to follow more
recent economists who take as central notion the
satisfaction of material needs."[35]

So, the main question for me is whether there can be a just
distribution concerning human needs at all. In the past, one has
mechanically applied the distribution of products in the distribution of
needs. That means one makes a quantitative calculation to measure human
desires, needs and satisfaction. Such an effort is still pursued today, but no
longer in terms of the purely quantitative calculation of profits and labour.
Human needs surpass the categories of profits and interests. Nicholas
Rescher has written, for example, about the task of distributive justice:

The task of a theory of distributive justice is to provide the
machinery in terms of which one can assess the relative
merits of demerits of distribution, the "assessment" in
question being made from the moral or ethical point of
view. Its objective is to establish a principle by which the
"assessment" of alternative possible distributions can be
carried out.[36]

CONCLUDING REMARK: THE POSSIBILITY OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN MODERN CHINA

The above investigation points to a simple fact: Marx does not object to a
fair and reasonable distribution. He is against any form of human alienation.
Any sort of distribution which distorts, undermines, or dismisses the human
life in its totality would be condemned by him. The point now is, what kind
of distribution is fair or reasonable? In a general manner, one may say that
only a kind of distribution which is compatible with human life, and which
realizes it, can be regarded by Marx as just. To be more specific, a just
distribution leading to distributive justice must meet the following
principles:

First, distribution cannot be a mere means. It must reflect reality.
So, it is, as the Kantian formulation goes, both the end and the means of
human life. As an end, distribution must be compatible with life. That
means that it must meet the state and conditions that make life *true* life.
Marx's radical objection to any form of alienation clearly indicates his
intention of providing the material basis for a true human life. In this sense,
distribution is just if it does not break human life apart. Labour-division,

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[35] Althusser and Balibar, *Reading "Capital"*, p. 162.
[36] Rescher, *Distributive Justice*, p. 7.

cutting the whole process of life into different, unrelated parts of life, and so on, distorts human life and makes it defective. Any distribution that aims at separating the part from the whole of the process of life would be unjust.

Second, as a means, distribution can be just only if it does not contradict the end. If the end is the total sum of all human activity, then production is only a part of it. So, a just distribution must conform itself to all human activity. In this sense, distribution consists not only in the distribution of products, but in the whole process of production. Distribution is not limited to the distribution of the means (or instruments), but extends to all conditions and means which may produce the best effects for life. In this context, distribution can be understood as the distribution of the instruments of production, the distribution of resources, the distribution of needs, profit-sharing, and generally the distribution of all factors which may affect human life. In a word, it is a distribution of the sum of the aspects of life.

Third, a fair distribution cannot be limited to any single category of distribution, be it qualitative or quantitative. Distributions based on a single aspect of life are only of relative value. That means that fair distribution can be judged only in the network of the totality of human relations, human needs, human activities, and perhaps human aspiration for a "perfect" future society (the one Marx once dreamed of, and which is expressed in terms of the classless society).

Based on these principles, one can work out a table of distribution of human needs for our present society, a task which I will try to complete in a future paper. For the purpose of discussion, I would like make a short remark as follows.

The main problem of feudal China was injustice: the unjust relations among classes, the unfair distribution of goods, the unreasonable division of labour, unequal treatment of citizens, and so on. Fundamentally, that was a wrong system or structure. The socialist revolution has attempted to destroy this irrational system and replace with the so-called communist society. After four decades, it seems that the revolution has not been successful for many reasons – a matter that a great number of economists and social scientists have dealt with. For our purpose, it is sufficient to mention one of them. It is the idea of equality. Such an ideal remains utopian so long as the totality of human aspects and activities are judged from a single economic or materialist aspect. Equality is only a relative term in the web of the complex of human relations, of which economic equality or equal distribution of products is just a part. No more no less! Viewed from this point, it is time to call attention to the fact that recent modernization in socialist countries cannot rebuild true justice, even a just distribution, if the state focuses only on the factors of production and profits.

Tsinghua University
Beijing, China

PHILOSOPHY IN VIETNAM IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

NGUYEN TAI THU

"Rethinking the Role of Philosophy in the Global Age" is not only an important theme for developed countries, but it is also a significant question for developing ones, i.e., those who are in a period of industrialization and modernization, as is the case for Vietnam. In order to carry out its role, Vietnamese philosophy must integrate within the thought and culture of the region and the world. To reach that goal, rethinking the content and form of Vietnamese philosophy is a necessary task.

VIETNAMESE PHILOSOPHY AS A MODE OF PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING

In the early 1960s, the Institute of Philosophy hosted conferences in which participants discussed *whether Vietnam had its own distinctive philosophy.* Opinions varied. Some thought that Vietnam had only politics, ethics, and religious studies, but not philosophy. Others held that Vietnam had only a pre-philosophy, but did not have philosophy. Some believed that, to build a theoretical foundation for defending and developing the country, it needed philosophy, but that Vietnamese philosophy did not yet exist, and so politics had taken that role instead. Others considered Vietnamese philosophy to be mainly the patriotic thought of resistance against invaders, and so on. Now, after more than 40 years, as the Institute of Philosophy compiles the book *The History of Philosophical Thought in Vietnam,* the same issue is again raised and some still insist that there is no Vietnamese philosophy. The question is difficult, but it seems impossible that a nation such as Vietnam has an indomitable, heroic tradition with traditions of thought and reason, but not its own philosophy.

In the history of world philosophy, there have been different conceptions of philosophy. This means that philosophy is an open concept. It changes according to the historical period and the development of the scientific disciplines; it also depends on the requirements of social practice in the nation in the particular period. In addition, however, this means that having a sufficient comprehension of Vietnamese philosophy with its own subject matter and content is still a largely open issue in need of additional research. It is understandable, therefore, that there be different ideas about philosophy in general, and about Vietnamese philosophy in particular, even among researchers and philosophers in Vietnam.

In dealing with objective reality, people may need to employ different modes of cognition. One must not only pass over the limitations of appearance, but go deeply into the essence of the object; one mist observe the object, not in isolation and as unchanging, but in motion and change, in causal relationships, in its possibilities as well as in its reality; one should never be satisfied with unconnected knowledge, but seek general conclusions and general principles. If this is a model of philosophical thought, certainly Vietnam has, and has had, its own philosophy.

The environment for the establishment of Vietnamese philosophy were those conditions in which the Vietnamese lived, which always pressed upon them and created in them a recognition of the two hard destinies of a personal fate and a national fate. To keep alive and to be able to overcome difficulties, they had to face, discover and understand reality thoroughly.

Living in a subtropical, hot and humid climate, the creatures there are born and perish quickly. Every year, there are many storms, floods, droughts, epidemic diseases, and famines. Man's well-being is not assured: one may be alive now but die later, exist now, and then instantly be no more, be healthy at one time and ill at another, be wealthy hither and indigent thither; fortune is side-by-side with misfortune. In addition, while living under the Chinese feudal regime, most Vietnamese were economically exploited, politically regressive, and hardly restrained in spirit; this made their lives ever anxious and anguished. The influence of these social and natural conditions upon their personal lives forced thinkers to pay attention to personal fate, to trace the original causes of events, to join them together, and to find ways of escape. Series of phenomena were set up in *opposition*, such as: freedom – oppression; pleasure – suffering; life – death; misfortune – fortune; wealth – poverty; which then became repetitious and so permanent issues for reflection and discovery. Correspondingly, philosophical thought about personal fate germinated and developed, was discussed and debated, and became the foundation for human life and its purpose.

Existing in the border area of East Asia and on the trade route between East and West and North and South, Vietnam has always been the victim of invasions by different imperialists near or far from Vietnam. Vietnam has had to struggle against them. In the wars, its forces were always at a disadvantage: enemies were strong, Vietnam was weak; enemy soldiers were many, Vietnam's were few. Normally, the strong win and the weak lose. However, to survive, Vietnam needed to achieve something unusual: that the weak wins over the strong and the few over the many became the Vietnamese historical reality. This was not only the result of will, but also the achievement of wisdom and stratagem, of practical and dialectical thought. A series of possible eventualities were recorded, many approaches were proposed and many possibilities considered, in order that numerous decisions be considered and carried out. Together they constituted a dialectical method of patriotic war, which became part of the typical nuance of the philosophical thought of Vietnam.

The relationship between the two above-mentioned modes of thought is organic. It has never been the case where one was lost while the other survived; on the contrary, the two modes of thought have always co-existed: interwoven, they influenced one another and formed the nuance of Vietnamese philosophical thought. Certainly, sometimes, the concern for personal fate emerged; at other times, it was the national fate which emerged. Both personal and national life formed those two modes of thought and vice versa; due to both personal and national fates, both modes of thought were sustainable and preserved.

Vietnam drew on foreign movements of philosophy at different times in its history. However, because foundational Vietnamese philosophical thought was formed as described above, it did not grow in the same direction into schools as did the western theories; rather, it turned around the two main concerns of Vietnam, and accordingly became richer and deeper. In addition to these two issues, other foreign theories entered and were propagated throughout the country, but they did not develop beyond general introductions and lectures.

Compared with the great philosophical systems of the world, Vietnamese philosophy does not have general theses on cosmology, ontology, or epistemology; neither does it have any philosophical school or great philosopher. This is a limitation. However, the effects of philosophical thought on personal and national fate have already established a theoretical foundation by which the Vietnamese would reach the height of philosophy, and change nothing into something, and possibility into reality.

OPEN INTEGRATION: NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR VIETNAMESE PHILOSOPHY

If we look at Vietnamese philosophical thought as recorded in historical texts, it is obvious that it contained traces of foreign philosophies, such as concepts, categories, and ways of expression. This is an undeniable fact. However, this does not mean that Vietnamese philosophy is only a copy or imitation of foreign philosophies. Rather, the essence of its thought shows the Vietnamese soul, mind, identity and way of thinking. Moreover, the issues were Vietnamese, and the solutions were directed towards their lives. Vietnamese philosophy is the outcome of the process of Vietnamese cognition, reflection, experiment about the interaction of the local people with their natural and social environment, and their experiences in overcoming the obstacles they encountered.

On the other hand, one cannot deny that Vietnamese philosophy depended on what the Vietnamese people inherited and learned from other systems of philosophy through communication and integration in the region and in the world. This does not mean that it lowered itself, because for every philosophical system, it is normal to draw on other philosophical systems in order to enrich one's own. Even ancient Greek philosophy, the paradigm of philosophical thinking, inherited various elements of thought and science from

ancient Egyptian and Indian civilizations. Thanks to communication with Indian philosophy and its dialectical thought, Chinese philosophy became more profound and comprehensive. Late in the field of philosophy, Vietnam needs to emphasize this aspect.

For Vietnam, opening the door to integration with others in the region and in the world is not only a present fact but something that has happened many times in its history. The common features of each opening and integration involved facing difficulties and challenges and struggles between two directions of thought: acceptance or opposition, either refusing and striving to resist for a long time or a dominance of an integrative tendency. Each time had its own particular conditions, with particular responses by the people in the situation.

In Vietnam, in the early centuries AD, there were struggles and integrations between the simple thought of the locals and the metaphysical thought of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism of the Han dynasty. At that time, Vietnam was under Han domination, and the plan of propagating Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism throughout Vietnam was part of the Han scheme for assimilating the Vietnamese nation into Han territory. However, the Vietnamese will for self determination led them to struggle against Han assimilation. Therefore, the process of integration proceeded with difficulty, and dragged on for a long time, until just at the end of the Han period, it began to develop. By the beginning of the independence period, about the tenth and eleventh centuries, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism together became the real worldview of the Vietnamese.

At the end of the nineteenth century, as part of a general trend, western imperialism expanded towards the East. Vietnam's independence was again in danger. In this new situation, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, as the Vietnamese basic worldview, appeared helpless. The Vietnamese patriots could not use them to explain the new world, and especially could not find in them anything to give them the power to prevent the danger of western aggression. Some Vietnamese discovered the system of western thought which undergirds contemporary western power; they proposed to reform that thought and sought to innovate and integrate it. However, for different reasons, they were rejected by the Nguyen dynasty (1802-1945). One opportunity to be "a rich people, a strong country" was ignored; a chance to prevent French invader was lost. Vietnam came under French domination in 1887.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Duy Tan, Dong Du, and Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movements took place in Vietnam. In essence, they were patriotic movements that had the intention of innovating and renovating the old system of thought in order to integrate it with the French Enlightenment and other Western European progressive thought at that time. Their aim was to improve the common people's knowledge and to strengthen their power in order to regain national independence. However, as these movements threatened French imperialism's domination in Vietnam, they were forbidden, which is why the effort of integration was not successful.

Ho Chi Minh, after years of traveling around the West to find a solution for the nation, encountered Marxism-Leninism and introduced it into Vietnam. Marx said that philosophy must not only explain the world, but also transform it. He also affirmed that, "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."[1] Once that thought penetrated the consciousness of people, it had to involve material force. This view of Marx had a great practical significance to the modern revolution of Vietnam. After adopting Marxism-Leninism in general, and Marxist-Leninist philosophy in particular, Vietnam gained extraordinary power to make outstanding achievements, such as: overthrowing feudalism and imperialism, liberating the nation and the society, and emancipating its people.

The long history of the Vietnamese nation has shown that it is very difficult to integrate into progressive trends of the world, for there are many obstacles. However when the obstacles are overcome and integration accomplished, it should not only influence and change social reality in a positive direction, but also should bring the thought of the nation to a new level, whence other achievements of knowledge and practice would follow. Now is the moment for Vietnam to integrate into the new global order. The trend is unstoppable, but the current integration is not the same as that of any other time in history, but comes with both new advantages and new difficulties and challenges.

The Communist Party's *Doi moi* policy, passed at the sixth General Congress, has opened a new opportunity for international integration in Vietnam. Since then, there have been resounding achievements in the renovation of the economy and international economic engagement. Immediately thereafter, the renovation of foreign affairs, with a policy of diversification and multi-directed diplomacy, also brought significant achievements. Spiritual and cultural activities also joined in the *Doi moi* movement and integration. Consequently, we have new conditions for what we can call *Doi moi* philosophical thought. It is an opportunity to modernize and to enrich the mind and thought of the nation, and a chance for philosophical thinking to uphold its essence as criticism and to update itself. Vietnamese philosophy has already taken certain steps towards this integration.

In accordance with general developments in the nation, integration would normally have already happened in philosophical thought, too. However, with a vision of the social conditions and political situation in the country, the integration of philosophy and thought seems not right at this time. Either integration or anti-integration is still possible; which of the two

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[1] Abstract from *The Introduction to Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, first published in the *Deutsch Französische Jahrbücher, 1844*; see Marx and Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), Vol. 3, p. 182.

should be developed depends on the understanding of the Vietnamese and on the treatment imposed on and by the age and the nation.

RETHINKING TRADITIONAL THOUGHT AND DRAWING ON WORLD PHILOSOPHY

The present epoch is one of integration, principally from the aspect of economic activity. But when the economy globalizes, sooner or later other social activities follow. Philosophy is no exception. Even if one does not like it, society does influence and change people's minds. Step by step, there is a change of position and role of social forces which create new factors tending to international integration. In view of this general trend of the age, active acceptance and integration are better for a nation than passivity.

For a positive outcome, it is necessary to decide clearly the object of integration: to recognize the opportunity to enrich the system of national thought, to make the people's lives healthier, to have a foundation for developing Vietnamese thinking capacities, and to expand relationships with other nations. Realizing this objective of self enrichment is impossible without carrying out at the same time both a rethinking of traditional thought and an examination of the values of philosophy in the modern world.

Rethinking traditional thought does not mean rejecting it, but examining its values in order to exclude or to retain what is central, and to develop them appropriately. There are distorted opinions about tradition, such as: traditional thought is conservative and backward or, on the contrary, that traditional thought is the highest thus far, having unchanging original values. Both are unsuitable for reality, and not useful for integration.

Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism are long-established in traditional philosophy, politics and ethics in Vietnam, and have had a close relationship with the Vietnamese society and its people. Obviously, they are products of feudal society and consist of outdated feudal elements which need to be rejected. But their long lasting values – such as kind heartedness, recognition of human obligations, responsibility for others and for society, the appreciation of morality, respect for the environment, and the recognition of depending on the concrete situation in acting – need to be preserved and even further developed and propagated.

In Vietnam, Marxist-Leninist philosophy has been imported and developed for nearly a century. As a scientific and revolutionary world viewpoint, it has taken a fundamental role in training generations of Vietnamese revolutionaries. In comparison with Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, it is new, but for modern requirements it is old, so that it needs to be treated in the same way as tradition. This means that we need to rethink it, to assert the values which should be preserved, and to deal with those which need to be developed and supplemented.

Materialist dialectics is the soul of Marxist philosophy. Its historical role is undeniable, but it was the product of the nineteenth century, and its generalizations were based on the knowledge and the social conditions of that

time. Since then, there have been major steps in the developments in every field of science and life and which require philosophy to follow suit. Engels who, together with Marx, founded Marxism, said that, the development of science and industry always required a correlative development of philosophy. He asserted that "during this long period from Descartes to Hegel and from Hobbes to Feuerbach, these philosophers were by no means impelled, as they thought they were, solely by the force of pure reason. On the contrary, what really pushed them forward most was the powerful and ever more rapidly onrushing progress of natural science and industry."[2] He also affirmed that, "just as idealism underwent a series of stages of development, so also did materialism. With each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science, it has to change its form."[3]

Because of not having renewed their theories, many researchers get confused in facing lived reality, and miss the social function of philosophy. When the government, the Party and society require them to pursue scientific research and to survey the reality of the social situation in order to discover and propose scientific bases for the decisions regarding guidelines and policies, they mainly interpret and illustrate old things already achieved, even preventing the development of life. They not only stop taking part in the *Doi moi*, but also obstruct the *Doi moi* movement of the country.

It is the time to face the truth and renovate existing philosophy. Only through renovation will modern social needs be satisfied and create a constructive internal integration. Through integration, there will be reciprocal exchange, such as adaptation from without, expansion from within, and the possibility of communicating with other philosophical systems. With our own general values, we have the conditions for developing outside, and other peoples would have reason to accept and receive us.

With the renovation of the traditional thought of the nation, there is a need to appreciate integration in a new way. On the one hand, by critically introducing the modern philosophical movements of the world to our people, enlarging their horizons and enriching their minds, it is easy to make new discoveries and find appropriate solutions. On the other hand, there is need to affirm the inheritance of a philosophical movement which is useful for our nation. Contemporary philosophy is not a united body, but consists of various directions with the expressions of different philosophical and political standpoints. Among them exist both the good and the bad, both that which is suitable and that which is unsuitable for contemporary Vietnamese society; that is why it is necessary to evaluate them in order to accept or to refuse them. The basic norm for such an appraisal, inheritance and adoption is not unknown to us. In the aspect of the social and political, it is what promotes a

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[2] Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy," Part 2: Materialism; first published in 1886, in *Die Neue Zeit* (tr. Progress Publishers 1946); see Marx and Engels, *The Complete Works* (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 1995) vol. 21, p. 407.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 409.

dynamic people and a strong country with justice, democracy and civilization. In the field of philosophy, it is what is healthy, acute, scientific and useful for the development of theoretical thought.

In philosophy, international integration is not only the general trend of the age, but also a demand of the development of national thought. When we look at the economy, our aim is to catch up with the economy of developed countries; in philosophy, this is not possible without raising the standard of national thought to equal the progressive philosophies of the age. Such international integration must be our fundamental initial step.

Department of Vietnamese Philosophy
Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

REFLECTIONS ON PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH IN VIETNAM IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

PHAM VAN DUC

For the last two decades, the comprehensive policy of 'renovation' (*Doi moi*) in Vietnam has brought about historically very significant achievements. During that period, the army of scholars engaging in researching and teaching philosophy in Vietnam has grown considerably, both in quantity and in quality. Many research themes, which have been either directed or financially supported by the Party and the Government, have been directed toward strategic problems of the development of our country or toward fundamental problems of philosophy. Looking back over this period, Vietnamese philosophers may ask themselves what have been their main achievements and what problems should they focus on in order to strengthen their role in the context of contemporary globalization.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS FOR PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH IN VIETNAM

The impact of *Doi moi* can be seen both in teaching and in research in philosophy. Since 1986, the number of published works in all fields of philosophy has increased rapidly. The scope of philosophical research has become more and more diversified: from the history of philosophy to logic, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of culture, philosophy of sciences and technology, environmental philosophy, and from ancient philosophy to modern philosophy, from Marxist philosophy to Non-Marxist philosophy, from the major thinkers to the main tendencies in philosophy. That kind of diversity can be explained.

First, in 1986, with the launch of *Doi moi*, renovation in thinking has been a vital factor. During this process of renovation, more and more attention from the Government has been given to theoretical activity in general and philosophical research in particular. Second, people engaging in philosophical activities have become more and more mature, many of them have successfully defended MA and PhD dissertations, and some have been awarded professorships. Third, in the context of the policy of openness and international economic integration, there has been a continuous expansion in the interaction, exchanges and cooperation in the area of teaching and researching philosophy between Vietnamese scholars and institutions and their counterparts abroad. Many Vietnamese scholars have participated in international conferences or received scholarships to study abroad. A great

many international scholars have attended conferences or delivered lectures on subjects or themes that have not previously been accessible to scholars in Vietnam.

However, what is noteworthy here are the ways of doing research and the contributions of Vietnamese philosophy to the cause of our comprehensive renovation. Prior to 1986, philosophical research in Vietnam had focused mainly on commentaries and propaganda for the Party's policies. But after 1986, along with that task, many philosophical research projects have made valuable suggestions for mapping out and planning the policy for the socio-economic development of the country. For example, in the area of social philosophy, many scholars have contributed to the defense of arguments on the decisive role of productive forces in relation to production relations, not the other way around: production relations should be developed in advance in order to pave the way for productive forces to be developed; on the role of multi-sector, multi-ownership, and socialist-oriented market economy; on the role of human resources and driving forces in general in the process of promotion of social development, especially involving economic interests; on the need of combining economic growth with social progress and justice in every step of development; on affirming that culture is the driving force and spiritual foundation for social development, and so on. Those arguments have been included in official Party documents and their soundness has been verified in practice.

Similarly, the problem of democracy in society and the building of a society truly governed by the people – which has been a very sensitive and important problem and has been often mentioned by President Ho Chi Minh[1] as well as in many philosophical works – has been recognized by the Party and consequently included in the documents of the 9th and 10th Party Congresses.

In the course of a comprehensive renovation of Vietnam, including the renovation of thinking, attention has been paid more to researching and teaching non-Marxist philosophy simultaneously with a reconsideration and renewal of the methods of teaching Marxist philosophy. In the past, the tendencies of non-Marxist philosophy were introduced rarely or mainly for critical purposes. However, since the beginning of the period of renovation, and in the spirit expressing in a respectful attitude toward all cultures including philosophical cultures, research on Western philosophy has been oriented not only to criticizing but also to discovering the positive and strong points as well as the real values of non-Marxist philosophical trends and doctrines, especially those of modern Western philosophy.[2]

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[1] Nguyen Trong Chuan, "Retrospective on 55 years of researching and teaching philosophy in our country," in *A Half Century of Researching and Teaching Philosophy in Vietnam*, ed. Nguyen Trong Chuan (Hanoi: Institute of Philosophy, 2001), p. 23 (in Vietnamese).

[2] Nguyen Hao Hai, "The situation of research on non-Marxist philosophy (modern Western bourgeois philosophy) in the last 55 years," in *A Half Century*

Vietnam has steadily built up its army of professional philosophers engaging in research and teaching of non-Marxist philosophy, and many of them have graduated from Western universities and colleges.

Together with researching and teaching Marxist and non-Marxist philosophy, research and teaching of the history of Vietnamese thought have been carried out. This work aims at introducing students to the outstanding thought of our forebears, mainly in the areas of politics, ethics and philosophy. In recent years, with the support of the government, the Institute of Philosophy has focused its research on the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought, from the period of formation of the nation to the present time. As a result, two volumes are in preparation. The authors have completed their draft of the first volume, which has been submitted to a publisher, and have continued to work on the second volume. Upon its completion, this history of Vietnamese philosophical thought will be a very valuable and useful document for the teaching of the history of Vietnamese philosophy.

However, we should acknowledge that our research on philosophy has not yet met the demands raised by the daily life; many pressing problems of the country's development and its management require answers from philosophers. There have been only a few valuable works researching philosophical problems originating from daily practice. Works reflecting the real rhythm of daily life have not been as expected both qualitatively and quantitatively. Many research projects, for lack of data collected from practical surveys, have little practical value and exert only a modest impact on social practices as well as on the activity of planning policy and providing guidelines for the Party and government. In quantitative terms, for almost 20 years people engaging in researching and teaching philosophy in our country have produced a great number of publications but among them there has hardly been any outstanding work on our society, not to mention on the region or the world, that bears the clear imprint of Vietnamese philosophy.

THE ROLE AND MAIN RESEARCH ORIENTATIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH IN VIETNAM IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

In Vietnam, philosophy has been defined as "a system of the most universal points of view on the world and the place of man in this world."[3] Philosophy often plays a key role in one's worldview and methodology; it is

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of Researching and Teaching Philosophy in Vietnam, ed. Nguyen Trong Chuan (Hanoi: Institute of Philosophy, 2001), p. 583.

[3] National Council for Directing the Compiling of National Textbooks for the Subjects of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thought, *The Textbooks of Marxism-Leninism* (renewed and revised edition) (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 2004), p. 23 (in Vietnamese).

identical with the core elements of a worldview, but not with worldview as such. The role of philosophy is to provide human beings with an interpretation of the world and their place in it. Therefore, philosophy gives us a generalized view of the world and especially of society. Like other theoretical disciplines, philosophy not only performs the function of interpreting the problems of the world in general and of human society in particular, but, on the basis of its interpretations, orients humans in their actions. Therefore, a good philosophy will help people act rightly. The history of the development of science has shown that every scientist is implicitly or explicitly under the influence of a certain philosophical worldview or system. Based on their correct philosophical views, many scientists have been able to make ingenious predictions and discoveries, which have been verified by later generations. It is difficult to fully specify the worldview and methodological role of philosophy in human social practices. History has shown that many philosophical systems have played the role of a worldview and methodology for great revolutions and have laid solid foundations for human action. From the experience of the history and practice of daily life we can affirm that philosophy plays an important role in the context of globalization. With a correct philosophical system, a nation will be able to choose for itself a wise course of action and discover the right orientation in order to make use of the opportunities and overcome the challenges brought by globalization.

The question is: on what problems should philosophy focus in order to successfully carry out its worldview and methodological role in the present context?

The theme of the XXI World Congress of Philosophy in August 2003 in Istanbul, Turkey, *Philosophy Facing World Problems*, illustrates that the development of the world has brought about many problems, the solutions to which require the joint effort of nation-states worldwide. Philosophy cannot ignore those problems.

First of all, philosophy should state clearly that we all live in a context of globalization. Philosophy faces globalization as a general and necessary tendency, as well as world problems brought about or deepened by globalization. Therefore, the task of philosophy is to contribute to a full awareness of globalization and the problems it has brought.

There have been different views on globalization. Globalization is often thought of first of all as *economic* globalization. In these terms, globalization is understood as a gradually but ever widening expansion of the scope of productive forces transcending national borders and leading to interdependence among nation-states in their economic activities. From the perspective of the most important features of current economic relations, economic globalization is known as an expansion of the capitalistic mode of production determined by the USA and other developed capitalist nations.

Researchers on globalization have worked out various interpretations of the causes and characteristics of globalization, especially in the period from the 1990s to the present. Generally speaking, the main

features of these interpretations can be stated as follows: *first*, contemporary globalization is closely linked to a knowledge-based economy, especially information technology; *second*, it has created a new world economy and international relations among a diversified series of subjects; *third*, contemporary globalization has established close economic relationships among various nations through a system of markets and market economy; and *fourth*, capitalist nations play decisive role in the present process of globalization. This can be seen from the fact that Western capitalist countries with their powerful competitive ability have created transnational and supernational corporations. At the same time, they have striven to broaden and expand their capitalist mode of production throughout the world.

What should be emphasized more is that the concerns of philosophy are not limited to the causes and characteristics of contemporary globalization, but also include its positive and negative relationships, and its advantages and disadvantages.

Theoretically speaking, contemporary globalization has brought about certain advantages, which can briefly be stated as follows : first, it optimizes the ability to allocate resources through global means; second, it creates the capability of facilitating objective economic rules in a global space; third, it accelerates and promotes rapid rational adjustments of the industrial structure through global instrumentality; and finally, globalization has made it possible to resolve some of the common problems which human beings have encountered during the process of economic globalization and social development. But along with these opportunities, globalization has also posed very significant and serious challenges to people and nations worldwide, especially to developing nations.

From the social perspective: the demands of the global economy have brought about enormous changes in labor and in the lifestyles of people from all nations. In the present context of the development of the world economy, every country faces such common and serious problems in the development of its national economy, as ecological and environmental pollution, the depletion of natural resources, issues of population and public health, the gap between rich and poor, social vices and transnational crimes, and so on. The process of globalization has accelerated, and has had a substantial impact on these global problems. Nowadays, no nation can ignore the rapid and broad spread of such pandemics as SARS, bird influenza, or terrorism, and international crime. If all countries in the world, especially developed countries, are fully aware of the above-mentioned problems and have positive and effective measures to deal with them, then social and economic development will become more comprehensive, harmonious and stable

From the political perspective: people often mention the serious challenges globalization poses to national sovereignty through the impact of the economy on politics. The rate of economic integration will lead to political integration. Following that logic, people have discussed the

weakening of the nation-state. In the context of contemporary globalization, people often talk more about interdependence among nation-states, rather than their independence.

In the present context of globalization, there is no entirely independent country, completely isolated from the world. The danger is that many countries want to take advantage of the globalization trend to achieve hegemony. These countries exploit some situations to make war on other weaker nations. The motivation behind those actions is economic interest. The act of waging aggressive war is an obvious violation of the national sovereignty of a nation and disregards international law. The American war against Iraq can serve as a typical illustration for this point. In recent years, recognizing serious violations of international law and national sovereignty, many philosophers have raised their voice to ask the United Nations to be more resolute in the protection the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions. Many philosophers want the United Nations to guarantee justice and fairness in the present context of globalization. Although the United Nations has not yet fully executed that role, many people assume that its existence is necessary in the present conditions. The problem is that the United Nations needs renovation itself.[4] Hence, philosophers cannot avoid the pressing problems raised by the contemporary world.

So far, economic globalization is the most important aspect of the process of globalization. Economic globalization impacts strongly on the political field. In turn, political changes exert influence back upon the economy. Philosophical research should focus on the impact of economic and political changes on culture in the context of globalization.

Many scholars have pointed out a tendency within globalization to unify all cultures. Developed countries want to impose their cultural values upon other countries. Through globalization, some developed Western countries claim that non-Western cultures are not well adapted to or even contradict Western cultures and civilization. They want the rest of the world not only to succumb economically, politically and militarily to them, but also maximally to limit the specific characteristics of non-Western cultures. Samuel Huntington's view of the clash of civilizations shows that there cannot be any peace in the contemporary world due to the existence of the clash among civilizations in the present context of globalization. The West wants to fight for their interests until victory, or, in other words, to force the non-Western world to yield completely.[5]

Even in the field of philosophy, Asian scholars engaged in teaching and research face a similar situation. Almost every Asian country has

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[4] Peter Singer, *Human Rights, the State and International Order. [A paper read at the XXI World Congress of Philosophy, Istanbul, 2003]* (The Vietnamese translation is available in *Review of Philosophy*, 2003, N° 11).

[5] Bjaznova, *Globalization and national values.* Research materials of the Institute of Social Sciences Information. 2005, TN. 2005-07, p. 7.

undergone Western colonial rule. The latter has not only exploited the natural resources of the colonized countries, but also broken the ties of local peoples to their cultural, intellectual and spiritual heritage – in other words, from the sources from which their identity has been created. Most Asian countries, after being liberated from colonial domination and gaining their political independence, have actively mapped out their own plan to develop their economy under the ideological mask of "modernization," which in fact is "Westernization" and "Capitalism." After the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, there has been no counterweight to the capitalist superpowers. That has allowed them to expand their global reach. Asian countries have been lured into the process of globalization. The advantages of Western culture in Asia can also be seen in the field of philosophy.[6]

In practical terms, no one can deny that globalization is a necessary process which has created opportunities for countries with developing economies to integrate into the world economy in order to accelerate their economic growth and to increase technological renovation. However, it should be emphasized that the opportunities brought about by globalization are not the same for all. Generally, more opportunities are given to the more economically developed and richer countries than poor countries. Indeed, globalization brings more challenges than chances to poor and developing countries. As Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General, said: "Globalization has brought us closer together in the sense that we are all affected by each other's actions, but not in the sense that we all share the benefits and the burdens. Instead, we have allowed it to drive us further apart, increasing the disparities in wealth and power both between societies and within them."[7]

As a developing country, apart from the advantages and opportunities of globalization and economic integration, Vietnam faces considerable challenges. Recently many Vietnamese leaders have pointed out very serious economic, as well as social, political and particularly cultural, challenges. What should Vietnamese philosophy do in order to take full advantage of the current situation, and address the challenges brought about by globalization in the present context?

First, if the international philosophical community is focusing research on problems caused by globalization, Vietnamese philosophers should orient their research on the practical problems raised by building and developing their country in this context. The country of Vietnam is in the

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[6] This was the problem raised in an International Conference, *"Teaching Philosophy in the Asian Context,"* which was held in Manila, Philippines, February, 2004.

[7] Kofi Annan, *Do we still have universal values?* [3rd Global Ethic Lecture of the Global Ethic Foundation, University of Tübingen, 12 December 2003] Research materials of the Institute of Social Sciences Information, 2005, TN. 2005-36. See http://www.weltethos.org/dat-english/00-lecture_3-annan.htm

process of continuing its renovation in just this context of globalization and international economic integration. Therefore, the problems raised by the development of Vietnam will be closely linked to those regional and international problems which cannot be detached in the present context. But, as an independent country, Vietnam will have to deal with its own problems in its development. On the other hand, world or global problems themselves have different manifestations in various countries. The specific manifestations are determined by local historical conditions. Therefore, despite certain problems having common features, they will also have Vietnamese characteristics. Therefore, one must recognize that there exists a dialectical unity between the universal and the particular in the practical problems faced by philosophers in every country. The main task of philosophy today is to research that relationship.

This also means that philosophers must contribute to a philosophy of development for their nation and, in the context of globalization and international integration, answer such questions as: What is a philosophy of development for the nation? and, What is the optimal way of development in order for a nation to take full advantage of the opportunities and overcome the challenges brought about by globalization?

History has shown that by taking advantage of the opportunities, many underdeveloped countries have been able to shorten their development period and catch up with developed countries. Underdeveloped countries can acquire capital, technology and skills from developed countries in order to accomplish an abridged development, thereby "reducing suffering." This is an advantage for late-developing countries or the "post-development advantage." For example, the four so-called "Asian Tigers," which have developed later than such countries like the USA and Germany, have made gigantic progress. They have caught up with and even overtaken capitalist countries with a long development, such as England, France and other western nations.

We would note that the distinction between a philosophy of development and 'philosophizing on development' remains relative. The former is on a higher level of generality than the latter. Philosophizing on development is the task not only for people engaged in research and teaching of philosophy, but for every branch of research and science. In the thousand-year history of existence and development, our forebears have constantly reviewed and summarized their philosophizing, which has focused on the relations between humanity and nature, and between man and man. In the struggles against foreign aggressors, our forebears have generalized strategic guidelines into profound philosophical thought, such as philosophizing of all-people totality, quick -fight-and-quick-win or steady-fight-and-steady-win philosophizing, and so on. At present, major enterprises also want to implement certain business philosophies. Successful business is closely related to its specific philosophizing. Similarly every branch of knowledge, in every period of its development, should work out its particular philosophizing of development.

However, philosophy is on a higher level of generality than philosophizing. Philosophy is a system of theoretical views on social development in general or on a certain sphere of human action. The task of building such a system is assigned, first of all, to people engaged in the research and teaching of philosophy.

Second, apart from the task of reflecting upon and researching problems raised by economic development in the world and in Vietnam, philosophy has its own logic. No system of philosophy or philosophical view has started from scratch. On the contrary, philosophy has always been inherited from previous philosophical views and systems, which have served as its premises and ideological origin. Therefore, one of the important tasks for Vietnamese philosophers is to research the philosophical thought of Vietnam. A satisfactory answer to the question about the existence of Vietnamese philosophy has not yet been found. There has never been philosophy in Vietnam if philosophy is understood as a rigorous system of views and categories, such as is commonly accepted in the West. However, if philosophy is understood as wisdom or the love of wisdom – as deeply reflection directing or orienting human actions – there is no reason to deny the existence of philosophy in Vietnam, a nation with thousands of years of history. The task of Vietnamese philosophers is to reveal and investigate the philosophical thought of the nation. In so doing, they have not only to reconstruct past philosophical thought and explain the foundations for their formation and development; more importantly, they must find the significance of this for the present situation of the Vietnamese nation, and clarify the possible contributions to the Vietnamese people and their country. Only then can we see clearly which thoughts should be preserved and further developed.

In addition, as mentioned above, the greatest threat and challenge for developing countries is that of losing national identity. Research on the values of national culture, including those of philosophical culture, is of the utmost importance in order to preserve and promote national identity.

Third, one of the no less important tasks for people engaging in research and the teaching of philosophy in Vietnam is to investigate the trends and ideas of eminent world philosophers, both in the East as well as in the West. Due to difficulties in material conditions and other limitations, those engaged in teaching and research in philosophy must concentrate their research primarily on the philosophical tendencies, views and thoughts which have the most influence on Vietnam and can, therefore, theoretically and methodologically contribute to the solution of the problems raised by its development.

We need, then, to focus on rethinking the understanding of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism in the present context of globalization. Within the history of the Vietnamese revolution, the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism has been regarded as the ideological foundation and guideline for the socialist-oriented development of the country. At the present time, those engaged in research and teaching of

Marxist-Leninist philosophy constitute the majority of our philosophers. However, Marxist-Leninist philosophy was formed as a result of the generalization of the historical practice of last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, apart from theoretical points which still have value for orienting our present practical actions, there are also some points which are no longer appropriate in new historical conditions.

The practice of 20 years of the process of renewal has shown that the persistence of Marxism-Leninism does not mean implementing it wholly and mechanically, but applying the thoughts of Marx, Engels and Lenin scientifically and creatively in new historical conditions. The success of the cause of renovation in Vietnam has demonstrated that point. Therefore, the rethinking and proper understanding and development of the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist philosophy is of utmost importance in terms of both theoretical and practical significance.

In the coming years, our task is to research and clarify both the theoretical points in the system of Marx, Engels and Lenin which are still correct and preserve their full value as the theoretical foundation and guideline for practical action, as well as those which need to be amended and developed further in order to be suitable for new conditions of the contemporary age. Simultaneously, we need also to specify clearly those theoretical points which were appropriate in the past, but which have been overcome by our practice and are not applicable in the current conditions.

Besides the rethinking and proper understanding and development of the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, we need also to continue to concentrate on researching the tendencies of non-Marxist philosophy. Since the beginning of the period of 'renovation,' there has been more attention paid to new approaches to research on the tendencies of non-Marxist philosophy. However, what has been achieved in this area is still modest.

The greatest challenge Vietnamese philosophers face in research on non-Marxist philosophy is that only a few scholars have special training in that area. In addition, most of the literature and resources on the subject are in foreign languages, and not so many people can make fluent use of foreign languages in their research. In recent years, some research materials in the area of non-Marxist philosophy have been translated into Vietnamese. However, there have not been many Vietnamese translations of masterpieces of world-famous philosophers.

In the future, we must actively train the army of scholars specializing in non-Marxist philosophy and, if possible, on particular thinkers. For the time being, due to the shortage of research materials and the limited proficiency of our scholars and teachers in foreign languages, it is of the utmost necessity to continue to invest in translating some typical works of the major philosophers of the various philosophical schools.

Upon their introduction into other countries, philosophical doctrines have undergone some variations and modified expression because

of the specific economic, political, social and cultural conditions of the new context. Thanks to that kind of variation and modification, foreign and imported philosophical doctrines have been able to survive in those countries. In spite of the fact that Confucianism was born in China, Confucian scholars have striven to find similarities and differences among Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese Confucianism. In addition, there exist different views on the impact of Confucianism on modern society. While many scholars note the great contributions Confucianism has made to the growth and modernization of the Asian tigers, some others still insist that for modernization it is necessary to renounce Confucianism. So the role of Confucianism remains a topic for further investigations.

Similarly, during its long history Vietnam has been under the influence of various cultures. There has been an acculturation of different cultures, including philosophical cultures, and foreign philosophical views themselves have undergone some variations in order to be adaptable to the conditions of Vietnam. We can say that such doctrines as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism (which have exerted much influence throughout Vietnam), and Existentialism and Pragmatism (which was influential in southern Vietnam under the former Saigon regime), but even Marxist-Leninist philosophy have all undergone variations and have had a different impact in different periods in our history. Our main task is to investigate and clarify their appearance and values.

Vietnamese philosophers engaging in researching and teaching philosophy in Vietnam are fully aware of the truth that "a nation that wants to climb the pinnacles of science cannot possibly manage without theoretical thought." "But theoretical thinking is an innate quality only as regards natural capacity. This natural capacity must be developed, improved, and for its improvement there is as yet no other means than the study of previous philosophy."[8]

On the other hand, in the present age of globalization, learning different cultures is necessary to enrich one's own national culture. At the same time, in order to develop, every nation must preserve and promote its national cultural identity, including its philosophical culture.

However, in our opinion, regardless of their specific research area and nature (practical problems or world problems or the history of philosophical thought in Vietnam or Eastern or Western philosophies, and so on), the ultimate point of philosophical research in Vietnam is to develop the country and the people of Vietnam as well as to enhance the thinking abilities of the Vietnamese. For the ultimate goal of all development and progress is human development, progress and happiness in order to help

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[8] Engels, *Dialectics of Nature* (1878), See *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 336; here quoted from Marx and Engels, *The Complete Works* (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 1994) Vol. 20, pp. 489 and 487.

humans achieve the True, the Good and the Beautiful. This is also the goal for which research and teaching in philosophy in Vietnam strives.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

PART IV

RETHINKING PHILOSOPHY

IN SEARCH OF A NEW PARADIGM FOR EAST AND WEST

GEORGE F. McLEAN

INTRODUCTION

In 1969, Neil Armstrong descended the ladder from his space ship and first stood on the moon. He said it was a small step for him, but a giant step for humankind. In fact, what he found *there* was nothing of real interest; he returned with a basket of stones not dissimilar to what we have in superabundance on earth. But what he found *here* was of immense significance for human destiny, for he enabled us to look at our earth as a global whole.

At the time I was in Hawaii at an East-West philosophers meeting. It became an urgent topic of discussion what this new vision of the globe, and hence of humanity as a whole, could have for the future of humankind. The discussion in the present volume continues that search. The danger is that we may apply old methods to this new question – and, indeed, the present slide into violence suggests strongly that this is the case and that we are on the wrong path.

Here, as a first step in our search for a new paradigm, I want to explore the convergence of two shifts: one, the addition to the focus on parts of an appreciation of the whole; the other, the enrichment of exterior objectivity by interiority or subjectivity. Do the cultural traditions of Asia and the Pacific have contributions to make in just this sense? If so, could they be essential to the development of the new paradigm needed in order for humanity to live in a global age?

THE PROBLEM: A FRACTURED WORLD

If indeed the world is a single whole, each part of which is in essential balance with the rest, how has it come to be seen as a fractured and fractious mass?

In ancient Athens, it became apparent that there was need for guidance for human behavior. The rhetoric of the sophists, and the demagoguery it enabled, were clearly inadequate for life in the Republic; indeed, Socrates himself was condemned to death. In response, Plato theorized a set of ideas as constant points of reference: unity and goodness, truth and justice. Unfortunately, in order to make these stable guides for human behavior, he separated them from the human life process and considered them as objects or things standing above and over against us.

Even the divine or highest soul contemplated these ideas which were above it and contrasted with it. Aristotle shifted the immediate focus to material objects, things distinct from us and available through the senses.[1] The result was an objectivist orientation in the West in which external relations to objects were given priority and the internal realm of the human spirit appeared only indirectly and with difficulty. Yet hierarchical structure left a place for an ultimate One which ruled the world and human life.

At the end of the medieval times, this remaining sense of unity broke down, constituting the end of antiquity. Rather than a ruling unity, nominalism took the position that all was radically single, and that universal or integrating terms were only names we put upon these singles as we order and reorder them for our changing and limited purposes.

Some control was sought, as Descartes put it, "in order to walk with confidence in this world"; for this ultimately fractured world of singles, the norm would be a clarity of ideas which would be certified by the object being sufficiently well known to be distinguished from all others. All would be broken down or *analyzed* into basic natures, distinct one from another. These would then be reunited in a process of *synthesis*, but the synthesis would consist only of ideas or natures resulting from the original process of observation and analysis, and therefore essentially alien one to the other.[2] The goal here would be to construct and control the whole by the parts; the vision would be individualistic, clashing, and competitive. Adam Smith and the economy of free market competition would not be far behind, nor would liberal democracy and the theory of a clash of civilizations. How else could alien atomic entities form the synthetic community?

Modern education, which would be the great natural effort of both developed and "developing" countries, would consist in removing the child from the unity of the family and the community for extended periods each day. For 20 years, his or her horizons would be sedulously shifted to thinking analytically in terms of minimal components. This newly constructed world would be in terms of contrasts, one against the other, whether in terms of chemistry or physics, profit (economics) or power (politics). It would be impressed on all that success in this life consisted in seeing and acting exclusively in these terms.

It might be thought that the progressive attention to the self or "esprit" in Descartes and Kant would oppose this objectivism, but when one notes that the self was an epistemological object, the full drama of the need for a new paradigm becomes clear.

Today, as we find ourselves in a unipolar individualist universe, without the balancing communal antipode, we reap the whirlwind. Three responses have been proposed.

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[1] Aristotle, *De anima*, III 7, 431a16; b2; and 8, 432a4-8.

[2] Descartes, *Rules for the Regulation of the Intellect*, 1628, publ. 1701.

The first is that of liberalism. The late John Rawls, its prime recent theoretician, proposed in his *A Theory of Justice*[3] and *Political Liberalism*,[4] that all synthetic cosmic and religious visions needed to be moved behind a "veil" of ignorance in order to create an open public space in which all ideas could equally compete. The mode, of course, is that of the market in individualistic Western capitalism, in which it is the Hobbesian competition of all against all that establishes the value not only of material goods, but here the very meaning of social life. It is proposed as the requisite condition in order that political discourse be authentic.

A second political theory is the neo-conservative, derived especially from Leo Strauss, a refugee to the United States and long a professor of political science at the University of Chicago. Strauss, in turn, relates back to the work of Moses Maimonides on writing in a time of persecution.

The theory distinguishes two readings of Plato's *Republic*. One is overt and written in terms of the good, of virtue and of responsible human freedom. These are the words of Socrates and the overt sense of Plato's text. However, considering human freedom and its adhesion to the good to be too unstable a basis for the order needed for the political life of a complex world, the Straussian interpretation reads in an opposite manner. It considers Plato's personal position to have been hidden in the text and expressed in a covert manner in the words, not of Socrates but of Thrasymachus, for whom peace comes only from power harshly applied. That, he said, is the whole reality of justice. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, it is the tyrant, Creon, who states the real art of statecraft.

From this follows the present neo-conservative rationale that peace in our global world cannot be based upon free agreement of cultures and peoples in negotiations according to a "road map," but rather requires a hegemonic power which levels, subjugates and integrates all peoples in its unipolar economic and political order. There is a unity, but only by reducing everyone to the inhuman state of slavery.

A third approach would accomplish the same effect by discounting the significance of the basic cultural identities of peoples, and asking them to go beyond these to transcendent common human values. These are the basic tendencies of human life, as of all of being, to search out its self fulfillment and all that relates thereto. This is a deeply metaphysical note richly elaborated by Martha Nussbaum in her *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*[5] and Kwame Gyeke in *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity*.[6] The vision however omits how these values are to be lived, which is precisely that in which the

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[3] Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.
[4] New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
[5] Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
[6] Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004 and www.crvp.org.

various cultures consist. Cultures are the ways that peoples have created over the ages and in their own circumstances to exhibit their proper modes of living the great human values. To ignore or transcend these would discount and override their way of life.

THE RESPONSE

In search now of the fundamental philosophical or paradigm shifts called for by globalization, these would appear to be twofold: namely, from parts to whole and from objectivity to subjectivity. If so, then Asia and the Pacific now have an essential, perhaps the essential, role to play. For it has been characteristic of the thought in this region to be precisely holistic, i.e., never forgetting (a) the whole as the true home of the part, and (b) the interior spirit as the deep meaning of the visible world. It is hopeful, then, that in many Asian countries there is a revival of attention to the philosophical resources of their cultural heritage.

It is perhaps not my role to attempt to state what in Asia is natively appreciated with uniquely deep resonance. Hence, here I shall suggest only elements in the Western tradition which are now being newly retrieved in order to respond to these needs.

Like the classical problem of the one and the many, the problem of a "common humanity" has two components: unity and diversity, of which Professor Gyekye focuses upon the first. Bringing to bear the full sophistication of the process of abstraction first introduced by Aristotle, he moves swiftly beyond cultures to identify the human essence or nature that is common and foundational to all cultures. This is shown to be not a chance convergence or an overlapping consensus, but a set of prerequisites for any community life. Thus, killing and dishonesty are basically destructive of life altogether, as are anarchism and disdain for elders who bear the human experience and exemplify the social learning of their people. He argues strongly for the consensus across peoples on these fundamental building blocks of social life in any age.

Yet, we are in but the very first decades of the new post ideological global unity, having broken beyond a bipolar world to a unipolar structure only in the very last decade of the last century. On entering the new millennium, we find ourselves in a vastly different world which we tend to approach with the philosophical tools and instincts of the past. Hence we see with eyes trained by the modern scientific – even scientistic – character of our education, which is to abstract from the differences in order to get to "the heart of the matter." Univocity and universality are our keys to meaning and our assurance of truth, as Kant pointed out – not only in his first critique on pure reason, but in his second critique on practical reason. Yet life is lived in the concrete, marked by uniqueness, multiplicity and plurality. Western philosophy is little experienced in the task of harmonization explored in Kant's third – and until recently largely ignored

– critique of aesthetic judgement. Yet it is precisely this, however, which characterises the rest of the world's civilizations.

This suggests that philosophy today is at the beginning of a long and exciting road. The task ahead will be to reinforce this unity, not by dismissing, but by reinforcing and incorporating the different modes or cultures in terms of which alone life can be lived. The global community must become an open community, able to leave room for, to take account of, and to respect the experiences and free creativity of all.

Different cultures may have been closed to others in the past. In this global age, as these cultures are newly encountered, the task will be to discover and develop the human abilities of mind and heart to recognize, value and engage them. For this, new modes of human awareness will be required. We will need to apply phenomenological methods that take us more deeply into human consciousness in order to discover the deeper creative sources, and the true nature, of cultures. We must find ways to understand them, not as walls which constrict, but as lenses by which we are enabled to look out, and through which we can both engage and be enriched by other cultures and horizons.

It is a basic insight of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics that we are born and raised in a particular locale, language and symbol system, culture and civilization, through which we are enabled to understand and relate to others. Finite beings have no privileged position to which all things are present or in which they are present to all. In our human condition, everyone has to be somewhere. What we need to discover is how we can be enabled by our distinctive culture, and begin to make it work for us in interacting with others.

This suggests the need to return afresh to metaphysics for a new and more humanized approach to the problem of the one and the many – but not beginning from the lofty ideas of a Plato, the universals of an Aristotle, or a set of politically dictated abstract rights. The place to begin, or re-begin, is the essentially unique exercise of human freedom by our forebears in facing human challenges and forming their hopes. Their creativity established the ways of cultivating one's life and raising one's offspring — one etymology of the term "culture"— with which alone we are endowed.

This generates neither an abstract rationalist "approach from nowhere," nor one that is essentially Greek. Instead, all peoples dispersed across the world must be able to join the new global dialogue from wherever they are, make their own contribution, and be enriched by all other cultures. As a result, in the future philosophy must be modeled, not on a flute (as are the monolithic deductive rationalisms of modernity), but on an organ with the full range of sonorities of the world's cultures. The result, it can be hoped, will be not a philosophical tradition that is hegemonic, imposing itself universally, but one composed, as in the image of Isaiah, of the many peoples converging with one another as each follows its own path to the holy mountain.

THE PARADIGM SHIFT, STEP I: FROM PARTS TO WHOLE

Eugene Rice,[7] in his study of Nicholas of Cusa, provides an example of understanding in terms of parts and whole. He contrasted, on the one hand, the experience of walking through a valley, encountering each rock and tree individually and rather by surprise with, on the other hand, a view of this same valley from a hilltop whence it can be seen as a whole with its diverse parts. The latter view would make immediately clear why the stream ran as it did, why the trees were located in that area, and why other sections might be desert and barren.

Heidegger provides a theoretical framework for such a shift of vision from part to whole. He points out that, at each juncture of human thought, a particular choice is made. Plato's choice was precisely to search out objective knowledge. Each step thereafter built upon and extended this search. At present, it is possible to proceed along that path and to make further, but limited, arithmetic progress. Alternately, one could return to thought prior to Plato, and take up other elements which were present but not developed in the path Plato chose. Here the progress could be dramatic, even geometric. Paradoxically, the step back is the key to dramatic progress.[8]

Following this suggestion, we might look back prior to Descartes and find there that the basic insights are in terms, not of analysis into the many and diverse, but of a 'one' in terms of which all has its meaning.

Thus, at the earliest stages of humanity, the entire life of a tribe or clan is interpreted in terms of the one totem of the tribe that can be identified by the intellect working in terms of the external senses. In the subsequent stage in which the intellect can work, as well in terms of the internal sense of imagination, the myths or stories of the gods are developed which enable the human mind better to understand the interplay of diversity and unity in terms of a hierarchy of gods. Finally, as the very beginning of philosophy, the intellect begins to work in its own formally intellectual terms such as "being." Parmenides reasons carefully to show that, whatever he would say later in his poem about diversity, being is most fundamentally one, unchanging and eternal.[9]

Plato himself would see the One as the highest of the Ideas/Forms which all participated in or imaged to some restricted degree. The Christian fathers drew on this to express the reality as coming from the one creator

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[7] Eugene Rice, *"Nicholas of Cusa's Idea of Wisdom," Tradition,* Vol. 13 (1957), p. 358.

[8] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), p. 130.

[9] Parmenides, *Fragments*; see G.F. McLean and P. Aspell, *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), pp. 40-43; A. Mourelates, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

and converging toward the same as the one goal. Cornelio Fabro would say that when Aquinas and the scholastics rigorously structured Christian thought, this notion of participation of the many in the one was the key concept.[10]

Nicholas of Cusa,[11] the last of the medievals and the first of the Renaissance thinkers, developed a model that worked in terms not of parts, but of the whole. Just as all things are being and to think of reality is to think of being, so all constitutes a whole, and to think of anything as real one needs to think of it in terms of the whole. Hence, to understand the reality that I am, is to understand it as a partial realization of the whole. That is, it is not the part but the whole that returns the primacy and is the key to any meaning for the part. Moreover, if my goal is to express the whole, then that which expresses a part of the whole which I do not express is not alien to me, but is part of my very meaning in life. It not only complements me, as would (for example) another member of a team that I belong to, but it is part of my very essence.

In the East, this sense of the whole is vibrant, even characteristic. This appears in Japan, where one introduces oneself first in the broadest categories of place or nation, coming to one's individual name only last. It is central to the Confucian vision of family, first; in the Buddhist overriding sense of harmony; and in the basic and central position of advaita or nondualism in Hindu thought. It is proclaimed most forcefully by Islam's affirmation of the unity of God. This sense of unity or of whole is one vitally needed contribution from Asia to life in our global times.

THE PARADIGM SHIFT, STEP II: FROM OBJECTIVITY TO SUBJECTIVITY, CULTURE AND RELIGION

However, even though this sense of the whole has been part of the history of both East and West, we now live in a global world in which this sense of the whole can no longer be an external matter of balancing essentially clashing powers. How then can the whole be lived today? There are reasons for concern. The history of the modern West has been rather one of the liberation of the individual from, and protest against, the power of the king and community. This links the British "Magna Charta," the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen," and the American "Bill of Rights" to the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." All speak of 'rights' against the whole; even the UN Declaration speaks of 'obligation' only in the last of its 29 items. Consequently, the basic

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[10] G.F. McLean, *Ways to God* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1999), ch. 5.

[11] David DeLeonardis, *Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

paradigms of the East and the West would appear to move in opposite directions, so that terms have opposite meanings.

Nor is this merely a matter of misunderstanding, for understanding guides action and misunderstanding leads to destructive action. It may be well and good for people in the tradition of the Magna Charta to treasure their rights and be proud of the economic and political system they have developed over centuries to live these rights. But when they use these as 'glasses' that devalue others, family responsibility, or structures of respect and authority, it follows easily that they will act to force their political structures upon the rest of the world. Thus, the new attention to the whole becomes hegemonic and draws the strongest reaction from others in defense of their very identity. To be sensitive to the interior commitments of others raises the issue of another paradigm shift, namely, from objectivity to subjectivity.

If, as seen above, and especially since the Enlightenment, the West has been centered exclusively upon objectivity, the world is now moving to include subjectivity as well. Indeed this is precisely the heart of global times.

In the middle of the 20th century, the effort to create and control a world of others, conceived as objects by ever more rigorously applying objective knowledge, began to collapse. The resulting subjection of humankind to the great ideologies was simply no longer bearable. Fascism was defeated militarily when it attempted total control. The Soviet system collapsed partly from within and partly in the face of the non-violent spiritual resistance of the Polish people. Colonial capitalism was rejected by all the subjected peoples of the world whose dignity would no longer be repressed.

This had its analogies in philosophy. Ludwig Wittgenstein's effort to explain knowledge as an empirical picturing in his *Tractatus* had relegated the essential intentional work of the mind to the margins as unutterable. This had to be reversed through his *Blue and Brown Books* until, in his *Philosophical Investigations*,[12] he came to center upon the intentionality of the human spirit as the very heart of knowledge.

Similarly, Edmund Husserl, in his attempt to provide a solid basis for mathematics, found it necessary to bring out the distinctive intentionality of the human mind which he had heard of in Franz Brentano's studies of Aristotle. This was applied to being by Heidegger in terms of truth as the process of unveiling being, and to hermeneutics by H-G. Gadamer.[13] By 1968, from both sides of the English channel (which some consider the widest body of water in the philosophical atlas), Western philosophers had begun to look seriously into the dimension of human subjectivity. This made it possible to understand the nature of culture and religion, not as objects, but from within the subject in truly new terms.

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[12] New York: Macmillan, 1965.
[13] H.-G. Gadamer. *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975).

This holds the possibility of providing a new and positive paradigm for a troubled relationship. Modern times saw all simply as a matter of external competition for primacy in economic profit or political power. These terms can explain and implement competition which soon degenerates into conflict. But when considered from within, we find that all holds to its being and is oriented toward its fulfillment. Even a rock cannot be annihilated but only transformed, no matter how much pressure is exerted upon it. At a higher level, plants send out their roots and leaves to receive the nourishment they need in order to grow, flower and come to fruition. Animals in turn employ their conscious and kinetic capabilities in search of their fulfillment (per-fection) or self-realization.

Endowed with intellect and imagination, the human person can seek solutions to concrete problems and human development in so many and myriad modes that it is necessary to set priorities or to rank them. Some are given special weight, and hence are called values (from the Latin *valere* or 'weighing more'). As all is ordered in relation to these special priorities, a hierarchy of values is formed in which all other values have their proper significance. Thus, in an order built, e.g., on competition, courage and patience have different rankings, are pursued in different ways, and make different contributions than in an order built on harmony.

To values, however, correspond virtues – literally the "strengths" (*virtus*) or capabilities to realize one's values. These are developed by practice, with which comes facility and spontaneity. Their development is encouraged in turn by the values of the society or community in which one lives.

In turn, the combination of values and virtues constitutes a *culture*[14] or, in Cicero's term, a way of cultivating the soul. As reevaluated and adjusted in terms of what is life giving and life promoting, this is passed on as tradition (*tradita*). Thus, a cultural tradition is the cumulative creative freedom of a people as they respond to the challenges of their circumstances and develop their own proper way of achieving fulfillment.

If now we are in search of a new paradigm for relations between East and West, we are in a position to see that this is best sought in the direction, not of objective realities as distinct, contrasted and competitive with one another, but rather of the elements of subjectivity by which realization and fulfillment are consciously pursued. This must be not only self-fulfillment as opposed to others, but a relational fulfillment which can be for the good not only of some, but of each as part in the whole.

Here an essential contribution can be made from the East and its sense of harmony and complementarity. This is a sense, not of one contrasted to the others, but of one with the others. The *ying* is simply not conceivable without the *yang*, just as a chessboard is inconceivable if one

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[14] V. Mathiu, "*Cultura*" in *Enciclopedia Filosofica* (Frirenze: Sansini, 1967), vol. II, pp. 207-210.

color is removed; they go together and essentially so. This relatedness of all will be an essential component of any new paradigm.

Nor is this simply an unrealizable regulative ideal like the "ideal speech" situation of a Habermas or a Rawls.[15] On the contrary, Yu Xintian[16] and her Shanghai Institute of Foreign Relations have been modeling a concrete future for China in global interaction. It is based, not as in the past, on closure or protection against interference in internal affairs, but upon engagement and interaction. To this, she sees China as bringing special gifts, namely a sense of harmony and a respect for marginalized peoples, and she sees as well that China has the economic power to assure that its voice be heard.

But the paradigm will not be complete or effective if it is simply a matter of acting "as if" or, as is said in children's games, "making believe." If the new global paradigm is to be effective, it must be solidly grounded in an integrating unity. It is here that Iqbal would suggest moving beyond philosophy to religion. In the West, this is relation to (re-ligation or 'tying back to') the real and objective reality of the infinite and absolute divine as Being itself. As shown from the beginning of metaphysics by Parmenides, this must be one, infinite and unchanging.

At first, this might seem to be in tension with the East, especially Confucian and Buddhist Asia and the Pacific. But this would be so only if the divine is taken as an object 'over against', or as a Platonic transcendent. However, to this Paul Tillich would add a significant insight in terms of a phenomenological sensitivity to the interior working of the human consciousness.[17] While affirming Being itself as the proper and necessary metaphysical statement of the divine, he would add that in terms of human awareness, God is man's ultimate concern. We have seen above how culture is best understood in terms of the tendency of all beings to hold to its being and seek its perfection. That is, all peoples are concerned for their own full realization, and develop and continuously adjust a sophisticated pattern of life to this end. But through all of the particular concerns, the basic or ultimate concern is indeed a universal harmony in terms that are one and infinite, true and just, good, loving and beautiful. This is reflected in the multiple facets and particular concerns of life.

It is this which can unite and enliven the many particular concerns of diverse peoples. The multiple religions are concrete ways of living and pursuing this concern. Samuel Huntington notes rightly that each civilization is founded on a great religion and that conversely each great

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[15] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

[16] Yu Xintian, ed., *Cultural Impact on International Relations: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XX* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002).

[17] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 238, 255.

religion generates its own civilization. The relatively recent shift, from looking at all things as objects (counterpoised to one another) to subjectivity, now enables us to appreciate cultures, as it were, from within and in terms of the pursuit of each person and people of its ultimate concern.

This appreciation of the inviolable importance of the subjectivity of the human heart is reflected in the Second Vatican Council, which found it essential to recognize the freedom of conscience of everyone to their own religion. Moreover, it was no longer suggested that other religions were wrong, but, rather, that each was a valid path to God.[18] Gone was the old diction that there was but one portal to salvation by which all must enter.

Instead, the image is that of Isaias[19] – of all nations each proceeding along its own path, and all converging on the one Holy Mountain. In terms of human subjectivity, then, the deeper meaning of globalization is that all people are converging, not only through external means of transportation and communication, but internally through shared concerns and empathy. All are increasingly able to hear and appreciate the sacred hymns of other peoples East and West and the way these suffuse their distinctive cultures with meaning and beauty. This is essential to any new paradigm for a global world.

CONCLUSION

What then are the characteristics we have discovered for a new paradigm for global times?

First, that it will be in terms, not merely of objective and external relations, but also internal in character in terms of human subjectivity.

Second, that it will be in terms of the whole rather than of an assemblage of parts.

Third, that it will be marked by the Eastern sense of harmony, in which no one reality is separately intelligible; rather, for their meaning and identity, all stand essentially in relation to each other.

Fourth, that it is founded in the ultimate concern whereby each people and culture in their many strivings converge toward an even greater and deeper unity.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy
Washington, DC

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[18] Pope Paul VI, "Freedom of Religion," *Nostra Aetate*, Oct. 28, 1965.
[19] Isaias 13.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND CULTURE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE

MAIJA KŪLE

Contemporary phenomenology is the borderline where classical Husserlian phenomenology transforms into other trends or realizes the limits of its possibilities. The most striking example of phenomenological transformation is its incorporation into philosophical hermeneutics and the interdisciplinary dialogue among cultures.

Speaking on the issue of the borderlines of phenomenology, I have raised the question whether there are phenomena that have defied description in classical phenomenology, i.e., that which is perceived and interpreted, yet at the same time surpasses consciousness and is independent of it, representing the phenomena of nature and Cosmos. I have named these phenomena, *the fundamentals of the Universe*. These phenomena are common for all people regardless of their nationalities, languages, religions, philosophies, politics and so on. In characterizing these phenomena, one cannot do without metaphysics (in the wide sense of the term) – i.e., a way of philosophizing that could speak not only of the subject and transcendental Ego, but also about the Universe that is independent of human beings.

Such a new phenomenological approach moves from the description of the structures of consciousness and research into human existence, to the description of the common meaningful fields of everyday life in which individual egos are not strictly differentiated. Such a life is based on the fundamentals or phenomena which go beyond the merely human. These phenomena are light and darkness, silence, space and meaningful place, rhythm (as the fundamental basis of the flow of time), and so on.

The inner logic of the development of phenomenology is undergoing a period of transition with the change of basic viewpoints that push aside the philosophy of subjectivity, *cogito* analysis, narrow Egology (which allows of the recognition of Other only within the framework of subjectivity) – very characteristic for the Western mind – and moves into the foreground the philosophy of communication, solidarity, dialogue, and sight beyond the sphere of the subjectivity, to the fundamental phenomena of the Universe.

The communal does not emerge just because there is a basis for its appearance in the structures of individual consciousness or existence. The deepest levels of the communal are the fundamentals of the Universe. The human being ventures forth by speaking and creating meanings out of the

density of the preexistent world, which is familiar to him or her, but always stays beyond the human.

We cannot ultimately specify the fundamentals upon which we hold that our meanings are valid and our knowledge is true. Being committed to such fundamentals, we are projecting ourselves to what we believe to be true or valid through these fundamentals. We cannot first see what they are and look *at them* since we are looking *with them*.

The background for meaningful reality is created by such phenomena of the Universe as rhythm, light, darkness, silence, noise, and meaningful place. In analyzing such extraordinary phenomena, phenomenology gives a basis for an interdisciplinary dialogue between cultures.

It seems that human understanding is influenced by deep ontological layers, located *beyond* the level of culture, but coming to us through the symbolic, cultural level. Contemporary phenomenology in the activating an interdisciplinary dialogue among cultures, involves these universal phenomena -- the fundamentals of the Universe. That is why the ontological pre-conditions of understanding and meaning should be sought not only in the human mind and volition as creating culture, but also in the Universe as a whole. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has a similar orientation: "The cultural action expresses not a preexisting thought, *but Being*, to which, as incarnate, it belongs already."[1]

Phenomena such as light, darkness, silence, noise, rhythm, and space *function as the basis of the intersubjective processes of life*. Silence and noise are not only and solely phenomena created by culture, but phenomena necessary for life and living. Just like light and darkness, silence and noise are phenomena whose scope reaches out from nature, from phenomena created by the Universe, up to the phenomena depicted in art and symbolic reality. The intersubjectivity of everyday life might be the level at which those unique phenomena could be grasped in interconnection without severing the natural and the cosmic from the symbolic and the social. It is on the level of everyday life that these fundamentals appear as the most essential phenomena forming human existence. The changes of day and night organize human existence on a biological, social, cultural and symbolic level. Nietzsche spoke about rhythm as an eternal recurrence. We can interpret his view today as an idea about one of the fundamentals of the Universe – rhythm. Meanings in the world of the human being, which exist only insofar as they are continuously affirmed anew, are included in rhythm.

Without eternal recurrence human life is impossible. Eastern philosophies know this better than Western. There is the eternal love, which returns from generation to generation; there is the eternal recurrence of likes and dislikes, of friendship and hate as long as there is human companionship. Thoughts, ideas and meanings return when they are thought

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[1] Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 40.

out and comprehended anew. The values common to all mankind, a stable world order and a meaningful life, cannot exist without it. Its precondition is rhythm characterized by stability. When the human being living in a world has detached him- or herself from the order of the Universe, a crucial problem arises as to how the human world should be put in order. The idea of eternal recurrence plays the role of a regulator, for it then provides an appraisal of every moment one has lived through, every action and every thought. The moral inherent in the phenomenon of eternal recurrence and rhythm appears to be even more ruthless than any other rigoristic moral.

Eternal recurrence is a call for the fulfilment of every moment of life. It does not require coordinating reality with a kind of present ideal, and it does not allow bemoaning the imperfection of reality and the present state of affairs. The phenomenon of eternal recurrence compels us to notice the perfection that every moment contains endless responsibility. It is necessary to love the inevitable and to bear suffering, for the human being's power is limited. Eternal recurrence arrests the moment and renders its sense on the background of eternity; it puts the world in order and attaches meaning to all that is going on, demanding from the human being the utmost responsibility for each step. That is a model of a world of the highest intensity so sorely needed today.

It is very characteristic of contemporary Western philosophy that the symbolical, cultural layer appears as severed from the natural (life, existence) layer. Phenomenology, in its description of fundamentals of the Universe, tries to avoid this. And what is most significant is that, on the level of everyday life, the cultural phenomena are not separated from the universal, cosmic, natural processes. The biological and natural merge with the symbolic and aesthetic. It is of interest that contemporary art tends to overcome this severance by streaming into life activities, "leaving art museums and going out into the streets," turning to vital human values and the fundamentals of the Universe.

Classical Western phenomenology, apprehensive of naturalism and fighting psychologism, has driven the transsubjective, transcultural and the cosmic phenomena out of the field of problems to be discussed, and at the same time has over-accentuated the questions of subjectivity to such a degree that it has made the solution of the problem of intersubjectivity impossible.

The new effort in joining the phenomena of life and the natural, cosmic view is especially gratifying: the human being is thus returned to the harmonious interconnection with nature, the Universe, and with everything that exists. The dialogue among cultures becomes possible on the deepest basis of life and the Universe. The thesis of the omnipotence of the human being, cherished by the Western philosophy of subjectivity, is thereby weakened. Solipsism, which jeopardizes the theory of intersubjectivity in phenomenology, is consequently cancelled out, for man is a microcosm in a macrocosm, according to Leibniz. The foundations of intersubjectivity are also changing. They need not be sought and found only in the disintegrated

social reality, in the fight for cultural pluralism and incompatibility of discourse.

In the first place, the world of the human being is united by *being* in the world, the ecophilosophical[2] view, which operates on the idea that humans are responsible for everything that is alive. That is a philosophy of solidarity, not only in the world of the human being, but also a solidarity created by fitting in with the universal light, silence, place and rhythm.

The human being lives in a world of silence. The word, the sound, and the voice seem to be decisive. In fact, they only fill the silence, express it, carry a message and announce the thought. Silence is deeper; silence is the foundation. The voice is a reflection. The voice carries the thought out, while silence goes inward. Silence envelops the origins of our being, the mystery of our conception, in a total unfathomable darkness. Silence envelops our end, our going away. Only in the middle is there voice and sound, trembling, feigning, eagerness to live and to escape the silence of being, our beginning and end. The voice expresses us while silence creates.

The existence of meaningful silence shows us that the human world does not consist only in expression in verbal form.

When we are conscious of ourselves, silence turns into keeping silent. When thinking, we are silent. When speaking, we often do not think. This was observed thousands of years ago by Lao Tzu, who said:

> Those who know do not speak.
> Those who speak do not know.[3]

We all tend to think that it is language that connects us. However, is it not silence that connects us to a still greater extent? Speaking is only possible because there is being silent. Is not the fox of the French writer Saint-Exupery's tale, *The Little Prince*, right when he says to the Little Prince: Language is the source of all misunderstanding. Language deceives, this has been known to all the contemporary philosophers. But does silence deceive?

We are in search of truth. But do we find the truth in the voice, sound, modulations which tremble, quiver, and fade away altogether? Do we find truth in speech, words, and sounds? Lao Tzu has observed:

> Sincere words are not embellished;
> Embellished words are not sincere.
> Those who are good are not defensive;

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[2] The contemporary conception of Eco-ethics is developed by the Japanese philosopher T. Imamichi. See: *Acta Institutionis Philosophiae et Aestheticae*, vols. 1–20, (Tokyo, Japan, 1983-2000).

[3] *The Tao of Power. Lao Tzu's Classic Guide to Leadership, Influence, and Excellence*. A new translation of the Tao Te Ching by R. L. Wing (New York: Doubleday, 1986), No. 56, *Gaining Oneness*.

> Those who are defensive are not good.
> Those who know are not erudite;
> Those who are erudite do not know.[4]

Truth cannot disappear because it is not subject to the ephemeral, the impermanent. It is not subject to the time of speech, for it enters the deepest time, eternity, where language keeps silent. We often hear chattering, but we wish to listen to the silence of truth. Martin Heidegger, one of the greatest Western phenomenologists, has said that the Universe manifests itself at a much deeper level than the verbal one. The experience in which meaning is realized contains not only verbal but also sensual, volitional, and other manifestations of life. The Western writer Aldous Huxley, in *The Perennial Philosophy*, writes: "The goods of eternity cannot be had except by giving up at least a little of our time to silently waiting for them. This means that the life, in which ethical expenditure is balanced by spiritual income, must be a life in which action alternates with repose, speech with alertly passive silence."[5]

The human world, however, does not exist solely to provide a basis for the creation of texts, notions, and predicative performances. On the contrary, texts, words, notions, and judgments serve to activate the human world, to serve as mediator between peoples and cultures. Here also a part is played by meaningful silence. The deepest forms of silence are impossible outside of the context of culture, but they cannot be reduced to culture. The possibility of grasping this produced silence is inherent in culture. Cultural differences, in their turn, may become a barrier to genuine understanding of what silence tells us in an unfamiliar situation.

Is not Krishnamurti right in stating that understanding does not come with knowledge? It appears in the intervals between words and thoughts. These intervals are silence, which knowledge does not break. It is open, too subtle for reflection, pregnant silence. You cannot know silence, it can only be understood. No one can tell another how to understand silence. Here we confront the deepest aspects of individual existence on the horizon of the Universe. However, being all alone we could never fill silence.

We are united by common experience, a common cultural code. Phenomenology speaks about the intercultural dialogue which is possible on the basis of mutual respect, on the understanding that we and everything-that-is-alive are the part of universal life processes. Our existence is based on the fundamentals of the Universe. Even in silence we are not completely alone, though we are rid of the market clamour, the falsehood of language, the fickleness of thought, the frailty of the will. When we start hearing silence, we hear ourselves and our will strains itself in excitement and longing. Yet the longing is vain; we shall discover only what we have put

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[4] *The Tao of Power*, No. 81, *The Evolved Way*.
[5] A. Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990), p. 300.

in. To hear is to be able to listen. And to listen means to be able to create in the same tonality (only in the "voice" of silence) in which the words are spoken.

A silence like this is so mighty that it turns into peaceful resistance. In Feodor Dostoievski's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, the silence opposing the Great Inquisitor is much more powerful than the Inquisitor's own words and the inner logic of his thought. The Spanish painter Goya's picture of the shooting of the rebels cries out much louder in a voice of the silence of death than a live voice could have done. Chinese drawings reflect deep and eternal silence.

"The twentieth century is, among other things, the Age of Noise," writes Aldous Huxley. "Physical noise, mental noise and noise of desire – we hold history's record for all of them. And no wonder; for all the resources of our almost miraculous technology have been thrown into the current assault against silence. [...] Spoken or printed, broadcast over the ether or on wood-pulp, all advertising copy has but one purpose – to prevent the will from ever achieving silence."[6]

Keeping silent merges with the silence of the Universe. Silence reveals its basis. Silence speaks to the human being. It speaks *via* the tombstones of the dead, *via* death and pre-birth, *via* the starry heaven above us, *via* the word unsaid and the feelings repressed. Silence is the entirety of words that needs no words any longer. We need silence. Silence does not need us; philosophy knows that it will take us anyway.

Light is other important fundamental of the Universe. Western philosophy has become "okularocentric" (orientated to eyes), with the idea of catching the world as a written text, as "the look." But light plays a much more important role at the level of human life.

Our world exists because of light. But people cherish the delusion that they themselves constitute the basis of their existence: their activity, their industry, and their will to power, energy, electricity, and so on. We are capable of transmitting laser beams and yet completely disregard the great mystery of light. It seems to us that light obeys us just like tools and other man-made things. Civilization, industry, development of technology – all of these serve to impart the most flattering feeling of power to us.

However, there is something transcending the world created by civilization and every human consciousness. It is the basis of the Universe. It allows for the possibility of speaking about an intercultural approach in phenomenology.

Light manifests itself both as a part of the world of nature and the precondition of life – indeed, the primogenital factor of life – as the manifestation of both *Lebenswelt* and poetic vision. Light is the most essential phenomenon shared by all living beings. Light exists in physical

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[6] Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, pp. 218–219.

nature and is created as a human condition; it is also perceived in a symbolic context as a metaphor.[7]

For some time Western philosophy viewed these unique phenomena in very different ways. On the one hand, it was clear that they belong to the natural sciences (theory of optics, etc.) and, on the other hand, philosophy began to discuss them proceeding from the point of view of the history of culture, i.e., accentuating their definite symbolic features. Both approaches are acceptable. However, the most essential shortcoming has always been that they are incompatible *in principle* and speak of completely different things. They belong to different discourses, one relating to natural science and the other to culture.

Contemporary phenomenology notes the special traits of these phenomena: they are basic, and not subject to the human being. One could even say: they are cosmic. Yet they are also irrefutably still human phenomena, belonging to the human world, possessing powerful community-forming traits. The more cosmic such phenomena as light, darkness, silence are (as it were) sound to our ears, the more they aesthetisize our everyday life and impart that sense of community which the many intersubjectivity theories find so difficult to discover. A phenomenology that discusses the fundamentals of the Universe gives a basis for interdisciplinary dialogue and understanding among cultures and world philosophers.

Latvian Academy of Sciences
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
University of Latvia
Riga, Latvia

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[7] The best-known nineteenth century Enlightenment thinker in Latvia, Garlieb Merkel, opened his volume *Tēlojumi un raksturojumi no manas dzīves* (*Passages from my Life*) with the motto: Light is life! Light is happiness and mightiness of the state!

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT ROLE SHOULD PHILOSOPHY PLAY IN OUR LIVES?

LE HUU TANG

In the effort to 'rethink the role of philosophy in the age of globalization,' "rethinking" suggests that thinking which was appropriate in the past may need to be amended and improved to be suitable for a new context.

To that end, let us reconsider how the role of philosophy has been valued. Various systems, tendencies, and schools of philosophy have come into existence during the three thousand year history of philosophy. However, according to academician T.I. Oizerman, a leading Russian scholar in the history of philosophy, there is no universally accepted definition of philosophy.[1] But this, by itself, says little. The notion of culture has more than 300 definitions, but it cannot be said that there is no understanding of, or development in, the sphere of culture. The same, we would say, is true for philosophy. Despite the absence of a commonly accepted definition of philosophy, philosophy has continued to exist and develop new systems, trends, and schools.

From its beginning to the present time, whether in the East or in the West, and under various systems, tendencies and schools, the core content of philosophy has remained the study of the most general theoretical points of view. There are the well-argued answers to problems raised by man regarding the essence of the world, his place in it, and its relationship to his fellow creatures and to nature. Man has always found in philosophy arguments, judgments, reflections, concerns, worries, together with answers to the questions concerning the fate of human beings in this broad universe, the origin of its mysteries, the forces determining nature and human life, the meaning of life and death, and so on. The various answers given in different philosophical systems and schools have been *interpretations* of the world, according to which people live.

However, like any other theoretical system, philosophy not only performs the task of *interpreting the world*, but provides *orientations* for human action. It also accomplishes another *methodological* function

The orientation value of philosophy is, in principle, no different from that of the principles, laws, and theoretical systems of scientific disciplines, such as the law of preservation and transformation of energy, or the law of value, and so on. The difference appears only in the fact that philosophical principles and assertions are the results of the cognition of the

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[1] T.I. Oizerman, *Philosophy as the History of Philosophy* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia Publishing House, 1999), p. 19.

most general aspects, characteristics and relations in nature, society and thought.[2] Therefore, unlike principles and laws of various scientific disciplines, they serve as orientations not only in certain concrete spheres, but in all spheres. Philosophical principles and assertions help people to have a certain starting position when they begin their research and action. This helps human subjects, as they act, to see in advance a general development of their objects and to determine in a preliminarily manner the milestones they should pass. In other words, philosophy helps people to define generally their course of action, the approach, and the solutions to their problems, and to avoid groping among countless complicated and interlacing connections without orientation. Starting from a certain philosophical position, people are able to choose an effective way to resolve their problems. Of course, given the various possible philosophical positions, people can choose different ways and measures to settle their problems. This means that *acceptance or rejection of a philosophical position by human beings is not only the acceptance or rejection a certain world outlook* or interpretation of the world, but also *acceptance or rejection of a certain methodological foundation for guiding their action.*

The above assertion shows that philosophy is not remote and impracticable but, on the contrary, is related intimately to human life and practice. Starting from an appropriate philosophical position, people will be able to find effective ways to resolve problems raised in their lives. In contrast, starting from a false philosophical position, people may easily commit mistakes. Here we can see the *orientation* value of philosophy – one of the concrete manifestations of its methodological function. Unfortunately, this value has not yet been thoroughly exploited. Therefore, there still exist improper evaluations of the role philosophy plays in providing solutions to problems raised by our lives.

Improper evaluations find expression, first of all, in the attitude of people who have no respect for philosophy. According to them, the results of philosophical research are of no practical value because it deals with over-generalized problems.

The above opinion seems, to a certain extent, to be justified because, in many cases, people need concrete answers to the questions raised by concrete practices and problems. But if people cannot find concrete answers from professional philosophers, that does not mean that philosophical knowledge is useless. Although problems raised by human

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[2] According to Aristotle, unlike other specific sciences investigating concrete forms of real being, philosophy focuses on the most general principles and forms of all existing beings. I. Kant claims that the most important task of philosophy is to grasp the deepest rational knowledge and combine all such knowledge in the idea of the whole. Marx, Engels, and Lenin think that Hegel's dialectics is the theory of universal relations and the deepest, richest and most comprehensive development. Philosophy is a science of the most universal laws of the development of nature, society and nature.

life and our practical activities have always been concrete, their effective solutions must be based on, or start from, the solutions to general problems. As Albert Einstein noted in 1954, "the difficulties a contemporary physicist faces in his field force him to turn more frequently to philosophy than physicists of previous generations."[3] M. Plank held a similar view: "the more a set of new events and thoughts becomes complex and diversified, the greater the need to have a solid world outlook. An inclusive world outlook is of great significance not only for physics but for the whole range of natural sciences."[4] Therefore, sooner or later, researchers will face general – including philosophical – problems in their dealings with concrete problems in both their cognitive and practical activities. The solutions to general problems serve as a foundation for answers to concrete questions. The solutions to be found in philosophy are not peripheral, but are essential contributions to solutions to very concrete problems.

The contributions of philosophy should not be understood simply as if they were the result of research in a concrete scientific discipline or productive activity. The conclusions which philosophers have achieved are not direct solutions to the concrete and problems of human life, but, as mentioned above, the foundations for such solutions or answers. For example, a conclusion of the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam is that "production forces are restrained not only when production relations become obsolete, but also when production relations develop synchronically: some elements have been promoted much further than the level of development of production forces." This is a foundation to determine a series of new and more appropriate policies in the spheres of social reconstruction and economic development through the whole process of renovation. This is only one of many examples showing that the effect of philosophical research is found in its *orientation value* for practical actions and in its general conclusions and solutions, rather than in concrete answers to concrete cases.

A suspicion of the truthfulness of philosophical claims is another cause of a negative attitude towards philosophy. People often ask if philosophical knowledge would be reliable in providing an orientation for human beings in their practical activities. The problem is that, in ancient times (when specified scientific disciplines had not yet developed), humans were content with the answers provided by philosophy to problems and inquires about their surrounding world. But with the rapid development of specific sciences, people no longer are satisfied with answers given by philosophy. The question is, why?

First of all, this is likely because scientific claims should be empirically verifiable and empirically refutable in principle, whereas philosophical claims cannot be empirically verified or empirically refuted.

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[3] A. Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York, 1954), p. 19.

[4] M. Plank, *An Outline of Physics* (Moscow, 1925), p. 35 (From *Philosophical Problems of Physics* [Moscow. 1959], p. 97).

(For example, how could the following views be empirically verified: matter precedes consciousness; Hegel's view that the development of the absolute idea is the foundation for the development of nature, and so on.)

Second, it is claimed that philosophy has no research method of its own while natural sciences use modern scientific methods together with modern technology, which guarantee the truthfulness of the results of researches in those areas. To a certain extent, such a view is not baseless for, in order to discover the mysteries of the objects of its research, philosophy does not possess any specific technical devices or experimental tools to collect the data and materials for its research. So on what bases and in what way can philosophy approach the truth?

Based on an analysis and generalization of the cognitive character of philosophy throughout its entire historical development, many authors have come to the conclusion that philosophy itself does not directly research concrete objects, events, and processes, but uses the results and achievements of other cognitive and practical activities. The latter have been conceptualized and theorized by the appropriate scientific disciplines, or expressed in works of art, literature, and the like. These results and achievements serve as "the empirical materials and data" for philosophical research and discovery.

How are philosophical discoveries made? Some authors suggest, by the means of theoretical thinking; according to others, by theoretical generalization; through interpretation, is the view of still another group, and so on. In these or similar ways, philosophical conclusions have been drawn, which have served human cognitive and practical activities.

From his research in physics, M. Born concluded that "physics needs philosophical generalization."[5] A. Einstein and L. Inphender also claimed that "philosophical generalizations ought to be founded on scientific results. However, while introduced and widely promulgated, they have been influential in the development of scientific thinking as they can reveal one of many possible development trends."[6] Sharing a similar view, Louis de Broglie writes

> some years ago, in my research on Henri Poincaré's works on physical mathematics, I paid particular attention to the case of an unsuccessful discovery. I wondered why Poincaré, who had thought much about the relativity of physical phenomena, who had an excellent command of knowledge of Lorenzo's turbulences, and who in 1905 applied the main results of relativistic statics and kinetics, could miss the chance to achieve the great synthesis which

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[5] M. Born, *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1953. In *Lenin and Modern Sciences* (Moscow, 1970), p. 27.

[6] A. Einstein, L. Inphender, *The Development of Physics* (Moscow, 1965), p. 48.

made the name of Einstein immortal? I think that I answered that question when I wrote that Poincaré had a rather skeptical view about the theories of physics, and thought that, in general, there exists a countless number of views and images, which are various but compatible from a logical perspective; the reason why scientists choose their views and images was only a matter of convenience. Perhaps this nominalism prevented Poincaré from understanding the truth that, among all logically possible theories, there exist theories which stand closer to physical reality; in any case, the latter are more appropriate to the intuition of physicists and have more suitable impacts to their efforts. *If so, the very philosophical tendency towards nominal convenience in Poincaré's mind prevented him from grasping the significance of the idea of relativity with all his greatness.* (emphasis ours – L.H.T)

The above remarks from outstanding physicists of the twentieth century confirm that, starting from "empirical materials and data" and by the means of theoretical generalization, philosophy can make discoveries. The philosophical discoveries are of great value in orienting human cognitive and practical activities.

If the abovementioned views are correct – that is, if philosophy indeed relies on materials provided by other sciences and practical activities, and makes its discoveries only by means of theoretical thinking – are the ways of thinking in which we have been engaged, the methods we have been using in our philosophical research, correct? In this case, how can we avoid subjective and speculative judgments? What can guarantee the reliability of the results of philosophical research which have not yet completely been verified or refuted by our practice? How can we improve the reliability and persuasiveness of the results of philosophical research? Should we conduct philosophical research using other methods which can guarantee that the results of philosophical research will really be based on the most updated materials of science and practice? These problems are pressing and must be researched and resolved.

To address these concerns, we propose the following response. Perhaps we can combine philosophical research with scientific research, and employ their respective methods so that the objects of research address the questions raised by researchers. In so doing, the results of philosophical research could be more relevant, reliable and convincing. This is of particular importance in the age of globalization, the age in which we

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[7] *Ways of Sciences* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 306–307. [This is likely the translation of Louis de Broglie, *Sur les Sentiers de la Science* (Paris, 1960); see also his earlier work, *Savants et découvertes* (Paris : Michel, 1951) – Ed. note.]

encounter global problems the solutions to which require that one overcome narrow and local restraints in order to progress toward a global perspective, and for which the participation of philosophy is indispensable.

While we note that lack of respect for philosophy that is unfortunately still present in some places, we also note that there exists another attitude toward philosophy – toward *the absolutization of the role of philosophy*, according to which all concrete problems will somehow be immediately resolved only by having a [firm] grasp of philosophy. Such an overemphasis on the role of philosophy has led to the illusion that philosophy is a universal key which can solve all problems. In some places, out of an eagerness to bring philosophy to serve practical activities, some philosophers have engaged enthusiastically in research on very concrete issues, forgetting that, in order to find answers to these problems, apart from general theoretical knowledge and philosophical knowledge, we need other types of knowledge, such as a commanding grasp of the real situation, in which the concrete issues have been placed in a certain temporal and spatial context. This firm professional knowledge, especially a sharp practical sense, can be obtained only through years of training and practical involvement in a particular sphere. Without all the aforementioned, no true philosopher could find correct answers to the concrete problems of human life, even the most simple.

Therefore, in order to resolve effectively the very concrete, complex, and diverse problems of life, we need to avoid both mistaken extremes; we must avoid both a disrespectful attitude toward philosophy – which can lead to arbitrariness and short-sighted methods, and consequently to a lack of foresight, creativity and dynamism – and *an absolutization of the role of philosophy* (which would lead to a mechanical application of general philosophical principles, laws and knowledge, without consideration of actual situations and, subsequently, unavoidably leading to failure).

A combination of the two kinds of knowledge – general knowledge including knowledge of philosophy and the specialized sciences, and practical knowledge including understanding of practical situations and professional proficiency – is a necessary foundation for the success of our practical activities.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

EAST ASIA AND THE EVOLUTION OF COMMON VALUES

YERSU KIM

At the center of this paper stands the notion of cultural synthesis. A culture, if it is to survive and prosper, must constantly adapt its ideas, values and practices to the changing and changed circumstances. Cultures and civilizations of each time and place strive to forge an optimal synthesis of ideas and values that would best enable it to deal with the tasks of survival and prospering. At some point in time and place, a synthesis will be perceived, by those inside as well as outside, to have reached an optimal point, a reflective equilibrium in the process of interaction and interchange of ideas and values on the one hand and the recalcitrant but changing reality on the other.

I see East Asia from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries to have achieved such a synthesis. It was a universalistic cultural order based in important part on Confucianism, which venerated the past, and propounded a distinct view of human being and moral significance of every aspect of human, natural and societal life. This civilizational order gave East Asia many centuries of political stability and cultural achievement. Even as a young civilization was in the making – through a dizzying succession of transformations subsequently known as the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, French Revolution, Industrial Revolution and colonialism – progressively strengthening its universalistic claims, East Asia was largely oblivious of the challenge posed by the new historical reality, supremely confident of its cultural superiority.

Not nearly as spectacular, but certainly more far-reaching in consequences was the "clash of civilizations" that took place two centuries before the September 11 attack in 2001. In 1793, Emperor Ch'ien-lung of the Ching dynasty granted an audience to Lord Macartney, an emissary of King George III of Great Britain, in search of expanded trade with China. In the eyes of the Chinese, Great Britain was merely one of the distant tributaries within its sphere of civilization, and they demanded Macartney to perform the ritual of kowtow – the ritualistic essence of East Asian cultural universalism – consisting of 3 genuflections, each accompanied by 3 prostrations.

You know how the encounter ended in an inconclusive compromise at the time. The British emissary ended up performing 3 genuflections, without prostrations required of tributary emissaries. But we must remember that by this time Britain was in an early stage of Industrial Revolution, and the mission took place some four years after the French

Revolution, in many ways events which epitomize European modernity. Barely 50 years later, the British had grown strong and audacious enough to resort to military means to advance its trade interest. With the so-called Opium War, China began a progressive and rapid descent into a semi-colonial state. East Asian civilization was clearly facing a challenge to its universalistic claims and a grave threat to its survivability as a viable civilization.

Suddenly confronted with vitality of the European civilization and its challenge, countries in traditional East Asia attempted to deal with the situation, each in its own way. Although there were important differences in speed and modality, there was a distinct pattern in the responses made by East Asian countries. They first tried to mobilize national resources under the banner "Rich Nation and Strong Military." Then there was a broad suggestion as to how to go about achieving this goal: it was necessary to learn the technological ways of the West, while remaining faithful to the spiritual and moral values of the East. Finally, there emerged a gradual realization that the path of "Eastern Ethics and Western Technology" is more easily said than done. There was a sense that the Confucian cultural synthesis in its entirety was no longer adequate – indeed, it was detrimental – to deal with the historical realities of the modern world created on the foundation of the Western synthesis.

By the end of the nineteenth century, it was clear that the Western synthesis was enabling humanity to lead a material existence at a level never before imagined possible, and a societal existence where democracy, social justice and the rights of human beings were increasingly becoming norms. The persuasiveness of this phenomenon was such that many peoples and societies willingly abandoned their customary truths and ways of life. Although there were differences in speed and modality, this meant the adoption and internalization of the values and practices of the Western cultural synthesis. East Asian civilization, abandoning its traditional role as the teaching civilization, became a willing pupil of Western civilization. In moments of doubt and uncertainty, one needed simply to turn to the ready-made cultural model provided by the Western synthesis.

Today, in the early years of the twenty-first century, East Asia, a region of the world where 1.6 billion people live, has once again become one of the major poles of the world economy, together with Europe and North America. It is also becoming increasingly clear that modernization, in the sense of Westernization, is drawing to a close. As the process of modernization nears completion in terms of material wealth in many countries of East Asia, so too does the validity and persuasiveness of the Western synthesis. A growing sense of uncertainty and crisis has been evident now for a number of years, a sense that ideas and values underlying the Western synthesis that had served humanity so well in its tasks of survival and prospering, seem now to be increasingly irrelevant and even counter-productive. The ideas and assumptions on which modern society had been founded are no longer adequate to deal with many of the central

problems facing humanity, such as the environment, inequalities among individuals as well as among nations, dehumanization of work, and the consequent deprivation of purpose and meaning of life.

By the time East Asia embarked on the process of modernization, the material and institutional achievements of Western civilization were in full bloom. Today, even as it has become clear that the Western synthesis is no longer able to offer a sure guide to human survival and prospering, **East** Asia is nowhere near forging a clear conception of where it wishes to go from here. Efforts have not been lacking in offering "East Asian" solutions to the problems facing humanity. One such effort is the so-called Asian values debate of the 1990s, the values which put emphasis on education, consensus building, harmony, responsibility and leadership of governments.

What role does philosophy have at this important juncture in civilizational transformation? I think one important role for philosophy lies in identifying those values shared by major civilizations, particularly by the European and Asian. It will be an important contribution to the task of rejuvenating those spiritual and cultural values which can be the resources for forging a new cultural synthesis – though perhaps just an expansion and revision of a partly flawed cultural synthesis. I believe the starting point of such an effort at cultural synthesis is to see these values in clear relation to the tasks and problems which afflict humanity, and try to come to grips with them. In a sense, I am proposing that we reverse the conceptual process with which we as philosophers are more familiar. I am proposing that we look first at the fundamental problems which afflict Europe and East Asia – and indeed humanity as a whole. Then we need to try to see what the values are which are needed to deal with these problems. The values required may turn out to be European, East Asian, or of some other provenience. We understand these values because they are closely connected with the problems we know first-hand in an existential way. People in different cultures can communicate in an intelligible way about these values because the problems from which they spring are common to peoples of different cultures.

The values of different cultures and civilizations intersect at points where the commonality of problems which they face is perceived. Would such an approach free us from the metaphysical and epistemological baggage which has made the search for commonality such a difficult task? The notion of universality, and in a sense a more recent metamorphosis of this idea into that of transversality, have always been bound up with the difficulties of communicability and translatability, as well as with the charge of hegemonism.

What is clear is that both Europe and East Asia have a common task at hand of forging a cultural synthesis that can serve humanity as it faces the realities of the twenty-first century and beyond. A radical cultural synthesis is clearly called for, but there is no dominant voice which can claim with certainty and authority the form and direction of this

transformation. But whatever form and direction this transformation may eventually come to take, one can identify a number of issues which recur.

There is, first and foremost, the task of an appropriate revision of the aggressive individualistic ethics that have formed the backbone of Western civilization. Can it be tempered or even replaced by a greater concern for the common good? Can we make the ethos and institutions of traditional communalist societies relevant to the societies of tomorrow? Can familism, which is often pointed out as an essential element in the traditional East Asian culture, be sublimated into a normative standard for a more inclusive and cooperative human relationship?

Most controversial, perhaps, is the problem of the human relationship to nature. In place of the conception of man, as a being separate from nature, obligated to conquer it, a less exploitative outlook must take root, which sees man as one species among others embedded in the intricate web of natural processes which contain and sustain all forms of life. Such an outlook must be supported by the knowledge that there are limits to natural resources and that human intervention in the actual process is bound to have far-reaching consequences. It must be a relationship that is able to deal with the still unsolved problem of poverty and underdevelopment in much of the world. In short, it must enable us to manage the complexity of nature to sustain our economies. The task ahead is not simply to control nature but to control ourselves so that the economy can fit appropriately within the natural ecology. Can traditional East Asian ecological thought be a helpful intellectual and spiritual resource in dealing with the problems of the twenty-first century?

Just as crucial is the problem of social justice, both at national and international levels. The forces of a globalizing economy are creating great wealth for humanity, even as they widen the gap between the haves and have-nots within and among societies and nations. Are received conceptions of justice adequate to deal with these problems? Is there some way that a fundamentally different idea of justice be incorporated into the received, widening its applicability without sacrificing the purpose for which the idea of justice stands?

Finally, the issue of the meaning of life figures importantly in the debates. It is connected with the attitude that sees human flourishing primarily in terms of the accumulation of material wealth. Such an attitude must be replaced by a more holistic perspective, which knows how to balance and coordinate satisfactions among many different dimensions of human existence. It would be an outlook that places inner satisfaction of the mind on the same or even on a higher level than material satisfaction. Art, music, poetry and rituals would temper and enrich barren rationalism, regaining their commensurate places in the lives of men and women. It would be a perspective in which reason and emotion, quality and quantity, future and past have their own appropriate and respected places. Is the idea of self-cultivation that stands at the core of the traditional East Asian ethical

and cultural tradition relevant and adequate to the realities of the twenty-first century?

These are all open questions. It would be cultural arrogance in the extreme to think that any one culture alone had all the answers to these problems. Because we live in an age more skeptical about universal ideas and values and more receptive toward plurality and diversity, I believe it is primarily in the way a given culture or civilization comes to grips with the fundamental problems it faces that we must seek commonality that binds different peoples and societies. The task of cultural transformation in terms of common values is a task that challenges all our cultures. Cultural interaction will have to be a "conversation of mankind," and the cultural synthesis hoped for will be neither European nor East Asian, but transversal, one "whose center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere."

Kyung Hee University
Seoul, Korea

THE SEARCH FOR A GLOBAL ETHICS: CONFUCIUS AND ANCIENT GREEK MORAL PHILOSOPHY

MYRTO DRAGONA-MONACHOU

At the beginning of the last decade, the need for common values became urgent, and a campaign was undertaken by institutions, theologians and moral philosophers to search for a global ethics. In 1996, UNESCO's Philosophy Division launched an ambitious project in search of a universal ethics, organizing multicultural meetings and conferences all over the world. The International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) promoted such a dialogue among cultural traditions, and the theme of the XXI World Congress was "Philosophy Facing World Problems." Perhaps it is not accidental that, in 1996, Samuel Huntington's well known book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* appeared. Although Huntington admits some "constants of human behavior," he did not propose the promotion of common ethics as an antidote to a possible cultural conflict. He rather speaks of a "world policy of a multicultural character" and particularly of "an international order based on civilizations." Yet, in the last section of his book, entitled "The Commonalities of Civilization," he sketches, following Michael Walzer, a minimalist universal ethics, contrary to the maximalist ethics of the various particular cultures, laying emphasis on those elements that might achieve a reduction of the various cultures into a Civilization. He summarizes in a rather positive spirit the "Declaration of Common Values" adopted in Singapore (1990), and remarks that despite the world's division into the major religions, such as Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and so on, there are some common basic values; and, if humans ever develop a universal civilization, this will gradually emerge from the search and extension of those common elements. Yet, although Huntington considers the prevalence of common values a guarantee for peace, he nevertheless lays emphasis on the differences of cultural traditions as accentuated by the resurgence of religious fundamentalism.

Universalism is inherent in philosophy, and especially moral philosophy. Even if conceptions of "the good" might be different in various cultural traditions, the concept of "the right" as a norm of conduct can have a universal character. Even if various deontological and moral codes of conduct may reflect particular social values and mores of peoples, as moral codes they have a common core. They express in one way or another various versions of the "golden rule." This assumption is confirmed by

socio-biological and anthropological research data as well as by recent "evolutionary ethics" which looks for the origin of ethics and claims to have discovered natural altruistic inclinations implying the existence of norms that can be claimed to constitute the core of morality. These norms, stated by ethnology, show that despite pluralism and diversity there are some common structures – moral universals exist side by side with common needs and meta-needs that do not seem alien to the common values so badly needed in the condition of contemporary globalization; this allows the feasibility of a certain universal ethics. This common core of morality enables people from different religious and cultural traditions to reach a certain "overlapping consensus," and proceed to declarations of universal ethical principles such as the recent Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005).

This common moral background can be traced from the first moral philosophies that have come down to us. Philosophical ethics arises either as a reflection on the popular ethics of the time or – and this is more important – as a reaction to it. Philosophical ethics, as we can see from the history of Greek moral philosophy, appears as a reaction to the life style of the time (Xenophanes-Heraclitus), as an awareness of ethical relativism (Protagoras), as a consciousness of the similarity of human nature and the arbitrariness of cultural discrimination (Antiphon), as an acknowledgement of the importance of education and freedom for the formation of mores (Democritus), and particularly as an effort to question theonomic ethics and to distinguish moral concepts and values from the religious ones (Xenophanes-Socrates) – thus inaugurating the independence of secular ethics from the theonomic one. It is not accidental that one of the first debates in the history of ethics is the distinction of the good from the holy – and the defense of the priority of the good to the holy – in Plato's *Euthyphro*. Thus, a comparative study of the world histories of ethics may help to discover the common core lying in the various cultural traditions, and encourage the prospect of universal ethics. Most illuminating, however, is the comparison between ethical systems that have been developed independently of one another. From this viewpoint, even a rough comparison between Confucian and ancient Greek ethics seems particularly representative. The Far East came into contact with the Western world and with the Greco-Roman ethical tradition after the 4th century CE and particularly in modern times (16th-17th century). So, no influence can be traced between such remote thinkers as Confucius, and Socrates and his followers (i.e., ancient Greek moral philosophy as a whole, which lies at the origin of the ethical tradition of the Western world).

It has been argued[1] that the differences between Confucian and Western Ethics are broad and deep, since the former, as a code of conduct, includes politics, ritual, etiquette and conventions without "prescriptive

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[1] Chad Hansen, "Classical Chinese Ethics," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 69-81.

ought-statements." It is language, not reason, that guides acts, and man must learn to rectify names. Besides, whereas Greek and Western ethics can be understood with reference to reason, Confucian ethics is more social; it is a morality of roles. Yet, so also is Aristotelian ethics up to a point. The morality of Confucius has been considered conventional or anti-utilitarian, in contrast to Mozi's utilitarianism and Mencius' intuitionism.[2] He is credited, however, with a negative version of the "golden rule" as a gloss on "reciprocity," with the remark that "while the code is conventional, interpretation of the code appeals to more universal moral considerations."[3] Although Chad Hansen remarks that Confucius' attachment to *Li* (ritual) is uncritical and that "he never raises the Socratic ethical question 'why follow just these conventional norms'?,"[4] Confucius (551-479 BCE) is often compared with Socrates (470-399 BCE), the founding father of philosophical ethics, on the basis of his method, irony and agnosticism regarding the survival of the soul.[5] Confucius' writings might also be compared with Stoicism. Neither Confucius nor the Stoic Epictetus, following Socrates, wrote down their philosophical teachings. This was done by their pupils, and it is well known that both Socrates' and Confucius' teachings have had various, sometimes conflicting interpretations.[6]

Like Socrates, Confucius was not only an intellectual and founder of a philosophical school, but a cultural phenomenon, tightly bound up with the destiny of the Chinese world.[7] Like Socrates, Confucius became a myth for his students, and was so differently pictured by them and virtually sanctified that it is just as difficult to restore the "historical" Confucius as it is to restore the historical Socrates. The *Analects* still remains the most trustworthy source for his life as a man and charismatic teacher (using questioning and irony), and as a person using education as a means for political transformation and humanness as virtue and justice, aiming at the development of an ideal human being – thus recalling the Socratic "*kalos kagathos*." Confucius seems to share the disappointment of both Socrates and Plato from the politics of their time when he asks "What about men who are in public life in the present day?"[8] and saying that, "by being good, a man is taking part in government"[9] because "to govern is to correct."[10]

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[2] Chad Hansen, "Classical Chinese Ethics," p. 70.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[5] Sotiris Chalikias, *The Analects of Confucius*, Vol. I, Greek translation and Commentary, (Athens: Indictus, 2001), pp. 25-26.

[6] Will Durant, *The History and Civilization of China*, Greek translation by A. Frangias (Athens, 1955).

[7] Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1997), p. 55.

[8] Confucius, *Analects*, XIII.20.

[9] *Ibid.*, II.21.

One of the major problems of understanding Confucius' thought is the philosophical interpretation and translation of his ideograms such as "the Way" (*dao*), "perfect humanness/benevolence" (*ren*), "ritual" (*li*) , "most perfect man" (*jun zi*), "holy sage" (*sheng ren*), "equity" (*Zwong*), "justice" (*yi*), "virtue" (*de*), and so on, into a contemporary philosophical idiom. I shall rely here, in my brief survey of passages recalling important point of ancient Greek ethics, on Greek and English translations.

Confucius' ethics has been seen as concerned with moral character rather than moral acts.[11] One of its central concepts was virtue, on the basis of which man can become good and govern the state well. This passion for virtue was shared by both Confucius and Socrates. In the face of similar moral, social and political conditions, both focused their teaching on the improvement of human soul or character. Socrates fought against the sophistic relativism and skepticism as well as against the political decadence of his time, trying to realize a vision perhaps not dissimilar to that attempted by Plato in his *Republic*. Confucius, living in a confused political and spiritual situation, tried to inspire his pupils with a similar ideal by showing the Way leading to justice and preaching the cultivation of the virtues, the perfectibility of man, benevolence and respect for the Other.

We may say, then, that moral philosophy, both normative and practical, as we understand it today, begins with Confucius and Socrates. Both taught self-knowledge and wished to accomplish self-improvement. Both sought wisdom and fostered the ideal of the wise man. Neither elaborated rounded-out and dogmatic philosophical systems, but cared for the soul and the cultivation of character. It is noteworthy that the creation and flourishing of moral philosophy both in Greece and Far East, i.e., the "Golden Age" of ethics, was the period between the 6th and 3rd centuries BCE – and this period was stamped by the personalities of Confucius and Socrates respectively – Socrates living about a century later than Confucius. In arguing that Socrates is the founding father of moral philosophy, I do not mean to say that before him we do not find signs of a moral philosophical reflection. Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Parmenides – Confucius' contemporaries – and some Sophists had raised ethical questions in a secular spirit, and most of Socrates' teaching can be seen as a reaction to these first ethical queries. Neither is the analogy between the moral philosophy of Confucius and ancient Greek ethics restricted to Socrates; it extends to Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics as far as these philosophers continued to do ethics in the line of Socrates. The ideogram *dao*, for instance, recalls Parmenides' "road" and "truth," and the ideal of the sage (*jun zi*), the wise man of the Stoics and some of the particular virtues (*de*) in Aristotle. Thus my comparative survey covers the period from the 6th to the

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[10] *Ibid.*, XII.17.
[11] D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* [English translation] (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 10 ff.

3rd century BCE, the "Golden Age" of ancient ethics, although it does not extend for lack of space to Confucius' pupils and descendants.

I consider as the cardinal idea of Confucius' ethics to be the concept of the perfect man, the excellent man, the incarnation of the perfect humaneness, which is similar to Socrates' "good man,' Plato's "philosopher," Aristotle's "excellent man" (*spoudaios*) and to the Stoic wise man (*sophos*). I shall restrict myself to quoting some of Confucius' passages referring to the perfect man that fully correspond to the letter and the spirit of Greek philosophers, without giving the full reference of the Greek texts for reasons of brevity. I must confess, however, that the Greek translation which I mostly follow differs in many respects from the English one, which I should follow here, in particular in rendering as "benevolence" what the Greek translation renders as "humaneness" – and this holds for other concepts as well. Confucius says:

> "The gentleman [= Greek *kalos kagathos*] puts his words into action before allowing his words to following his actions"[12] = Socrates (Plato's *Apology*).
> "If the gentleman forsakes benevolence [humaneness: Greek translation], in what way can he make a name for himself?"[13] = Socrates-Stoics.
> "The gentleman is on the side of what is moral [just: Greek translation][14] = Socrates (Plato's *Gorgias*)- Plato, Aristotle, Stoics.
> "The gentleman cherishes respect for the law"[15] = Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics.
> "The master said: 'I have no hopes of meeting a sage. I would be content if I met someone who is a gentleman'"[16] = Stoics: "the wise man has not been found yet."[17]
> "The master said: '...[I[n being a practicing gentleman I have had as yet no success"[18] = Socrates-Stoics.
> "The master said: 'The gentleman is easy of mind, while the small man is always full of anxiety'"[19] = Stoics [tranquility of mind].
> "There are three things which the gentleman values most in the Way: to stay clear of violence by putting on a serious countenance, to come close to being trusted by setting a proper expression on his face, and to avoid being boorish and

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[12] Confucius, *Analects*, II.13.
[13] *Ibid.*, IV.5.
[14] *Ibid.*, IV.10.
[15] *Ibid.*, IV.11.
[16] *Ibid.*, VII.26.
[17] SVF III Diog. 32.
[18] Confucius, *Analects*, VII.33
[19] *Ibid.*, VII.37.

unreasonable by speaking in proper tones"[20] = Aristotle [the great-souled man], Stoics [the wise man].

"Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire"[21] = the golden rule, a basic principle observed by all religions and philosophies.

"The stuff is no different from refinement"[22] = Democritus: "Nature and nurture is the same thing. Nurture transforms man and becomes his nature."

"The master said: If something has to be put first, it is, perhaps, the rectification of names"[23] = Plato's *Cratylus*.

"The Master said: 'Unbending strength, resoluteness, simplicity and reticence are close to benevolence [humaneness]'"[24] = Aristotle, Stoics: the wise man.

"If a man remembers what is right at the sight of profit, he is ready to lay down his life in the face of danger"[25] = Socrates-Epictetus.

"The man of wisdom is never of two minds"[26] = Socrates.

"The master said: 'The gentleman has morality [justice] as his basic stuff ...by being modest gives it expression, and by being trustworthy in words brings it to completion'"[27] = Socrates, Aristotle, Stoics.

"The master said: 'The gentleman is devoted to principles'"[28] = Socrates-Stoics.

"The Master said: 'For the gentleman it is morality [justice] that is supreme'"[29] = Socrates.

"The gentleman takes office in order to do his duty"[30] = Socrates.

"[The gentleman] from a distance appears formal; when approached, he appears cordial; in speech he appears stern"[31] = Stoic sage.

"Confucius said: 'A man has no way of becoming a gentleman unless he understands Destiny'"[32] = Stoics.

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[20] Confucius, *Analects*, VIII.4.
[21] *Ibid.*, XII.2.
[22] *Ibid.*, XII.8.
[23] *Ibid.*, XIII.3.
[24] *Ibid.*, XIII.27.
[25] *Ibid.*, XIV.12.
[26] *Ibid.*, XIV.28.
[27] *Ibid.*, XV.18.
[28] *Ibid.*, XV.37.
[29] *Ibid.*, XVII.23.
[30] *Ibid.*, XVIII.7.
[31] *Ibid.*, XIX.9.
[32] *Ibid.*, XX.3.

This comparison shows, I believe, that Confucius' ideal for man is not different from that of ancient Greek philosophers. His wise man incarnates almost the same virtues as those of the Greek sages, but, what is more important, he pays respect to principles such as truth, trust and justice which are deemed to be universal.[33] Confucius and Socrates behave in the same way: "Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have undertaken on another's behalf, have I failed to do my best? In my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I passed on to others anything that I have not tried out myself?"[34] He cultivates himself[35] and he tries to correct and improve himself.[36] He uses the same method of questioning, he practices the same *elenghos* and he shares the same view about knowledge: "I shall tell you what it is to know. To say you know when you know and to say you do not know when you do not, that is knowledge."[37] His view about friendship is similar to that of Aristotle. He says, "Do not accept as friends anyone who is not as good as you"[38] also distinguishing three kinds of useful and harmful friendship. He speaks in lyric terms about virtue, considering it a gift of the Heavens[39] and a sort of "pole star commanding the homage of the multitude of stars without leaving its place,"[40] considering it as "mean" in Aristotelian terms. He says, "Supreme indeed is the Mean as a moral virtue"[41] and he exhorts its cultivation without reward. He says, "To put service before the reward you get from it, is that not exaltation of virtue?"[42] All these views are Socratic and some, such as "Love your fellow men," are Christian. Confucius sees justice as the supreme virtue covering morality as a whole.[43] After Socrates, Plato, Aristotle – and nowadays Rawls – justice has pride of place in ethics.

It is not easy to give a label to the ethics of Confucius. It is a virtue ethics when compared to the rule-centered ethics of some of his descendants whose ethics seem closer to the Stoic ethics of natural law. Thus, Confucius' ethics seems closer to that of Plato and Aristotle, while his spiritual and moral attitude is both Socratic and Stoic. Confucius' ethics is practically oriented, and this is of particular interest nowadays after the turn from metaethics to practical and applied ethics. The fact that in philosophies so remote we find similar moral structures shows that the project of a

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[33] Jennifer Trusted, *Moral Principles and Social Values* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

[34] Confucius, *Analects*, I.4.

[35] *Ibid.*, XIV.25.

[36] *Ibid.*, XIII.13.

[37] *Ibid.*, II.17.

[38] *Ibid.*, I.8 and IX.25.

[39] *Ibid.*, VII.23.

[40] *Ibid.*, II.1.

[41] *Ibid.*, VI 29.

[42] *Ibid.*, XII.21.

[43] *Ibid.*, IV.10.

universal ethics such as that launched by UNESCO for common values is not utopian. This project proceeded with conferences held first in Paris, in 1997, during which the values and norms that could help humanity to face world problems were discussed; next in Naples in the same year, during which Islamic, Confucian and other cultural values received broad acceptance within a global spirit; and finally, and perhaps more substantially in 1998 in Beijing. In this conference more that forty experts from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Germany, and so on, met and explored the project of universal ethics from the perspectives of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and so on. The feasibility of a global minimalist ethics was expected to be realized, not only through dialogue but through an "omnilogue" and on the basis of "the golden rule" and the interiorization of human rights. Respect for human rights has proved the basis for the achievement of the "overlapping consensus" among world cultures and is badly needed for peaceful human existence.

Department of History and Philosophy of Sciences
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Athens, Greece

COSMOPOLITANISM AND MARXISM

PETER KEMP

In this paper, I want to show how a great idea – that of the world citizen in ancient Stoic philosophy -- has been preserved and concretized during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries thanks to the Marxist movement, so that the world citizen – the cosmopolitan – today has become the central figure for understanding the world and our tasks in a global age.

THE OLD CONCEPT

The concept of the cosmopolitan or citizen of the world is quite old, originating in ancient Greek Cynic and Stoic philosophy. The first philosopher who called himself a "cosmopolitès" or "citizen of the world" was the Cynic Diogenes from Sinope, who lived from 412–323 BCE, *i.e.*, the time of Plato and Aristotle. If someone asked him where he came from, his sole reply was: "I am a citizen of the world".

Three centuries later, the Roman philosopher Cicero (106–43 BCE), and a little later still, Seneca (4–65 CE), developed the idea of a *societas generis humani* – a society of Humankind – as the most extensive society to which human beings belong. Thus, every human being belongs to two societies: the society into which he/she is born, and the society of the world. Even a head of a major state could thereby understand himself to be a member of a more comprehensive social reality than his own state.

This was the case with the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE), who wrote in his *Meditations*: "I am a member of the enormous organism of Humanity."[1] This membership, however, had a purely spiritual or personal character. It was the feeling of belonging to a community of thought encompassing all human beings, even individuals who, as Marcus wrote, were "interfering, ungracious, insolent, full of guile, deceitful and antisocial."[2] In practice, this meant openness to everyone irrespective of whether they lived close by or far away. Marcus wanted to put himself in everyone else's place: "Accustom yourself not to be inattentive to what another person says, and as far as possible enter into his mind."[3] As Martha C. Nussbaum points out,[4] this idea, articulated by a powerful politician,

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[1] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, VII.

[2] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, II.1.

[3] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, VI.53.

[4] Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

could not but diminish his anger towards other individuals and cultures he spontaneously disliked and rationally criticized.

The Stoic citizens of the world, however, were not united by common political and cultural problems, but rather only by general human conditions. Their cosmopolitanism remained on the purely personal level and was not concerned with global peace.

COSMOPOLITANISM IN KANT

This changed in modern times when the idea of the cosmopolitan appeared in the works of many of the Enlightenment philosophers of the eighteenth century. It appeared Bayle, Montesquieu, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot and Thomas Paine, amongst others. Moreover, the *Citizen of the World* became a pivotal theme for the most important thinker of that time, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who has been called "the cosmopolitan thinker par excellence."[5]

I cannot here present in detail the development of the cosmopolitan idea in the age of the Enlightenment. I must limit myself to summarize Kant's role in the development of the figure of the world citizen. His conception of the cosmopolitan is one of the milestones halfway between the ancient cosmopolitan of the Stoics (to whom it was a purely abstract idea of humanity), and the global world citizen today (who has the responsibility for taking major world problems seriously). In the nineteenth century, Marx and Engels represent another important milestone in this transformation of the world citizen. I shall discuss this later.

According to Kant, the notion of the cosmopolitan is a hope, an idea stemming from the promise of a more peaceful world where all peoples partake in a world community. This idea is a part of his practical philosophy. As we know, Kant divided his philosophy into a practical part and a theoretical part. Both parts underwent a critical investigation wherein he scrutinized the possible conditions of, on the one hand, the perception and understanding of objects in time and space, and on the other, the realization of human community based on a universally valid moral principle.

Through both the theoretical and the practical spheres of perceived and reflected reality, Kant sought to develop a new metaphysics or conception of reality that would replace stale and dogmatic metaphysics. Kant located the relation between the two spheres in the imagination that enable us to conceptualize and order things, and which enable us to imagine other human beings and the realization of a community of mankind.

According to Kant's philosophy, the cosmopolitan is a guide in the development of this community. This notion belongs in a quite specific way to public law. Public law emerges because the mutual respect of property

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[5] Francis Cheneval, *Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Bedeutung* (Basel: Schwabe & Co, AG Verlag, 2002), p. 403 ff.

requires a legal system enforced by a public legislative power, i.e., *civic society*. It is a system of laws for a people (a group of individuals) or a community of peoples.[6] These people relate to each other, and when they relate to themselves as a whole, they form a state.

Furthermore, Kant observes that when states interrelate, this gives rise to the idea of a law of peoples – *Völkerrecht, jus gentium*. However, this law concerns war and peace between *states*, and not really a relation between peoples (as we see in Hugo Grotius's famous book of 1625, *Of the Law of War and Peace*). On the other hand, when there is an internal relation between peoples and individuals in international law, Kant speaks about cosmopolitan law, *Weltbürgerrecht*.

Cosmopolitan law seeks peace as well, but its quest does not spring from the horrors of war. Rather, it springs from practical reason's peaceful idea of a human community, including all peoples and individuals on earth. This idea is rooted in individuals existing on the same globe, *globus terraqueus*, who join in a fellowship of the Earth that we live on and the seas we travel.

Kant had already laid out this basis of the cosmopolitan law some years earlier, when he published a small text on *Perpetual Peace* (*Zum ewigen Frieden*). On that occasion, he stated that the cosmopolitan law was not a fantastic, overextended concept, but simply the idea of a right to hospitability (*Hospitalität*), within reasonable limits. This should not be confused with the right to be a guest (*Gastrecht*), as it does not entail open doors everywhere. Rather, it proposes that everyone has the right to be received and to be treated properly. It was the *right to visit* which, according to Kant, rests on a fundamental *natural law* to the *"common possession of the surface of the earth,"*[7] which makes it possible to get one step closer to a cosmopolitan constitution built on the idea of a *cosmopolitan contract* and to have peaceful relations between distant parts of the world.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte used a similar conception of the cosmopolitan law a few years later when he took an additional step and

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[6] Immanuel Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797-98) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1947); references are made to *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, Band V (Berlin: Akademie Ausgabe, 1908) § 43; English Translation, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Mary Gregor (Cambridge and Glasgow: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*, Dritter Definitivartikel zum ewigen Frieden (Königsberg: 1795), p. 103; *Perpetual Peace* in *On History, Third definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), pp. 85–136; p. 102 ff.

regarded it as the right not only to be on our common earth, but also to engage in mutual agreements by a legal relation to one another.[8]

It is important that this cosmopolitan law – in contrast to what has been international law until the twentieth century – concerns the relation between peoples and individuals. To Kant and Fichte, the sovereignty of states is not a negation of peoples' shared lives. Moreover, since the cosmopolitan law's motive is not negative (i.e., the aversion or alleviation of war), but a positive and free creation of real and perpetual peace among all peoples, peace is not sought after as an act of despair, but is appreciated through the insight that we belong together.

In his minor work, *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (which came out even earlier, in 1784), Kant develops a vision of a world history where the cosmopolitan is "the end of nature."[9] He regards the appearance of freedom in man's action throughout history as an ongoing, though slow, progression according to "a hidden plan" that comes from the original disposition for freedom.

According to Kant, the main challenge that nature gives mankind is to realize a civic society that can secure universal law. The finest purpose of nature can be attained only in a society that bestows absolute liberty on all, with whatever strife that this entails, and which still meticulously defines the limits of everyone's liberty so that we can coexist with the liberty of others. Consequently, mankind's utmost goal must be such a society wherein *liberty* is, to the highest possible extent, subjugated to an irresistible power that enforces *external laws* – a fully *just civic constitution*.

Kant adds that the creation of such an absolutely civic constitution is dependent on an external legal relation between states – i.e., peace. Nature employs the intolerance of mankind, societies, and states to attain a condition of security and peace in a confederation of peoples (*Völkerbund*) that secures peace and justice to even the smallest state. Nature, thereby, forces the "wild" man to give up his animal-like liberty, making states reach an equilibrium and instantiating a cosmopolitan condition of public security.

Kant concludes that we must regard the philosophical attempt to develop a world history of absolute constitutional unity according to nature's plan to be not only possible, but also beneficial for mankind. This could appear as mere fiction, but though we lack the insight to see the hidden mechanisms in the development of the plan, Kant is convinced that

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[8] J.G. Fichte, "Grundriss des Völker- und Weltbürgerrechts" (1797) in *Grundlage des Naturrechts*, Zweiter Anhang, *Fichtes Werke*, Band III (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971) §22, p. 384.

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, Werke in sechs Bänden, Band VI (Im Insel Verlag: 1964); cf. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Band VIII (Berlin: Akademie Ausgabe, 1912); *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*, in *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), pp. 11-26.

his idea of nature's plan helps us see the many seemingly meaningless human actions subsumed into one system that summarizes and values the efforts and suffering that peoples and governments have endured with a cosmopolitan intent.

THE SURVIVAL OF COSMOPOLITANISM IN MARXISM

The cosmopolitan law does not, however, manifest itself in Kant as anything beyond the "right to visit," and it was not a concept that could prevail when the notion of a nation, built on historical and cultural experience, appeared in the nineteenth century. In all major philosophers after Fichte – for instance, Hegel – there was no longer any question of cosmopolitanism. The founder of modern sociology, Max Weber, wanted a *national* social science, a German sociology, and rejected cosmopolitanism.

There was only one important exception. This was Marx and Engels who, in the defense of the communist movement, wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, published in February 1848. Here, for the first time, a labor movement claimed to be global and to realize cosmopolitanism. They presented this manifesto as an appeal "in the face of the whole world" to "working men of all countries!"[10] They declared that it was the "cosmopolitan character" of production and consumption created by the bourgeoisie through its exploitation of the world market, that now gave the working class or the "entire proletariat" the possibility of changing the world. This proletariat was proclaimed "independently of all nationality," since "the working men have no country."[11] But they "have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."[12]

The change from Kant to Marx and Engels is radical. Cosmopolitanism is no longer a weak idea of a right to visit, but the right and the will to conquer the property of the means of production. "The distinguishing feature of Communism," they say, "is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property."[13]

But on one important point Marx and Engels do not differ from Kant: they imagine a world without war between nations. They declare: "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put to an end. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."[14]

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[10] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), tr. Samuel Moore [1888] (London: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 218.
[11] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 241.
[12] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 258.
[13] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 235.
[14] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 241.

THE REVIVAL OF COSMOPOLITANISM

It is surely this vision of peace between nations that is at the core of cosmopolitanism. But the two world wars in the twentieth century have shown that if the citizens of different nations are to refuse to go to war against each other, it is not simply a question of the abolishment of bourgeois property and of the nation state. And perhaps it is not a question, as Marx and Engels thought, of the destruction of nations. Rather, it aims at the integration of all nations with their different experiences into a global community which preserves what is best in each.

It is, however, true that extreme nationalism that excludes any transnational institutions has shown itself as very dangerous for the world. But we had to endure many great wars in the twentieth century before the peoples and the leaders of the world recognized this. Thus, not until the end of the twentieth century did people realize that, if we are to have peace on earth, mankind must *together* deal with the main issues of our time, such as financial globalization, sustainable progress for future generations, transnational crime, and related problems.[15] And they must still learn how to recognize the autonomy, dignity and integrity of peoples from other nations and cultures.

The figure of the cosmopolitan disappeared totally during the twentieth century, but came to the fore again in the 1990's. Philosophers like Jacques Derrida from France, Jürgen Habermas from Germany, and Martha Nussbaum from the United States began to defend cosmopolitanism, and sociologists such as David Held in London and Ulrich Beck in Munich presented analyses of the societies which showed that the idea of cosmopolitanism was the only idea that could guide people in our time to develop democracy on a global scale.

What has happened since cosmopolitanism took the floor again after many years of silence? A great political event indeed: the dissolution of the opposition between East and West symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Before this point, it was nearly impossible not to be caught up in the focus on the fight between the so-called free world in the West and the communist world in the East. After the Wall fell, people discovered that the real issue was not the opposition between two superpower spheres but, rather, a plurality of conflicts crossing various borders. In Europe, we had the Balkan conflicts, in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, in Iraq the, Kurdish-Iraqi conflicts, and so forth. Furthermore, these conflicts were not just military ones. They were also economic and cultural. The anti-globalization movement of the late 1990s was a revolt against worldwide financial repression, and the recent demonstrations against 12 cartoons in a Danish right-wing newspaper reveal

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[15] Cf. Peter Kemp, "The citizen of the world as a figure in a critical vision," *Nordisk Pedagogik* [*Special issue: Education as a critical force – myth or reality?*] 24.1 (2004): pp. 11-18.

a deep gap between common people in the Islamic world and common people in the Christian world.

The world situation at the beginning of the twenty-first century is in need of more than the cosmopolitanism from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But both Kant and Marx contributed considerably to us being able to grasp the idea of the world citizen as a hope for a divided world. It is a central philosophical task today to explain how we can develop and realize global cosmopolitanism in a way that takes the big global problems seriously. Rethinking philosophy today in a global context is to take up this task.[16]

Danish University of Education
Copenhagen, Denmark

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[16] Cf. Peter Kemp, *Verdensborgeren som pædagogisk ideal* [in Danish: *The World Citizen as Ideal of Education*] (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel, 2005).

ART, CULTURE AND AUTONOMY

KEITH LEHRER

Art is the reconfiguration of experience in terms of experience. This includes the experience of culture. Art is the appropriate mode of discourse to avoid co-optation, confrontation and conflagration in the age of globalization. I seek to aestheticize the content of philosophy in the art object. The art object is a mentalized physical object. You can only know what the artwork is like by experiencing the object. The art object is about something. It has content. The question for this paper might be put this way. *What is the special advantage of embodying philosophy in the artistic medium in the age of globalization?*

How does an artwork convey content? Art has the capacity to convey content in a special way that takes us beyond literal communication. The sensory experience, the sensory phenomenology of the surface, is not merely a vehicle or medium for conveying a message. It is, instead, part of the content of the message. It is an exhibit of what the content is like. The sensory experience is part of the message as well as the parcel conveying the message. Someone can tell you what a painting is about, but something is missing in the description. Experience. The artwork must exhibit its content to you in experience for you to know what it is like. You may require information and assistance to understand, but the understanding is in part sensory. That part puts the artwork to the test of experience. This is related to the way in which the sensory puts the scientific work to the test of experience. To summarize, the artwork has a content that is exhibited by the sensory experience of the work that is part of the content.

The inseparability of the sensory experience from the content of the work is a result of the sensory experience being that part of the content that exhibits what the content is like. Moreover, it is the success or failure of the work of art to show us what the content is like that constitutes the aesthetic success or failure of the work. A painting may convey a religious, political or commercial content, but if it does not succeed in showing us what it is like, then it does not succeed as a work of art. You may know a great many truths about a religion, a political system or an economic system, and not know what they are like. The art of narrative literature is an aesthetic method to overcome the abstract objectivity of usual mode of philosophical discourse to show us what it is like to live in certain way.

The key question I want to address is: What is the relevance of all of this to the issue of the role of philosophy in the age of globalization? First, what is the problem about globalization anyway? There are problems of the destruction of culture, ways of life, and the

environment. That is not all there to worry about, but that will suffice. The first thing to notice is that the ties of globalization force upon us the question of whether we should change our conceptions of ourselves, and, if so, how we are to change. The same question arises concerning our religions, our politics and our economics.

The question of whether to change or not to change is often co-opted in the age of globalization by power and wealth. Globalization is a protean and Heraclitean force for change. Let us look at the structure of change. People are confronted with the problem of whether to amalgamate their views, their culture, with those of others or attempt to isolate themselves. The problem with isolation is that it may lead to confrontation with the power of others. The problem with amalgamation is that it may lead to the destruction of what we value by co-optation. The problem is that we either aggregate or refuse to aggregate, assigning the others a weight of zero. The cost of assigning the others a weight of zero – that is, refusing to aggregate with them in a positive way – may be alienation, confrontation and the threat of conflagration. This is a philosophical paradox that we see realized today politically as a desperate problem. The cost of aggregation and compromise has become the sacrifice of culture. We appear confronted by the choice of alienation from others or from ourselves.

The special role of art is its capacity to reach a new conception, a new content, which has a kind of autonomy based on its special artistic character. The content of art is, of course, influenced by context and community, and yet it reaches back into the response systems that are universal and biological. The sensory content loops through culture, religion, politics and economics in a way that ties them all up, down and together in a loop with nature and biology. Universal religions, political systems and economic systems have been a dream. Some would say that the dream has become a nightmare. Universality cut loose from the constraints of sensory experience fails to exhibits what the meaning or content of it is like. That is the problem with discourse outside of art. Aestheticized philosophy contained in the content of the art object exhibits what it is like. It ties the content to experience in a loop. However, the artist, or the philosopher become artist, has the capacity to reconfigure experience. The test of the reconfigured experience rests with those who receive the artworks. There is no guarantee that this will work miracles or work at all. My suggestion is that the universality of philosophy is the corporeal particularity of it realized in the artwork.

There is a role for reason and objective analysis. At the end of the road of reason, the choice to aggregate or isolate may remain. The problem is to find a way to change – for we inevitably will – so that our identity is not co-opted by the aggregation of the identity of the other with our own. So how do we change without a loss of identity? Is there any way of incorporating identity? The question, once posed, suggests an answer. The answer is art. It is the art object that allows us to mentalize an externality. The mentalized physical surface of the artwork is a one that

articulates what we are, our thoughts, or feelings our culture. It exhibits what the content of culture is like. It is the work of an individual incorporating the significant other in his or her externalized identity. It shows us that the egocentric predicament, or the sociocentric predicament, is an egotistic or socioistic fiction. In the work of art, we are always in a process of change. We reconfigure. We transform. It is the original well lost, for the change autonomously exhibits to us what we are like as we change what we are like.

So far, I have placed emphasis on the creator who reconfigures experience by showing us what content is like in the work of art. However, what something is like depends on the receiver, on what it is like for the receiver, who becomes, therefore, an essential force in what the artwork is like. The content of the artwork is a dynamic, synchronic and socially activated. I know that I am leaning toward a postmodern conception of art in what I am about to say. But the artwork must empower the viewer. This goes beyond respect. The content of the artwork is a consequence of the autonomy of the receiver as well as the artist. It is not simply that the meaning or content of the work of art changes over time, that is also true of the meaning or content of words, it is that the content or meaning of the work of art must await the response of the receiver, observer or spectator. For part of what the artwork is like is what it is like for receiver.

I do not say that there is no chance of co-optation of culture in works of art. The risk of co-optation, of being taken over by the other, is always there. But the artwork confronts the viewer with the challenge of creation, which is the same challenge that confronts the artist. It is the challenge to reconfigure experience in creation of new content out of a sensory experience. That experience exhibits what the content of the artwork is like. This is crucial to the issue of co-optation and identity. The receiver must experience what the content is like in the same way that she experiences his or her own consciousness including the consciousness of culture. Experience of what the content of the work is like takes one into subjectivity, whether individual of social, as the content is experienced and exhibited in the experience of the receiver.

Art takes us into an experience of what the content of religion, politics and commerce is like. When we experience in art what they are like, it is we, in collaboration with the artist, who create that meaning or content. The artist may intend that we be inspired to find some meaning, some hurrah for what he or she advocates, and yet our experience of what the content is like may be more doubtful, indeed, we may experience it is as absurd. We are the autonomous receivers of the artwork. The success of the artwork is not measured by some abstract message but by the empowerment of the viewer who experiences what the message is like, what the content is like, in a moment of creative reaction. The receiver preserves identity because the experience of what the content of the artwork is like is an *expression* of that identity, indeed, of what the viewer is like in that protean, Hericlitean dynamic of experience. Change expresses identity rather

diminishing it. And what if you do not like what the content of the work of art is like? That is part of what you are like in the experience of the artwork. Your dislike, the offense you find in the content of the artwork, enhances your identity.

You can see the loop of content, identity and *expression*. You refer back to yourself in the experience of content, in seeing what it is like. It may change you, of course, but it is you changing you in the experience of what the work is like. That loop of the individual and social self ties the content of what the artwork is like to personal and cultural identity and the reconfiguration of it. Art changes us by our changing how we autonomously think about our world and our place in it. I seek to explain how art can enhance our autonomy, whether individual or communal, as we reconfigure experience in art. Can art become the vehicle and exhibition of how we may reconfigure ourselves, our world and our place in our globalized world? It is we who decide as we autonomously create and receive the exhibited content of our reconfigured world.

University of Arizona
Tuscon, Arizona, USA

CHAPTER XXVI

RETHINKING THE ROLE OF THE *INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES* IN THE GLOBAL AGE

PETER KEMP

My aim is to contribute to the rethinking of the role of our International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) in our global age. As a body for the organization of philosophical conferences and especially the world congresses of philosophy every five years, FISP is an institution in the narrow sense, with a firm structure including a general assembly, a steering committee, a board, a secretary general and a president. But it is also a network of philosophical societies and individual philosophers, and it is thereby one of the many non-state bodies that today are important actors on the global scene in play with other non-governmental bodies and with the states themselves.

FISP has an influence not only on global public opinion (by the fact that many philosophers are opinion makers), but also more discreetly through persons who work as advisors for politicians and others with social responsibilities. I do not mean to suggest that FISP is unimportant *vis-à-vis* the development of philosophical thinking in its various disciplines, but – since our task today is to rethink the role of philosophy in a global age – I want to stress its social and cultural role for the world community at the present time.

In this context, then, we can claim that there is a duty to philosophize. But if there is such a duty there must also be a right to philosophy. If you ought to do something you must have the right to do it.

For many years, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) reflected on this right to philosophy in connection with the struggle in France for high school and university education in philosophy. And when he was asked to give a paper at UNESCO in Paris in 1991 concerning UNESCO as a cultural organization for education in the world, he chose as his subject "The right to philosophy from a cosmopolitan point of view" – a title that alludes to a famous text of Kant from 1784, about an "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht" (that I would translate as an "Idea of a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose." This text appeared in the same year as his article, "What is Enlightenment?," where he uses the famous saying of Horace: *Sapere aude!* (which he translated as: "Have the courage to use your own reason"). And this is, of course, the courage to use the right to philosophy, which for Kant and for us is the right to know how

the world really is (behind all illusions), to know what it could be and, accordingly, what we can do in order to do the best for the world.

But what Derrida especially focused on in his talk at UNESCO in 1991 is that, in his text on universal history, Kant "predicts, performs and prescribes a certain number of international institutions that has only appeared in this century (i.e., the 20th century)."[1] And it is true that Kant speaks about a universal civil society with a "perfect just civic constitution,"[2] and even imagines a league of nations – and thereby focuses on a concrete realization of an international order. It is also true that Kant refuses to consider such a historical development as pure fiction; it is not a novel (German: *Roman*), but what he thinks will really happen in the future. And it is noteworthy that Derrida, who has often been accused of turning philosophy into literature, here claims that it is the greatness of Kant not to reduce his philosophical idea of history to a novel.

However, Derrida is well aware of the Eurocentrism of Kant, who speaks about a history of the enlightened nations in which "one will discover a regular progress in the constitution of states on our continent (which will probably give law, eventually, to all the others)."[3] But Derrida recognizes that philosophy is not to be determined by an original program or language which we need only remember in order to find its meaning. We discover more and more "modes of appropriation and of transformation of the philosophical into non-European languages and cultures, which nevertheless cannot be transferred by either classical modes of appropriation – that consists in making one's own what is the other's (here, by making interior the Western memory of philosophy and integrating it in one's own language) – or by invention of new ways of thinking; these, being strange to every other kind of appropriation, would have no relationship to what one believes to be philosophy"[4]

Derrida continues, that what appear today, "are philosophical formations that cannot be included in this basically cultural, colonial or neo-colonial dialectic of appropriation and alienation."[5] However, he also says, "[N]ot only are there other ways for philosophy, but philosophy, if it is, is the other way."[6]

Indeed, it is the philosophical task to reinvent the meaning of the fundamental ideas, the concepts of justice, the good life, freedom, and so on, as well as the concept of cosmopolitanism, and to reconstruct the institutions according to this reshaping of fundamental concepts. And this

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[1] Jacques Derrida, "The right to philosophy from a cosmopolitan point of view," *UNESCO* Paris Conference 1991, pp. 12-13.

[2] Immanuel Kant, *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 16.

[3] Kant, p. 24.

[4] Derrida, pp. 31-2.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

connection between the transformation of concepts and the transformation of institutions is what Derrida speaks of when, in his UNESCO lecture, he claims that it is "impossible to dissociate the motif of the right to philosophy 'from a cosmopolitan point of view' from the motif of a coming democracy." Indeed, the right to philosophy belongs to democratic rights, and in a fundamental way, because true philosophy fights for democracy.

Having followed Derrida up to this point, I want to go a step further in connection with some of the new research in sociology, and speak about the invention of a new world order. I think in particular of the recent work of David Held and Ulrich Beck concerning the transformation that has happened to the concept of 'state' in our time.

For a very long time the idea of state was the idea of an institution that possessed all power over a territory and over the population living in that territory. In European history, this idea of state was confirmed at the peace of Westphalia in 1648, according to which every state has absolute power over its people so that every individual was obliged to hold the same religion as his or her prince. And later, when religion became a "private matter," this did not change the conception of the state's power; the contrary resulted, because religion was declared external to politics.

But a change of the concept of state is exactly what has happened in our days, where the power of the state is not the only political power.

This demands a clarification of the notion of power. And David Held gives a good definition of power as "the capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social and physical"; he adds that the power "concerns the resources which underpin this capacity and the forces that shape and influence its exercise."[7]

Held also shows that this power is exercised in certain "sites of power," i.e., in different contexts and environments, so that we get different forms of power. Thus, there is the power in the areas of health care and the environment, in the area of education, in the market for goods and capital, in the public press, in associations and religious institutions, in the exercise of violence (normally as counter-violence in response to crime) and forced relations, and in juridical and regulating institutions (which constitute the foundations for the formation of the state).

All these areas of power are intertwined, and to the extent that the state institutions are not the only context for the exercise of power, the power of the state must be exercised together with and against other forms of power – and thereby the state is forced to relate to other non-state actors that are exercising power, not only within the state itself, but also in relation to other states and in relation to international and trans-national non-state players.

These non-state players may have a firm structure (as do, for instance, international banks), or they may be rather a kind of network (as

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[7] David Held, *Democracy and Global Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

are the systems of professional communication between scientists, lawyers, philosophers, and so on).

Thus, today it is a sociological fact that the states are no longer the only masters of the world. Different forms of power transgress the frontiers of the state, simply because big world problems that cannot be handled within state frontiers and by one kind of power corresponding to these different sites of power. Thus, more and more, nonstate actors become important on the global scale for the destiny of humanity.

FISP is one of these nonstate actors. As a federation of philosophical societies, it is an institution with a firm structure, but it is also a frame for a network of philosophers and lovers of philosophy that cannot avoid playing a role in cultural, social and even political contexts.

Together with many other trans-national actors, FISP has a global responsibility to the world to create and maintain justice, not only within societies but across all societies. And FISP has the task of indicating what education is necessary for people to understand the world they live in and how they can contribute to a just world order. We shall not only speak about education *in* philosophy, but also about an education *by* philosophy in the good life and just institutions.

To claim these goals is what Kant described as 'considering world history with a cosmopolitan purpose.' But, as he also claimed, this history is not a spectacle we can enjoy from outside, as pure spectators. It is a history in which we are ourselves involved as co-responsible for its course.

Therefore, this new concept of cosmopolitanism, that today is much more developed than it was in Kant, is not pure literature, not pure dream, not "a novel." It is our own life in the world. And the role of philosophy, which is the role of FISP too, is to take care of this life.

Danish University of Education
Copenhagen, Denmark

APPENDIX:

HOW THE POLICY OF A MARKET ECONOMY WAS LAUNCHED AND DEVELOPED IN VIETNAM IN THE PERIOD OF *DOI MOI* ("RENOVATION")

DINH XUAN LY

CHALLENGES TO VIETNAM'S ECONOMY AND CHANGES IN ECONOMIC THINKING BY THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY PRIOR TO THE PARTY CONGRESS OF DECEMBER 1986

After the Geneva Accord took effect in 1954, the North of Vietnam initiated a policy of constructing socialism. The question raised by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP)[1] at that time was what model its economy should follow: western-style market economy or soviet-style centrally planned economy. At that time, the socialist system had made progress in many fields. Therefore, it is easy to understand why Vietnam adopted the model of a centrally-planed economy despite the fact that the model was strongly criticized by Western economists. Nevertheless, the model was employed in an effective way during the two resistance wars against France and the US.

When the country was reunited (April 1975), the model was again introduced nationwide. But it increasingly revealed shortcomings. "In the period of 1976-1980, Vietnam's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate stood at 0.4% per year, but the population growth rate was 2.24% per year. In fact, during the 1980s, seven out of every ten Vietnamese lived in hunger."[2] The author of the article, "Vietnam: half way from poverty to prosperity" (published in *The Economist*), commented that "in the mid 1980s, Vietnam, with an inappropriate policy of agricultural collectivization, had been on the brink of poverty."[3] The socio-economic

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[1] Following the end of the Vietnam War and the reunification of the country, at the 4th Party Congress (1976) the name of the Party was changed to the Communist Party of Vietnam (CVP).

[2] Le Thi Que, *"From Thinking to Practice 15 years: the Vietnamese economy (1986- 2001),"* Economic Research, No. 354 (11/2007), p. 60.

[3] Vietnam News Agency, Reference Material dated 07/05/08, p. 1. [Editor's note: See "Vietnam: Half-way from rags to riches," *The Economist,* Apr. 24, 2008. http://www.economist.com/ specialreports/displayStory.cfm? story_id=11041638.]

crisis lasted throughout the 1970s and became fiercer in the mid 1980s. It was high time for the CPV to change its economic development policy.

The trend called "crossing the barrier" first occurred in the Doan Xa cooperative (Kien Thuy district, Hai Phong city) and then spread across the whole district. "Illegal contracting" (flat rate) in farming activities was found in many localities. This factor, which had been thought of as going against the principles of socialism, now became a practical ground for the CPV to readjust its policy in implementing economic mechanisms. Accordingly, Directive No. 100 on contracting with the landholding units and the households was issued by Secretariat of the CPV Central Committee (13/01/81). This Directive spurred agricultural production, and food productivity increased from 14.4 mil tones in 1980 to 15 mil tones in 1982.

In industry, the Vietnamese government also made a number of significant changes, the first of which was Decision No. 25 (dated 21/01/81), on policy measures to enhance production and business as well as the autonomy of state-owned enterprises. At the 5th CPV Congress (in March, 1982), the Party redefined the scale and speed of industrialization in agriculture, with a view to developing production and meeting people's urgent needs. The CPV declared that "agricultural development should be given top priority and brought to a new height of massive commodity production with a socialist orientation. On the other hand, the production of consumer goods was to be accelerated, and some important heavy industries required further development; agriculture, consumer goods manufacturing and heavy industries are to be combined in a proper agricultural-industrial structure."[4]

These policies, conducted within the framework of a centrally planned economic mechanism, could not resolve the country's difficulties, and production failed to meet vital demands; it was crucial to transform the old economic mechanism into a new one. This fact was officially acknowledged in a report by the CPV Politburo. There, it was stated that "Bureaucracy and subsidy have been obstacles to the whole current economic mechanism, especially in such areas as pricing, salary, finance, credit, monetary circulation and commerce. Therefore, it was imperative to remove the subsidy in pricing-salary-currency circulation. The removal was considered as a decisive way to push up production, control the market, to stabilize and gradually improve people's lives, and change the whole management mechanism of the economy."[5]

However, even these minor adjustments did not go smoothly. Before the 6th Congress, there existed two schools of thought. The first one

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[4] CPV, *Document, 5th Congress* (Hanoi: Su that Publishing House, 1982) Vol. l, pp. 62- 63.

[5] At the 8th Central Committee, Session V, No. 237/TLHN, dated 11/06/85; see CPV, *Document, Congress, Complete Work* (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2006) Vol. 46, p. 64.

advocated centrally planned economic mechanisms; the second supported the idea of "Doi moi" (renovation).

The Politburo and the Central Committee discussed these matters and made some crucial decisions. On September 20, 1986, the decision on key economic issues was made at the Politburo conference. The Politburo determined "only with an appropriate structure can the economy develop in a sustainable way. One of the most important things in economic policy planning and the achievement of socio-economic targets is the establishment of a correct economic structure as well as a structure for production and investment."[6] The Politburo also admitted that, over the preceding ten years, it "had made mistakes in the establishment of structures of economic, production, investments, etc., and within 5 years of 1986-1990, there should be major changes to the structures."[7] As for socialist improvement and the consolidation of new relations of production, the Politburo dictated that "socialist improvement must be in line with the law of harmonious development between the relations of production and the forces of production in terms of property and level. This is manifested by a multi-sectoral economy."[8] As regards the mechanisms of economic management, the Politburo affirmed that "the mechanism of central planning and bureaucracy must be removed and shifted to the mechanism of socialist economic accounting and business-doing." This change targeted economic restructuring, the mode of organization in production, and the distribution of goods in the direction of increasing the autonomy of production units and connecting labour's responsibility to efficiency in production and business.

The main features of the new economic mechanism were defined by the Politburo as follows:

- Planning is to be changed, based on an appropriate application of economic laws, building upon specific laws of socialist economics, and utilizing laws governing the relation between commodities and money.
- Ensuring that socialist economic units have their own autonomy in production and business, being responsible for their own production, activities, and business outcomes.
- Delivery of staff restructuring and administrative staff development in the service of the new economic mechanism, and defining clearly administrative economic functions of state bodies and functions of production and business of economic units; administrative decentralization on the basis of concentrative democracy.[9]

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[6] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work* (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2006) Vol. 47, p. 220.
[7] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work*, Vol. 47, p. 221.
[8] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work*, Vol. 47, pp. 228- 229
[9] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work*, Vol. 47, pp. 236- 237.

The above conclusions were considered as foundational in the CPV Political Report at the 6th Congress in December 1986.

THE FIRST BREAKTHOUGH: THE REMOVAL OF CENTRAL PLANNING, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF MARKET MECHANISM

The 6th CPV Congress marked a breakthrough in the process of renovation undertaken in Vietnam. The breakthough was made, first, in the attitude of the CPV towards market-driven economy on the two main issues:

i, a strict criticism of the old economic mechanism: "the central planning mechanism, with its subsidy and red tape that has over the past years been unable to create motivation for development, has hampered economic development, and has triggered chaos in circulation and distribution, as well as led to social negatives."[10]

ii, the establishment of the new economic mechanism in line with economic laws and the degree of economic development.

It was also emphasized that "the development of small sized production into large scale production is the process by which a self-sufficient subsidy economy is transformed into a commodity economy." The two main features of new governance were: "planning [as] ... the mechanism of economic management", and the "proper practice of the relation between commodities and currency."[11] It was affirmed that "the nature of the new economic mechanism is the planning mechanism driven toward the socialist means of business accounting, in accordance with the principle of the concentration of democracy."[12]

Therefore, at the 6th Congress, the CPV acknowledged commodity production and the role of the market mechanism, but had not yet considered whether Vietnam's economy should be market driven. Still, the international community has given 1986 as the starting point of renovation, whereby Vietnam has grown from a centrally-planned economy to a market-oriented economy."[13]

During the two years of implementing of Resolution of the 6th Congress (i.e., from December 1986 to March 1989), questions needed to be answered in terms of theory and practice. There was yet no consensus in how to understand 'market economy.' At the same time, the CPV's economic policies were implemented in a naïve way. Moreover, the political collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries had brought about psychological problems in parts of society and in the Party.

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[10] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work*, Vol. 47, p. 62.
[11] CPV, Document, *6th Congress* (Hanoi: Su that Publishing House, 1987) vol. 1, p. 65.
[12] CPV, Document, *6th Congress* (Hanoi: Su that Publishing House, 1987) vol. 1, p. 65.
[13] Vietnam News Agency: Reference Material dated 07/05/08, p. 2.

Against this situation, the 6ᵗʰ CPV Central Conference issued Resolution No. 06- NQ/TW (dated March 19, 1989): *Review after two years in the implementation of CPV Congress VI's Resolution: Direction and Tasks in the three coming years.* The CPV set forth principles of renovation, which emphasized that "renovation is not a process that changes socialist goals, but makes those goals more realisable..." In the economic field, the Resolution emphasised:

First, "Making a change in the economic management mechanism, transforming economic units into accounting businesses that aimed at developing a merchandised planning economy that consists of several sectors with a socialist orientation."[14]

Second, "Within a multi-sector economy, the social market (including markets of consumer goods, equipment, service, capital and security) is a single unit with several forces participating in goods circulation. Markets are circulating thoroughly nationwide and in connection with international markets. In the planned commodity economy, the market is both a basis and an object of planning. The market mechanism is manifested by the operation of laws in production and circulation of goods in the relation with other economic laws."[15]

By introducing for the first time a *"united national market in a planned merchandising economy, the market is both a foundation and an object of planning,* and, *national price should be attached to international price",* we see that this Resolution shows a progress in the way of thinking by the CPV about the notion of a market economy.

In 1991, the 7ᵗʰ CPV Congress approved the "Political Program on Country Development" in the transitional period to socialism. The Political Program continued to complement theory with commodity economy:

First, by introducing a policy "to develop a merchandised multi-sector commodity economy in the orientation to socialism"[16];

Second, "to remove the absolutely centralized bureaucratic mechanism of economic management, and to establish market economic mechanisms under state management by law, planning, policies and other instruments. To establish and develop all kinds of market in a synchronic way; and to carry out economic exchange within and beyond the country."[17]

In the Political Report by the 7ᵗʰ CPV Central Committee at the 8ᵗʰ CPV Congress, after citing the achievements and shortcomings in 10 years of the policy implementation of "Doi moi," six major lessons were also

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[14] CPV, Resolution at 6th Central Conference, Central Committee (term VI), Internal Circulation, p. 17.

[15] CPV, Resolution at 6th Central Conference, Central Committee (term VI), Internal Circulation, p. 18.

[16] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work* (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2007), Vol. 51, p. 137.

[17] CPV, Document, *Congress, Complete Work* (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2007), Vol. 51, p. 138.

drawn. Of the six lessons, the third one calls for "the establishment of a sector merchandised economy operating under market mechanisms and state management orienting to socialism." At that time, the market economy was not officially acknowledged, but it was already mentioned to utilize its positive elements in the service of socialist goals. The resolution stated "applying several economic forms and management methods in the market economy is to utilize its positives in the service of socialist goals, not to divert to capitalism; the market economy has its own negatives against socialist nature; by entering into a market economy, it is vital for us to overcome and minimize its negative tendencies."[18]

Accordingly, the market economy is an instrument and means to reach goals "of making every body, every family prosper" and to develop socialism.

THE FOLLOW UP: DETERMINING A MARKET ECONOMY ORIENTED TO SOCIALISM

After 15 years of the introduction of "renovation," the 9th CPV Congress (2001) officially determined Vietnam's economy as a socialist-oriented market towards socialism. At the same time, the understanding of a "socialist-oriented market economy" was made clear as "a multi-sector commodity economy operated under a market mechanism with state management orienting socialism."[19] A market economy aims at developing the forces of production, developing the economy to establish the infrastructure of socialism, and to improve living standards for the people.

A socialist-oriented market economy has several economic sectors, several forms of ownership in which the state economic sector plays a decisive role; the state economic sector along with the collective economic sector lay the foundation for the economy. All economic sectors doing their business under law are integral parts of the socialist-oriented market economy. Therefore, the CPV has recognized the indispensable role and legal position of such economic sectors as household units and small business owners, the capitalist private economic sector, and the foreign investment economic sector in the transitional period to socialism; "it is not matter of whether or not to allow the existence of such economic sectors, but they exist as an objective law."[20]

At the 9th CPV Congress, the basic criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of developing socialist-oriented relations of production were specified, such as "to foster productive forces, improving people's living

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[18] CPV, Document, 8th Congress (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 1996), p. 72.

[19] CPV, Document, 9th Congress (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2001, p. 86.

[20] Le Xuan Tung, "Breakthrough in Theoretical Thinking about Market Economy in Vietnam," *Communist Journal*, No. 16 (8/2007), p. 17.

standards, practicing social justice, etc... Economic growth must be achieved with progress made and social justice practiced at every step of development."[21] The Congress also specified the general economic model in the transitional period, as one that "implements consistently the policy of development of a multi-sector economy under a market mechanism and state management with a socialist orientation."[22]

Therefore, by the 9th CPV Congress, in the economic field, "Vietnam has basically developed the institutional framework of a market economy and has continued to complete necessary measures for better operation."[23]

COMPLETING AND STRENGTHENING A MARKET ORIENTED SOCIALIST ECONOMIC INSTITUTION

The 10th CPV Congress (2006) reiterated the introduction of policies to complete a socialist-oriented market economy, with the following features:

Firstly, the goals of the socialist orientations in the market economy, are "prosperous people, a strong country and an equitable and civilized society", improving people's living standards, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty, encouraging people to grow wealthy in a legitimate way, practicing progress and social justice in every step of development, and achieving economic growth with the development of culture, health care, and education; empowering the people to play a leading role in society.

Secondly, increasing the state's role and the effectiveness of state management by the proper execution of state functions: orienting development via strategies, programs, mechanisms, policies in respect of market principles; implementing state management via the legal system, minimizing governmental interference in market and business activities.

Thirdly, developing and managing markets in a synchronic and effective way, and under a mechanism of fair competition.

Fourth, strongly developing economic sectors, production and forms of business which are "based on (state, collective and private ownership) to develop several forms of ownership and economic sectors: state, collective, private (household, small business owner and capitalist) and foreign investment economic sectors."[24]

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[21] CPV, Document, 9th Congress (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2001, pp. 87- 88.

[22] CPV, Document, 9th Congress (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2001, p. 23.

[23] Le Thi Que, *"From Thinking to Practice 15 years: the Vietnamese economy (1986- 2001),"* *Economic Research,* No. 354 (11/2007), p. 71.

[24] CPV, Document, 10th Congress (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2006, p. 83.

On January 30, 2008, the 6th CPV Central Conference (term X) issued a Resolution on the *Completion of socialist-oriented market economic institutions,* with detailed contents: by 2010, gradually setting up a legal system; promoting the decisive role of the state economic sector in the economy along with developing other economic sectors and forms of business; establishing several economic groups, and multi-ownership corporations with a modern administration and with a capacity for international competition; renovations in the forms of organizations and the methods of operation in enterprises that supply public goods and services; developing various kinds of markets in a synchronic way; properly accommodating the relationship between economic development and cultural, environmental development; increasing the effectiveness of state management, the role of the homeland and of the people.

The conference also defined a vision of a market, socialist-oriented economic institution, which emphasized a full understanding of and respect for market laws and international practices, making use of them in a way that can be applied within a Vietnamese context with a socialist orientation; economic growth in association with general progress, social justice, cultural development and environmental protection; selectively adopting the achievements of developing market economies in the world for practice in Vietnam; playing a more active role in international economic integration, maintaining national independence, sovereignty, political stability, social order and security; improving the capacity of the CPV leadership and the effectiveness of state management; bringing into play the strength of whole political system. Five measures to complete a socialist-oriented market economic institution were put forward:

- to arrive at a consensus in the recognition of a socialist-oriented market economy;
- to complete the institution of ownership, developing all economic sectors, businesses and manufactures;
- to complete the institution of market elements, developing all kinds of market in a synchronic way;
- to complete the institution of a combination of economic growth and progress with social justice;
- to complete the institution of increasing the CPV leadership, the effectiveness of state management of the economy, and socio-economic participation by socio-political organizations, mass organizations and the people.[25]

Overall, from the 6th CPV Congress to the 10th CPV Congress and to 6th Central Conference (term X), the CPV's way of thinking about the market economy has increasingly developed, has been brought into practice,

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[25] CPV, Document, 6th Central Conference, Central Committee, term X (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2008), pp. 136-156.

and "has transformed successfully from a centrally planned economy into a socialist-oriented market economy. The CPV policy of renovation has been institutionalized in the constitution and in laws, laying out the legal framework for socialist oriented market economy to be established and developed."[26] As a result, Vietnam has been able to make significant economic advances: "from 1996 to 2000, the economic growth rate has increased significantly. The average rate of GDP growth in the period 1990-2000 is 7.5% per year; the GDP growth rate in 2000 is two times more than that in 1999. In period 2001-2005 (during the 9th CPV Congress) the average rate of GDP growth is nearly 7.5% per year; the economic structure has been substantially transformed, sources mobilized to develop economic sectors have been increasing; relative advantages have occurred within industries, and regions have been brought into play. The competitive capacity of the economy has also been improved. [27]

Vietnam National University
Hanoi, Vietnam

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CONTRIBUTORS

William Sweet is President of the Canadian Philosophical Association. He is also Secretary Treasurer of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies, a Member of the Board of Directors of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), and Professor of Philosophy at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, Canada.

Donny Gahral Adian is a philosophy lecturer at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta. He specializes in law, political ethics, and religion in democratic societies.

Dang Huu Toan is Deputy Editor-in-chief of the *Review of Philosophy*, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Dinh Xuan Ly is Assistant Professor at Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Myrto Dragona-Monachou is a Professor of Philosophy in the Department of History and Philosophy of Sciences at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

David Evans is Professor Emeritus of Logic and Metaphysics at Queen's University, Belfast, UK. He is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy and of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), and was Chairman of the UK National Committee for Philosophy.

Ho Si Quy is an Associate Professor and Director of the Institute of Social Sciences Information, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Huang Ying-huei is a member of the College of Economics and Business at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China.

Peter Kemp is Executive Director of the Centre for Ethics and Law, Copenhagen, and Professor and Director of the Department of Philosophy of Education at the Danish University of Education, Copenhagen. He is also the President of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie and a Member of l'Académie Internationale de Philosophie des Sciences and of the Institut International de Philosophie, Paris.

Yersu Kim is Former Director of the Universal Values Project of the Division of Philosophy and Ethics at UNESCO, and is currently Dean and

Professor, Graduate School of NGO Studies, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea. He has served on the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Maija Kūle is a full member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts and of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. She is also Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, Riga, and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Le Huu Tang is Vice President of the National Centre for Social and Human Sciences of Vietnam and Vice-Chairman of Vietnam's National UNESCO Commission.

Samuel Lee is Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and a recently-elected member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Keith Lehrer is Regents Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Arizona and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

William L. McBride is Arthur G. Hansen Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Purdue University (West Lafayette, Indiana, USA). He is also Secretary-General of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

George F. McLean is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, USA, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Nguyen Tai Thu is a Professor in the Department of Vietnamese Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Nguyen Tan Hung is a Professor in the Institute of Philosophy, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Nguyen Trong Chuan is a Professor in the Institute of Philosophy, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Pham Van Duc is Director of the Institute of Philosophy, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi. He is also Editor in Chief of the *Review of Philosophy* of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, and a recently-elected member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Young-bae Song is Professor of Philosophy at Seoul National University, Korea.

Tran Nguyen Viet is a Professor in the Department of the History of Vietnamese Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Tran Van Doan is Professor of Philosophy at the National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan. Born in Vietnam, he studied in Italy, Austria, Germany, and France, and has taught at the Universities of Vienna and Beijing. He is a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

Tu Weiming is currently Harvard-Yenching Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. He was Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (1996-2008) and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Vu Khieu is former Deputy Head of the Vietnamese Committee for Social Science, and is a professor with the Institute of Sociology, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

Yao Jiehou is Professor in the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China. He has served on the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP).

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