The Role of Intercultural Encounters

Re-learning to be Human for Global Times

Dan Chițoiu & Oana Cogeanu (eds.)

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Table of Contents

Introduction
A Case for Intercultural Encounters

Dan Chițoiu & Oana Cogeanu

Intercultural encounters, both home and abroad, have become a common occurrence: nowadays people and artifacts from a different culture are a glance or a click away. Traditionally, encounters between cultures took place through the movement of people or the circulation of artefacts. They involved the displacement of individuals or objects and implied some degree of preparedness. Irrespective of their motivations and forms, such encounters engender defining moments when individuals gain a better understanding of themselves as their cultures interact, clash or merge. Globalization, however, has transformed intercultural encounters. In a world with permeable boundaries where people come together increasingly in new work contexts and social environments, intercultural encounters are no longer a distant option, but an everyday fact. The question posed in this volume is if and how intercultural encounters shape the globalized world.

On the one hand, intercultural encounters reflect contemporary developments in terms of globalization and virtualization. On the other hand, they can cause and accelerate such world changes. As encounters with peoples of different backgrounds and values tend to be more fortuitous, immediate and direct, and preparedness decreases, intercultural interactions seem to become more challenging. More or less intentionally, they bring together real and virtual individuals and communities, leading to a confrontation of cultural differences and human similarities. Notwithstanding the challenges, such interactions may generate a new awareness of the other and of the self and an enhanced understanding of what it means to be human.

This volume places intercultural encounters on their contemporary background of globalization and contextualizes the enquiry into their nature and value by focusing on the role such interactions of cultures through individual people or artefacts may play in what it means to be human in and for global times. Intercultural encounters are approached here from a variety of perspectives ranging from the general to the particular, in order to illustrate how the meetings between and among cultures shape the contemporary world and also to gain an insight into how they can contribute to the necessary process of (re-)learning what best defines us as humans.

The volume begins with a chapter authored by Vincent Shen, "Becoming Human in a Globalizing Context of Interculturality," to whose memory this collection is dedicated. As today's globalization brings with

it the contrast with localization, and also the contrast of homogenization with diversification, this is a moment of human history when people of the world feel close to each other on the one hand, and also vulnerable and susceptible to conflicts on the other. At this critical historical moment, argues the author, it is time to be open toward many others instead of keeping closed within oneself. In response to the urgency of the global situation today, characterized by conflicts resulting from the self-enclosure of different peoples within various disciplines, cultures, political and religious groups, etc., human beings should be more concerned with one another and with the possibility of mutual enrichment. The chapter argues that, since globalization is a process that affects the whole of humankind, it should have some foundations in the nature of human beings; it should be based on human nature desiring always for something meaningful and sharable, with higher universalizability. Hence, globalization as a technological, economic and cultural process should be seen as the material implementation of this universalizing dynamism within human nature. The chapter proposes the intercultural strategy of strangification and theorizes its linguistic, pragmatic and ontological steps to implementing the universalizable, and thereby incarnating and manifesting the ontological interconnectedness in the process of time.

The second chapter, by Jānis (John) Ozoliņš, deals with "Identity, Diversity and the Globalized World." As globalization has made the world a much smaller place, states the author, different cultures, traditions and languages are in far greater contact than previously possible; consequently, the potential for mutual understanding is great, but so is the potential for conflict. The challenge, then, is to appreciate the influences that shape our values and beliefs as, in doing so, we are in a better position to value diverse cultures, religions, languages and traditions and recognize their worth. This is important, warns Ozoliņš, if globalization is not to result in the growth of a monoculture that destroys the rich diversity of cultures as well as our individual cultural identities. The chapter provides a methodical survey of national identity, cultural identity with a focus on the use of texts as an expression thereof, and the relations between globalization and identity, highlighting the dynamic nature of the interactions between peoples, languages, cultures and traditions. It argues that the so-called clash of civilizations does not need to imply a conflict to be feared, but rather an opportunity to learn about the perspectives of different cultures, values and traditions on such disparate human questions as conceptions of God, of human nature and human values. The author also emphasizes that, in being open to different outlooks, there is much to be learned about ourselves.

The third chapter, by Thomas Menamparampil, is entitled "Becoming Human and Humane: Developing a Global Vision to Address Local Needs and Anxieties." The global economy has made great contributions

to human growth with the help of technology and developing societies are mentally set for increased production and expanding trade. However, as the author advises, it will be a great pity if, in our eagerness for immediate advantages, we forget the long-term good of society and lose our hold on the skills for remaining human. The chapter discusses the pressures of the impersonal society and the impersonal economy, inter-community tensions and marginalization, as well as the solutions for retaining one's humanity that is being sensitive, persuasive, creative, responsible and spiritual. The author enforces that, when one begins to look at things from others' point of view, one moves further on the way of being human and therefore argues for adopting a creative form of dialogue called "critical dialogue" with any opponents: listening, affirming, appreciating, questioning and searching together, as a form of being human in context. Showing that our human condition is interdependent, Menamparampil makes a plea for collaboration and emphasizes the need for bridge-builders, culture-translators to enable minds and meanings to meet.

Chapter four offers Tone Svetelj's "Rediscovering the Universal Human in Raúl Fornet-Betancourt's Philosophy of Interculturality." Globalization should not be seen as a unilateral process based on consumerism and profit, but as a process based on dialogue and movement toward a union of cultures and nations economically, politically, socially and spiritually. This cannot be reached through abstract principles, but through a historical contextualization of human life in a given culture. Svetelj refers to Raúl Fornet-Betancourt's philosophy of interculturality to emphasize the importance of culture, as the realm of freedom, creativity and realization of each human being. The author provides an analysis of the philosophy of interculturality proposed by Fornet-Betancourt, with a focus on the search of what it means to be human within the process of globalization. The author argues that, when the globalization process is seen as the process of encountering between different cultures, this process offers us a myriad of new options of how to express ourselves as free, creative, and realized agents, which, however, should be approached knowingly and critically. A solid interculturality does not simply tolerate the otherness of others, but looks for what makes us all in the process of conviviality more creative, realized and fulfilled, and consequently more human.

In chapter five, "The Human Being as a Moral Culture Consumer," Carmen Cozma argues that the present consumerist society turns a spotlight on the concern for goods and services, promoting economic materialism, acquisition of products, finance, leisure, comfort, entertainment, etc., which eventually leave marks on globalization. The gap between the material and spiritual articulations of the human being is growing and accentuates the choice of more people for the shallow, the immediate, the fun, etc. As the author claims, people seem to increasingly distance themselves from their own *human* essence, especially from their defining

moral dimension, instead finding themselves in a wide ethical landscape that is void of ideals and values and eventually of meaning. Such a movement toward a horizontal manner of living without the transcendent reference proves to be harmful to the human condition, as even the healthy base of moral life is at risk. Hence, a reconsideration of our view on consumerism becomes necessary. The chapter reviews the term "consumer" and nuances the understanding of *homo consumens* in a world of mass consumption. In an attempt to highlight the major significance of *homo ethicus/ homo moralis*, the author focuses on the foundational offer of moral philosophy and emphasizes its role in shaping and cultivating the profile of a "moral culture consumer." The aim is to raise awareness on the vital importance of an integrated and dynamic grasp of the human be(com)ing, by engaging moral culture as (the) path to achieving an individual and communitarian wellbeing.

After having proposed conviviality, love, individual assertion and the moral dimension as ways of relearning to be human in/through the necessary interaction with the cultural other, the volume continues, in the second part, with a series of chapters on individual hypostases of intercultural encounters: the stranger, the immigrant and the traveler are particular ways in which one meets the other (within).

Chapter six, by Ernest Beyaraza, looks at "Re-learning to Be Human for Global Times: The African Experience." As the author argues, people respond to their natural environments; not simply becoming part and parcel of the natural order, but adjusting themselves to it. Moreover, they creatively develop a new order that suits their needs and interests, and superimpose the cultural order on the natural order. Thus, each ethnic group can be identified by its endogenous culture, which is exogenous to others. Like a person, a society's development is achieved through interaction with other cultures, and encounters of these endogenous and exogenous cultures have taken place from times immemorial, Beyaraza discusses colonialism, imperialism and globalization as critical cases of such encounters, where one culture is superimposed by others. On this basis, the author analyzes the three-fold intercultural encounters in Africa: precolonial Africa with its traditionally regulated group interactions, colonial Africa and hierarchical, exploitative relations, post-colonial Africa with the dilemma of tradition versus modernity and a less one-sided globalization. The chapter concludes that intercultural encounters pertain to the development of humanity and are constitutive of being human.

Chapter seven presents Osman Bilen's "Beauty Torn by a Prick of Thorn: Rumi's Philosophy of Human Love." Human self-conceptions are often reflected in arts, sciences, human institutions, etc. (concerning its existence, nature, potencies or limits). While issues related to the human being's place in the universe and human nature have occupied philosophical debates, love as the most innate human sentiment has been frequently

the subject of traditional folklore, poetry and other literal and visual arts. The author proposes to analyze Rumi's literary expressions of human love as a "philosophy of love." Human love is often explained as self-love, egoism, and sometimes reduced to self-preservation or sexual drives. It is also praised as a civic virtue contributing to social unity. For Rumi, however, love implies more than that, it constitutes primarily an ontological feature of human beings, as well as an aesthetic and ethical virtue. Against philosophical theories based on the primacy of epistemological faculties of human beings, Rumi considers "love" a way of knowing which brings the epistemological and ethical integrity of the human being to another dimension. The chapter discusses how the unity of knowing and doing appears as a result of human love in Rumi's messages, and suggests that only the infinity of human love can overcome the difficult task of bridging the infinite distance between human beings, nature and the divine.

Chapter eight, by Ioana Baskerville, looks at "The Good Stranger: Representations of the Other in the Romanian Folk Culture." The ancient Greeks situated the other ethnic groups at the edges of their *oicumena*, and considered them barbarians. There is a general tendency of individuals to understand the Other through artificial representations which in many cases surpass and counterfeit reality, but also help make sense of something unknown and apparently incomprehensible. The chapter shows that, according to Romanian folklore texts, the stranger was generally perceived as an unwanted presence, due to suspicion and fear, received reluctantly inside the household, and kept at a distance by magical rituals and overstated hospitality. This attitude, which could be considered as characteristic to many traditional societies, was also encouraged by the essentialist tendency of characterizing other ethnic groups and declining the possibility of an authentic reciprocal knowledge. The chapter, however, highlights the exceptions to such a tendency. Though rarely found in Romanian folklore texts, positive opinions on strangers became more abundant when more Romanians started to travel abroad and had the chance to meet other ethnic groups in their own surroundings. The author argues that learning from the positive aspects of the stranger as a way of gradually discovering the Self through rich intercultural experiences is a necessity in every contemporary society.

Chapter nine, by Oana Cogeanu, deals with "Self-Reflections: Re-learning to Be Human through Travel (and) Writing." Travel and writing are two essential practices that trace our human evolution. Human travel, defined by its intentionality, has become a formalized pursuit, regardless of its discomforts and dangers. Writing, an exclusively human occupation, provides a necessary record of ourselves and our environment. When the two practices are combined into the popular enterprise of travel writing, their consubstantiality becomes evident. Travel writing implies a double reading/writing of signs, an intentional process of making sense, whose

purpose is to signpost our own place, our being-in-the-word, through the refraction of the other and a reflection of/on the self. In embarking what is ideally both an outer and an inner journey, the traveler enacts the human nostalgia for integration and answers the all-too-human call of curiosity. This quest for knowing and being entails a process of meeting, incorporating and becoming the other throughout the journey and its written account. The chapter concludes that travel, writing and their combination in particular are practices of signification meant to map one's dwelling, to inscribe one's place in the world in a continuous process of re-learning what has already been learnt: to be human.

Chapter ten, by Camelia Grădinaru, approaches "Nostalgic Impromptus: Online Immigrant Stories and Cultural Differences." For immigrants in contemporary societies, online and mobile communication keeps alive two different realities, languages and cultural frameworks. Captives in between, immigrants are in a permanent connection with their home that is never completely left behind. This situation creates a complex and disturbing feeling of absence and presence; the longing may be annihilated but also exacerbated through real-time exposure to two types of life. The chapter investigates how the use of new media shapes the perception of displacement and destabilizes the meaning of nostalgia, in the particular case of a virtual community of Romanians that live and work abroad in United Kingdom. Examining the conscious use of the word "nostalgia" in immigrants' online conversations, the author highlights a series of nostalgic markers and sensitive topics with distinctive interaction patterns and shows that the nostalgic stories constitute depictions of the revised meaning of some common concepts such as home, family or country. In other words, such narratives represent epitomes of the contemporary ways from which people re-learn the basics of being human.

The volume concludes with an afterword by Dan Chițoiu, entitled "Faces and Sur-faces: A Phenomenology of Intercultural Encounters." This contribution offers an argument for the value and importance of the encounter with the other as a complex experience of the faces and sur-faces of persons and artefacts. The intercultural encounter is described as an ecstatic experience, related to the ultimate nature of the person and thus reveals the human propensity for movement toward the other. Looking at the experience of the encounter, the author states that what is confronted during such meeting is what appears, what is shown. In the face-to-face meeting of the cultural other, the other is not supposed or imagined, but rather present, in the concreteness of his or her own appearance and ways of being. The face of the cultural other is paradoxically both familiar and alien, as what happens when experiencing the other's cultural difference is *always different*. Thus, the encounter is impossible to anticipate or predict; its uniqueness comes from the fact that, although the other is alike in everything human, the other is different not only due to their manifested

cultural horizon, but also because the other is a *person*. The other, there-fore, gives a face to that cultural horizon which has formed him/her, and the expression of that face shows the most important aspect of the person beyond determinations, that is *freedom* to express oneself as unique and unrepeatable. The author goes on to show that, in the scenario of the in-tercultural encounter where each wears his/her cultural garment, *a new, common space* in-between is formed. In the intercultural meeting, there are not only *faces* but also *sur-faces* – the encountered objects that crys-tallize the fundamental landmarks of a cultural horizon. Through its *sur-face*, the artefact is a medium and guide for the cultural encounter with the other and provides coordinates and frames that shape the space of the encounter. Developing on the thoughts of Vincent Shen and his concept of *strangification*, Chițoiu argues that intercultural encounters constitute the space for interplay of *the same and the other* and provide a unique experience beyond the self and the other, but more toward many others.

In the end, this volume addresses the universal process of re-learning what it means to be human for global times, highlights our general condi-tion as (inter)cultural beings, and examines individual instances of en-countering the cultural other. In this survey of the different forms of in-tercultural encounters – real and virtual, individual and communal, conceptual or textual – the underlying question is whether the contempo-rary ubiquitous meetings between and among cultures can be expected to produce new forms of communication and revise cultural definitions, and thus possibly reshape the world as we know it.

One answer lies in the volume itself: as it brings together and inter-weaves a diversity of authors and approaches stemming from distinct, multilayered cultural backgrounds, this book (re)presents and makes a case for the necessity and potentialities of embracing intercultural encoun-ters.

Part I
Re-learning to be Human

1.
Becoming Human in a
Globalizing Context of Interculturality

VINCENT SHEN

I define globalization as

> A historical process of border-crossing, in which human desire, human universalizability and ontological interconnectedness are to be realized on the planet as a whole, and to be concretized now as a global free market, transnational political order and cultural globalism.[1]

Let me explain some basic concepts of this definition: "desire," "universalizability" and "ontological interconnectedness." I use the term "desire" to describe the energy within each one of us that is directed towards many others (people and things) and ideas of an ever-higher level of universalizability. I make a distinction between "universality" and "universalizability." Although "universality" still can be taken as the ideal for humanity, I do not buy the absolute/static idea of "universality" in this concrete and historical world, in which we have only an open-ended, gradual, expanding and processual universalizability. This is especially true in the process of globalization which should be encouraged to have a process of dialogue in view of sharable and therefore universalizable ideas and values. It should avoid that people impose ideas or values on others in the name of the so-called "universality." In the process of our temporal existence, we are looking for ever higher optimal "universalizability." This dynamism or desire directing toward many others in looking for higher universalizability presupposes the interconnectedness of all things and persons on the ontological level. Thus, we direct ourselves always toward many others for the common good, and in this dynamic process lies the significance and meaningfulness of our lives. Globalization is a process in which we realize our desire to go beyond, implementing the sharable, the universalizable, and thereby incarnating and manifesting the ontological interconnectedness in time.

Since globalization as a process affects the whole of humankind, it should have some foundations in the nature of human beings. Philosophically speaking, it should be based on our human nature desiring always

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[1] Vincent Shen, "A Book Review of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*," *Universitas: Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture* 361, no. 111 (June 2004): 109-112.

for something meaningful and sharable, for higher universalizability. Globalization as a technological, economic and cultural process should be seen as the material implementation of this universalizing dynamism within human nature. Human beings determined as we are by historicity, there can be no universality pure and simple but only a process of universalization over time. Although "going toward" the ideal universality, we are still only universalizable. All has to be sharable with mutual consent. This is to say that the ideal of universality exists only in an ever-receding horizon. Real human history is a process of unceasingly going beyond and towards higher levels of universalizability, therefore in the process of universalization.

Today's globalization brings with it the contrast with localization and also the contrast of homogenization with diversification. This is a moment of human history when people of the world feel close to each other on the one hand, and vulnerable and susceptible to conflicts on the other. At this critical historical moment, it is time to be open toward many others instead of staying closed within oneself. In response to the urgency of the global situation today, characterized by conflicts resulting from the self-enclosure of different peoples within various disciplines, cultures, political and religious groups, etc., human beings should be more concerned with one another and with the possibility of mutual enrichment.

As a means to overcome antagonism via the construction of effective dialogue, based upon the Confucian concept of *tui* 推 (extension), or *tuiji jiren* 推己及人 (to extend from oneself to the others), I adopt the intercultural strategy of *waitui* 外推, which can be best, if awkwardly, translated into English as "strangification."[2] Its etymological meaning is the act of going outside of oneself to meet many others, or going beyond that with which one is familiar to strangeness, to many strangers. This act presupposes the appropriation of language from which we learn to express our ideas or values in the language of others or a language that is understandable to others, as well as to learn about the ideas and values of others and, possibly, to use them for the betterment of ourselves. In turn, *waitui* ("strangification") and "language appropriation" presuppose an original generosity toward many others, without limiting oneself to the claim of reciprocity which is quite often used in social relationships and ethical rules.

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[2] The strategy of strangification was proposed by Friz Wallner as an epistemological strategy of interdisciplinary research. I was with my phenomenological and Chinese philosophical background before I met Fritz Wallner in the early 90s of the last Century. Thereafter, I adopted this term based on my Confucian tradition, and Daoist concepts of *hua* 化 (transformation) and *guan* 廣 (extension), and Buddhist idea of *huixiang* 迴向 (turning over), and thereby also rendered it an ethical and metaphysical meaning. I add to it the strategy of mutual strangification as dialogue, and I use mutual strangification as strategy of intercultural interaction and interreligious dialogue.

Three steps of *waitui* (strangification) will be discussed here. The first of these is linguistic *waitui (*strangification), which means that we translate one discourse/value or cultural expression/religious belief of one's cultural community into a language understandable by another cultural community. If it is understood and is acceptable after translation, then it has universalizable validity. Otherwise, its validity is limited only to its own world, hence self-critical reflection must be undertaken with regard to the limits of one's own discourse, value, expression, or belief.

The second step is pragmatic *waitui* (strangification). If one discourse/value/expression or belief can be drawn out from its original social and pragmatic context and put into other social and pragmatic contexts and remain valid, then it is universalizable and has a validity that is not limited to its own context of origin. If it becomes invalid after such re-contextualization, which means the failure of such an act of strangification, then reflection or self-critique should be undertaken with regard to its limit, mostly based on the difference in the core of life meaningfulness in terms of their ontological presuppositions.

The third step is ontological *waitui* (strangification). When a discourse/value/, expression or belief is understandable or even sharable by a detour of experiencing reality Itself, for example, a direct experience of other people, nature, or even of the ultimate Reality, it would be helpful for giving access to other's different scientific micro-worlds (disciplines or research programs), cultural worlds and religious worlds. For example, a poet's appreciation of woods under snow, such as Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," might be totally different from a scientist's description of the forest. Nevertheless, both must have a lot to share with each other when regarding the woods together on an evening when it snows.

This is particularly important today with regard to religious dialogue, in the sense that, instead of conceptual debates, it is better for one religion to understand another religion through the detour of one's experience of the Ultimate Reality, that, if indeed Ultimate, would allow one to have access to its various manifestations, like Christians might appreciate Buddhist emptiness, or Buddhists might understand Christian darkness of the soul. The denial of communicability between different ultimate realities might be only an excuse for religious exclusivism. Even when it is still hard to share, at least it is understandable and respectable as each has an ultimate reality to justify their life meaningfulness. This would increase religious tolerance, keeping in mind the fact of religious plurality.

While Fritz Wallner, my colleague at Vienna University, uses "strangification" only as an epistemological strategy for interdisciplinary research, I myself have extended it to become a strategy for dialogue among civilizations and religions, relating to different life-worlds and ontologies. Interdisciplinarity has indeed been a major issue for universities since the

1960s, however, from the 1990s onward, issues arising from globalization have become more and more urgent and dialogue among civilizations and religions has come to take precedence. The dispute among disciplines has become rather like a storm in a teacup, not a big problem anymore because all disciplines know the necessity for, and indeed practice interdisciplinary methods. In fact, the sciences merely conceived as "disciplines" start to break down and new generations of scholars are formed in the spirit of interdisciplinarity.

In todays' globalizing world, dialogue among civilizations and religions is a matter of urgency in order to avoid the wars and conflicts that might otherwise threaten humankind. In higher education, we should promote inter-civilizational, interregional and interreligious knowledge and dialogue skills. In the past, interdisciplinary training was the focus of all general education programs. However, after 9/11, as I see it, the world has undergone a radical change: war and conflict are now caused not by any lack of interdisciplinary knowledge or understanding, but rather by misunderstanding among civilizations, geographical regions, religious faiths and language communities. In comparison, interdisciplinarity is only a minor problem limited to academia. There may still be heated debates among disciplines, but these are mostly disputes over different or conflicting theories, whereas civilizational conflicts can lead to wars among people and loss of life on a large scale.

The dialogue which is needed between different cultural traditions and religions should be understood, as a process of mutual *waitu*i or strangification. Religious, regional and civilizational dialogues should be conceived as based on a mutual act of *waitui* (strangification). In the dialogue between A and B, on the level of linguistic strangification, A should translate his/her propositions or ideas/values/belief system into the language of B or a language understandable to B. While B should translate his/her into the language of A or a language understandable to A.

On the level of pragmatic *waitui* (strangification), A should draw his/her proposition(s), supposed truth(s)/cultural expression(s)/value(s)/religious belief(s) from his/her own social, organizational context, but put it into the social, organizational context of B. While, B should draw his/her proposition(s), supposed truth(s)/cultural expression(s)/value(s)/religious belief(s) out from his/her own social, organizational context and put it into the social, organizational context of A.

On the level of ontological *waitui* (strangification), A should make efforts to enter into B's micro-world, cultural or religious world through the detour of his/her experience of reality itself, such as a person, a social group, nature, or the ultimate reality. B should also make the same efforts to enter into A's micro-world, cultural world or religious world through the detour of his experience of reality itself or even of the ultimate reality. If, at the end of days, there are still irreconcilable differences, they would

not appeal to wars or any radical form of conflict, for they understand that each has their ours ultimate reality to justify and enhance their life meaningfulness.

In this light, communication and dialogue with many others can never be conducted within one's self-enclosure, but only begin when one steps outside of one's self-enclosure to meet the other. This I call as "a process of mutual *waitui* (strangification)." I go outside of myself to you and you go outside of yourself to me, so as to form a dialogue leading to mutual enrichment. When we conduct mutual *waitui* (strangification), we make our own scientific/cultural/religious/life world understandable to each other by translating our language into the language of the other or a language that is understandable to the other, by putting it into the other's pragmatic context or by going through the detour of experiencing reality itself or the other's life-world. This process of mutual *waitui* (strangification) is to be conducted not only in everyday life, in scientific research and in cultural and religious life, but also in economic and political life, where different political parties, interest groups, governments and citizens, etc., should commit themselves to a process of communication leading to mutual enrichment rather than conflict or war.

Waitui (strangification) and dialogue in the form of mutual *waitui* (strangification) are more fundamental than the communicative action understood by J. Habermas as argumentation. For me, Habermasian argumentation presupposes a previous effort of *waitui* (strangification) in expressing one's proposal(s) in the language of others or in a language understandable to others, without which there can be no real mutual understanding and no self-reflection in the process of argumentation. Habermas' four ideal claims for understandability, truth, sincerity and legitimacy simply cannot work in the real world. Without previous mutual *waitui* (strangification), I would think I am sincere, but you would think I am a hypocrite; I would think that I am telling the truth, but you may legitimate consider it absurd: since a commonly acceptable norm has not existed yet, or since the law is still an issue under debate, there is no accepted legitimacy to speak of. Therefore, one should start speaking in the language understandable to one's counterpart. Through this enhanced comprehension, one should show sincerity and truth of what one says, and negotiate its legitimacy with one's counterpart, in order to achieve the communicative act targeted by Habermas.

Philosophically, human life could be said as a process of existential extension by way of "strangification" in unceasing dialectics with self-awareness through of self-reflection. This general truth about human life is also valid for the process of the formation of humanity, as well as for the education process in general and for higher education in particular. On the one hand, "strangification" denotes the act by which one goes outside of oneself to many others, from familiarity to strangeness, from oneself to

strangers. On the other hand, people also need to spend time alone for the purpose of self-reflection, even if they inevitably live among many others and communicate with many others.

I replace the concept of "the Other" (l"autrui, l'alterité) of French postmodernists such as G. Deleuze, E. Levinas and J. Derrida with the concept of "many others" because the former implies an inherent opposition between Self and Other. Under the inspiration of the Confucian concept of "five relationships," Daoist concepts of "myriads of things" (*wan wu* 萬物) and the Buddhist concept of "all sentient beings" (*zhongsheng* 眾生), I prefer to use "many others." In my view this describes the concrete ontological situation in which we are born, grow up and develop.

"The Other" is a mere philosophical abstraction for it does not take into account the concrete persons among whom one lives. At no moment of our lives do we encounter purely and simply "the Other." We are all born into and grow up among many others. It is better for a life of sanity that human should being keep in mind the existence of many others and their dynamic relations. Life will be healthier if we are always aware of that we live among many others. The idea of "many others" is much clearer and more realistic than Levinas' concept of "tier parts," which means only "the Other of the other."

As I see it, from the beginning of human consciousness, there is an undetermined dynamic energy in search of meaningfulness in human desire. Such an energy transcends any particular form of realization, because it is the original energy by which human beings can attain transcendence from immanence. Although it is not yet an idealist process of spiritual adventure, it is an incarnated energy originated from a body-based desire that develops upwards and more fully, integrating the mental and the spiritual. Elsewhere I have described how this process starts with our desire in our lived body (corps vécu)[3] and then develops into different forms of representation – non-linguistic in the initial stage and linguistic in the stage that follows, first oral and then written. It prepares us for our later appropriation of higher and finer forms of language, such as the cultural, the scientific and the spiritual. It is in higher education which students start to specialize in a certain discipline or research program that uses a special technical language of various kinds.

Thus, human life extends from one's body dynamism and language appropriation to the social dimension of co-construction of a meaningful life, with its different circles of extension, from family, friends, community and states, to all under Heaven, even to the cosmic dimension of human existence. We are made aware of all these dimensions in higher levels

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[3] Vincent Shen, *Contrast, Strangification and Dialogue* (Taipei: Wunan Publishing House, 2002), 274-81 (in Chinese).

of self-transparency through the process of self-reflection, in dialectic with the process of strangification.

Self-reflection, cultivated especially by the humanities, more specifically by philosophy, can be defined on three levels in relation to three levels of strangification. First, in relation to linguistic strangification, we should conduct reflection that is related to multiple layers of meanings expressed through different languages and discourses. In fact, we find different terms in different languages which refer to more or less the same thing, such as chair, desk, bed, etc., and we have varieties of linguistic expressions within the same language for the supposed same reality. For example, "morning star" and "evening star," both denote the same star. More advanced reflections should be on the limits of linguistic expression: that is, that there are always hidden dimensions in reality; that the ultimate reality is unfathomable. As Laozi says, "the Dao that is speakable is not the constant Dao."[4] Zhuangzi too speaks of the "unsayable Dao" (*budao zi dao* 不道之道).[5]

In relation to pragmatic strangification, we should conduct reflection on the possible objectifications of all human behavioral intentions, such as eating, drinking, walking, etc.; or excellence in action, as virtues, such as love or humaneness, righteousness or justice, etc.; or varieties of rites, such as family rituals, state rituals, etc. We should ponder on the different patterns of value and praxis that lead to multitude of ethical and cultural practices. Finally, we should think upon the limits of all human values expressible by all virtues, ideals and praxis.

In relation to ontological strangification, we should conduct reflection on the different facets of reality and its manifestations, the possibilities of seeing the ultimate reality through its various manifestations, and, finally, the limits of all manifestations, which are indeed not yet the ultimate reality itself. There is a hidden dimension, an unfathomable side, a dimension where we experience emptiness, nothingness, darkness of the soul or clouds of nothingness.

Thus, strangification is in dialectical interaction with self-reflection. For me, self-reflection without strangification would result in the shadow of self-enclosure; whereas strangification without self-reflection, therefore without self-awareness, would result in self-alienation. The great Chinese philosophers have always suggested, even when they use different terms, that *waitui* (or strangification) is the most crucial process in human existence. This process endlessly extends from oneself to the family, to the community, to the state, to all under Heaven, and even to the

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[4] Laozi, *Laozi si zhong* (*Four Versions of the Laozi*) (Taipei: Da An Publishing House, 1999), 1 (my translation).

[5] Zhuangzi, *The Zhuangzi* (Taipei: Yiwen Publishing House, 1983), 454 (my translation).

whole universe. However, if it is without self-reflection and self-aware-ness, it is doomed to lead to a loss of self among external things and other people, somewhat akin to the Daoist Master, Zhuangzi's critique of Huishi, who was "chasing after myriad things without returning to him-self."[6] Without strangification, the human being cannot engage in self-reflection, thus subjectivity is a mere illusion if without true interaction with many others.

With this endless interactively dialectical process, we may hope that we become more human with self-reflection, we become more authentic, more autonomous and more sincere to ourselves. With strangification we become more generous and inclusive and develop the common good with many others.

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[6] Ibid., 585.

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Identity, Diversity and the Globalized World[1]

<center>JĀNIS (JOHN) T. OZOLIŅŠ</center>

Introduction

Globalization has made the world a much smaller place. The mass communication revolution of the last forty years has brought diverse cultures, traditions and languages in a far greater contact than was previously possible. The expansion of the free market economy and the growth of transnational corporations have also brought both East and West, as well as North and South into closer contact. While the potential for mutual understanding is great, so is the potential for conflict. The forces which shape cultural identity are varied and the challenge is to appreciate the influences that shape our values and beliefs so that we can understand ourselves. In doing so, we are in a better position to value diverse cultures, religions, languages and traditions as well as recognize their preciousness. This is important if globalization is not to result in the growth of a monoculture that destroys the rich diversity of culture as well as our individual cultural identities.

One aspect of the globalized world has been the communication revolution which has seen the possibility of diverse peoples able to encounter of faiths, cultures and traditions one another, and the variety that they have. As a result, we have become aware of the diversity of ways in which different cultures and traditions have addressed common human questions. It is also obvious that a particular way in which the world is described and understood will be in part determined by the language in which it is expressed. Language is not restricted to oral utterances or to texts, but also includes a myriad bodily cues and cultural practices. In asserting that language expresses a "form of life," that is, that to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life, Wittgenstein emphasizes the role of language in forming the world which we inhabit.[2] Adding to this insight, Gadamer acknowledges the importance of cultural tradition as the foundation of thought, arguing that thinking takes place against a background that includes morals, law and religion.[3] Both of these views need to be

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[1] A version of this paper has been previously published in *Religion and Culture in Dialogue*, ed. Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš (Basel: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 1-14.

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), para. 19.

[3] H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. and rev. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall (London: Sheed and Ward, 1989), 2nd Revised Edition, 235-236.

taken into account if we are to understand what is communicated to us through our encounters with peoples of other nations, languages and cultures.

Although globalization has led to some convergences, such as the rise of mass culture and the almost ubiquitous acceptance of the market economy, it has also exacerbated the differences among different religions and cultures so that in Samuel Huntington's famous phrase, there is a "clash of civilizations."[4] Huntington argued that future conflicts in world politics would be between different cultures or civilizations rather than because of ideological or economic differences between nation states. While Huntington sees the clash of civilizations as problematic, it can also be seen as having some positives. The clash of civilizations also results in creative tensions between one particular cultural perspective on human life and another. It also gives rise to different conceptions of what it means to be a human person and so affects very concretely our conceptions of who we are as persons. The clash of civilizations does not need to imply a conflict to be feared, but rather an opportunity to learn about the perspectives of different cultures, values and traditions on such disparate human questions as conceptions of God, of human nature and human values. In being open to different outlooks, there is much to be learned about ourselves and our values. For example, if we are a Christian or a Muslim, in considering the Jewish conception of God, we become aware of common origins, of having beliefs shaped by being Abrahamic faiths, but also of profound differences. Similarly, those from the same faith but from a different cultural background will also offer different insights to their fellow believers. The commonalities enable monotheists to stand on common ground, but it is through the discussion of differences that our identities as adherents of a particular faith emerge. It is through knowing and interacting with the other that we know ourselves.[5]

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[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). The phrase "clash of civilizations" is not Huntington's, but it was popularized as a result of Huntington's 1993 paper and was more fully developed as a theory about the behavior of nations in conflicts. After 9/11, his theory appeared to be vindicated, though it has been subjected to wide-ranging criticism. See S.P. Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3, (1993): 22-49. Some of his critics include the following: Amitav Acharya, "State-Society Relations: Asian and World Order after 11 September," in *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, eds. Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2002); David Camroux, "Huntington: Scénarios controversés pour le future," *Etudes* (Juin 1996): 735-746; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin; Groves, Denise, 1998); "India and Pakistan: A Clash of Civilizations?" *Washington Quarterly* 21, (1992): 17-20; Michael J. Mazarr, "Culture and International Relations: A Review Essay," *Washington Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1996): 177-197.

[5] This thought recurs throughout Ricoeur's work and philosophical anthropology is a major theme throughout. For Ricoeur's clearest statement on this see Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

When we investigate the values which guide our moral choices and decisions about moral actions, we will also discover that cultures and traditions will have quite diverse ways of arriving at similar conclusions. If we consider, for example, approaches to the virtues in Confucian culture and compare these to Western culture, at first glance, there appear to be profound differences. In Confucian philosophy, the four main virtues are benevolence (仁 rén), dutifulness (rightness) (義 yì), propriety (rites) (礼 lǐ) and wisdom (智 zhì). There are also a number of secondary virtues, such as filial piety, (xiàoxīn 孝心), which enjoins children to respect and honor their parents. A person displaying benevolence is respectful (gōng 恭), magnanimous (kuān 寬), honest or truthful (xìn 信), hardworking or diligent (mǐn 敏) and gracious (huì 惠). 孔子 Kǒngzǐ, says in the 论语, Lún Yǔ, or Analects, that the benevolent person (君子 jūnzǐ) considers rightness (義) to be essential in everything, practising it by acting according to the rules of propriety (礼), with humility and with sincerity, both important virtues.[6] In contrast, the virtues that are listed by Aristotle are courage, temperance, prudence or practical wisdom, justice, as well as liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, patience, truthfulness and friendliness, amongst others.[7] Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, also includes amongst his secondary virtues *euboulia* (deliberating well), filial piety, perseverance, modesty, abstinence and sobriety.[8] He also introduces the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.[9] Modern lists of virtues include compassion, honesty, conscientiousness, care, integrity and respectfulness, which echo the classical lists of virtues. In all cases, the virtues are the means by which human beings are to reach their ultimate goal, which is happiness. In both the Confucian and the Thomist case, there is the possibility of a transcendent happiness which is being re-united with Heaven (天 Tiān) or God.[10]

The lesson to be drawn from this brief excursus into virtue ethics is to recognize that, though there are commonalities among human beings since they all desire the same end, culture and tradition result in different

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[6] Confucius, *Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. James Legge (London: Dover, 1971), originally published in 1893 (Oxford: Clarendon Press). *The Analects*, bk. 15, chap. XVII.

[7] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thompson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), bks. II, VII [1107b18-20].

[8] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Dominican Fathers of the English Province, originally published in 1911, revised edition published in 1948 (Benziger Brothers, Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), II-II, Q.51, Art.1; Q.101, Arts.1-4; Q.137, Art.1; Q.160, Arts. 1-2; Q.146, Arts. 1-2; Q.149, Arts. 1-2. Hereinafter *ST*.

[9] *ST*, I-II, Q.1; Q.62.

[10] This is not to suppose that the Confucian Heaven is the same as Aquinas' Christian God, nor, that the thought that the Confucian Heaven is transcendent is accepted without dispute.

ways of understanding the means by which that end is to be attained. The virtues, whatever way they are described, are to bring about the upright, virtuous human being who, having attained virtue, will also attain happiness. It is evident that there are similar lists of virtues in different traditions, but it is equally obvious that there are different emphases on which virtues are seen to be the more important. Filial piety, for example, is significant in Confucian culture, reflecting its origins in ancestor worship. Aristotle extols liberality, that is, the right use of wealth, whereas this has disappeared as a virtue in the modern world. This does not mean that no one practices liberality, for instance, but it means that the virtue has been subsumed under another virtue of which it is a part.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suppose that the task of understanding another culture or tradition is easy. Prejudice, ideology and self-interest act to blind us, as well as our preconceptions, values and traditions. Although A. MacIntyre is primarily addressing rival philosophical traditions of inquiry, he argues that debates between two such traditions are inevitably inconclusive because each makes its judgements about the other from its own standpoint and, moreover, one will regard the other as irrefutably wrong.[11] For this reason, not only do we need to investigate the philosophical and theological foundations that shape our own culture and tradition, but also to try to stand in the place of the other, so that we are able to see ourselves from their perspective. It should not be supposed that this is unproblematic, as MacIntyre points out, since our diverse languages, cultures and traditions make significant barriers.

Despite the difficulties, we should not suppose that we are irremediably locked into our ways of thinking. Cultures, languages and traditions are not museum pieces, forever fixing our perspectives, but are fluid, always changing and in constant ferment, since each generation has to interpret traditions and culture anew. Language also changes under the influence of new experiences, encounters with people with other languages and cultures, new discoveries and changing patterns of life. Human beings adapt and change. New experiences result in fresh ideas that are expressed in novel words, sometimes borrowed from another language or culture.[12]

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[11] Alasdair Macintyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 7.

[12] The view that language and thought are connected is not particularly new. B.L. Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, eds. and intro. John B. Carroll and Forward Stuart Chase (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956). Whorf argues that different languages yield different conceptions of the world.

Although there are large divergences among the many diverse people and cultures of the world, this need not imply complete incommensurability and untranslatability of ideas between and among them.[13] It is a common experience of those travelling in a country where they do not speak the language that, when necessary, they are able to make themselves understood. Admittedly this will be in a very limited manner and the danger of misunderstanding is high, nevertheless, this would not be possible at all if human beings did not share some common experiences and so have ways of communicating them. Empirically, languages and cultures are not completely incommensurable, nor are ideas within them completely untranslatable. Hunger, thirst, being cold or hot and the need for shelter are all basic needs that all human beings require, but not only these. Human beings also need love, comfort in grief and the dignity that work can provide. They need an environment in which they can appreciate beauty and joy in the company of others and much more besides. These basic necessities are commonalities that human beings share and so we can expect to find descriptions in different languages that we can recognize as referring to those basic necessities. While it is a matter of empirical evidence whether this is the case, or not, indeed the case, then the possibility of communication exists. Since we can make ourselves understood, at least in a rudimentary way, it does seem that basic communication is possible and incommensurability ruled out. Actions by people in other cultures are intelligible to us.

Before the communication age, individual identity was shaped by the language, culture and tradition of the village to which individuals belonged. Perspectives and values reflected the community in which people lived their lives and encountered with strangers from different parts of the country, let alone the world were limited. Lacking experience of other cultures and traditions, people encountering strangers would have had difficulty in understanding them, perhaps regarding their customs as exotic and incomprehensible. Globalization, made possible through rapid travel, trade and communication technology, has enabled far greater encounter with diverse cultures and has also brought with it the threat of cultural colonization in which a dominant culture overpowers an indigenous minority culture. Hence, the intelligibility of another culture is a two-edged sword, enabling us to have comprehension of another culture, but also making it easier for an ascendant culture to weaken and finally eliminate

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[13] Davidson says that one of the problems with the idea of there being incommensurable languages is not that we could not understand them, but that the criteria for what would make languages incommensurable are not clear.

the traditions and values of another, resulting in the creation of a mono-culture.[14] Despite this threat, a diversity of languages, cultures and traditions remain and contribute to the shaping of the identities and characters of individuals.[15]

National Identity

There is plenty of empirical evidence for claiming that culture and language play a significant role in shaping not only individual identity, but also that of nations. This much at least is uncontroversial. Just as individual identity is highly complex, so too is cultural identity and ethnicity and the relations between them. In the case of nations, national identity is not simply the sum of individual identities. John Locke, for example, says that a commonwealth is any form of independent community.[16] David Hume also comments in his discussion on the soul that the continual ebb and flow of perceptions in the human mind may be compared to a commonwealth in which individuals are united through sub-ordination to government and laws and who give rise to new individuals who replace the old. There is an incessant change of the parts of the commonwealth, but it nevertheless is the same commonwealth throughout the changes. Not only can the individuals comprising the commonwealth change, but it can also change its laws and constitution, much like individuals can change their character and dispositions. In Hume's view, these changes are united through causation.[17] By commonwealth, both Locke and Hume mean the nation-state, focusing on the characteristics which constitute a particular kind of state. Nations, however, are not simply to be identified by their system of government, nor by the territory which they occupy, but first and foremost by the inhabitants who make up the nation. In some instances, states can also be constituted by several nations, for instance, by tribal nations. Conceivably, a nation can be thought of as being made up of several states.[18] Characterizing national identity is a complex task,

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[14] The loss of diversity can be observed through the dominance of transnational corporations in a variety of enterprises. Large shopping complexes in major cities whether they are in the United States or in China or anywhere in between tend to look the same and contain the same kinds of retail outlets. In order to experience the cultural diversity in a particular country we are forced to go further afield than the major cities.

[15] It should also be noted that there is also resistance to the creation of monocultures, so that minority cultures consciously work to preserve their cultures and identities.

[16] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), bk. II, chap. X, para. 133, 157.

[17] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. and intro. Ernest C. Mossner (London: Penguin, 1969), bk. I, pt. IV, sec. VI.

[18] For example, the United States Constitution recognizes the Indian Nations as sovereign on their lands within the state. See Article 1, Section 8. "Indian Nations have always

made more so by the variety of individuals, cultures and ethnic groups composing the nation. If there is plainly a single identifiable nation, it will be formed through the common experiences of the individuals comprising the state, despite their many differences. While this might not be through shared language, culture or traditions, it may be through common triumphs, disasters and commitment to a particular political system. Disasters, such as earthquakes, make no distinctions between people and common humanity demands that we respond to the needs of everyone affected, not just some.[19] Other common experiences that might bind individuals together could be an external threat that can only be met as a group. This is one explanation of how the modern state emerged.[20]

From one perspective, national identity is formed by the individuals that make up the nation, but it is also the case that individual identity is at least partially constituted by national identity. National identity and individual identity are not mutually exclusive, but are interrelated. Individuals characteristically identify themselves as belonging to a particular nation. Hence, someone will say that he or she is French, Italian, Australian, Canadian or a citizen of some other nation. There is, of course, a further distinction to be made between a citizen of a country and their ethnicity. Some nations will have a basis in ethnicity, whereas others, because they are multicultural, will not. A Chinese Australian can be ethnically Chinese, yet still an Australian citizen and identify himself as Australian.

Equally, he could identify himself as Chinese, but be an Australian citizen. More complex still is someone with dual citizenship or who is

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been considered as distinct, independent political communities, retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil…." The very term "nation" so generally applied to them, means "a people distinct from others." Chief Justice John Marshall, United States Supreme Court, Worcester versus Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 561 (1832). The idea of states within states can be thought to encompass territories within a state which seek an independent status, as opposed to states which form a federation, such as Australia and the United States. See, for example, Ian S. Spears, "States within States: An Introduction to Their Empirical Attributes," in *States within States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era*, eds. Paul Kingston and Ian S. Spears (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 16.

[19] There is much more to be said and has been said about the creation of a nation-state, starting with Plato and Aristotle. It is not intended to develop an account here. We are merely stating what is obvious, namely, that to have a sense of national identity, of belonging to one nation, human beings need to be bound together by their common experiences.

[20] There are different visions of how the modern state emerges. Hegel, for example, sees its origins in the actions and interactions of individuals all pursuing a common good. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Right*, ed. A.W. Woo and trans. H.B. Nisbett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Thomas Hobbes famously argues that the state exists in order act as power that all human beings must acquiesce in order that they might live in harmony. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

able to identify with more than one ethnic group. Someone of mixed ethnic parentage could have several possible ethnic allegiances as well as citizenships. A woman, for example, could be born in the United States to Latin-American parents from two different countries and marry a man from a European country, resulting in the possibility of having possibly four different citizenships.[21] For our Chinese Australian, it is also possible that in Australia he is considered Chinese, whereas in China, he is considered Australian, especially if he cannot speak Mandarin. By the same token, a person who is not ethnically Chinese would not be considered Chinese even if she could speak fluent Mandarin, had immersed herself in Chinese culture and had lived in China for many years.[22]

On this basis, Russia, for example, believes that it has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of countries that have significant numbers of ethnic Russians, arguing that the Russian State has an obligation to ensure that Russians living in other countries have their rights respected. In this case, we can observe the complexities associated with national and individual identity. Someone may be a Ukrainian citizen, for instance, but be ethnically Russian, or he or she may also have Russian citizenship. In the first instance, such an individual may wish to claim that he or she has a right to maintain his or her ethnic identity as a Russian and so demand the right to have separate Russian schools, where teaching occurs in the Russian language. In some instances, it will also lead to a demand to have the Russian language recognized as a second state language.[23] The Russian state appears to subscribe to the view that it has a duty to protect Russian citizens (and ethnic Russians, if not Russian citizens) wherever they reside. While recent events in Ukraine can be analyzed in a number of different ways, one of the justifications offered by the Russian leadership for meddling in the affairs of another sovereign state is that Russia has both the right and the obligation to protect Russian citizens living in Ukraine or elsewhere.[24] This, however, is a qualified obligation to protect ethnic Russians, depending on whether intervention serves the political or

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[21] This is not supposed that someone would want to have four different citizenships. It is to point out the complexities of national identity. Citizenship in some countries can be acquired by birth, that is, being born in a particular country, by descent, for example, by having at last one parent of a particular nationality, by naturalization, that is, by fulfilling naturalization criteria, including by marriage.

[22] See, for example, the discussion on multiculturalism in Chandran Kukathas, ed., *Multicultural Citizens: The Philosophy and Politics of Identity* (St. Leonard's, NSW: Centre for Independent Studies, 1993).

[23] For example, as was demanded by Russians living in Latvia, resulting in a referendum to consider the question of making Russian a second state language. This was firmly rejected. See "Latvia Rejects Russian as a Second Language," *BBC News*, February 19, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17083397 (accessed May 13, 2014).

[24] Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine, March 4, 2014, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6763 (accessed May 12, 2014).

economic objectives of Russia. There is in this instance, at the very least, a disconnection between a putative national identity, Ukrainian, conferred by Ukrainian citizenship and an ethnic and cultural identity, conferred through ethnic origin, that is, Russian.

Theoretically, what this suggests is that national identity can be considered to have two parts, the first, political identity,[25] which is associated with citizenship, say, for example, being a Ukrainian citizen, and the second, ethnic and cultural identity, being Russian. This bifurcation is an oversimplification, since political identity is more complex than simply citizenship and intersects with identity politics, which is connected to the assertion of rights by a particular group, based on actual or perceived discrimination on the basis of difference. This difference could be ethnic and so the demand by a particular group could be that discrimination on the basis of ethnicity violates their human rights.

Cultural Identity

Leaving aside the complexities of the way in which national and ethnic identity interrelate, as well as the intricacies of political identity, we will focus on cultural identity, which, as we have already said, is one of the identities constitutive of national identity and personal identity. An understanding of cultural identity is important if we are to understand the deeper motivations and influences that shape the perspectives and values of different individuals. This will be particularly so if we are seeking to understand a text or what motivates individuals. To say, for example, that someone is a Jewish writer is not simply to place an ethnic label on the individual, but to identify the tradition and the cultural perspective from which he or she writes. Moreover, it provides a key to interpreting his or her understanding of a particular problem or issue with which his or her writing is concerned. In practical terms, awareness of the nuanced understanding of putatively shared concepts that cultural identity brings enables us to appreciate that the concepts with which we construct our arguments and draw our conclusions may be understood by others very differently from how we understand and use them ourselves.

An obvious example is the question of what we mean by globalization, another is what we mean by human rights. In the West, globalization is generally seen in positive terms and one definition of it is the multidimensional and interactive processes of political, economic and cultural

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[25] We are making a distinction here between political identity in the sense of citizenship and belonging to a particular nation, and identity politics, where a much broader sense of political identity is used. In this latter understanding, individuals identify themselves as feminists, specifically oppressed racial groups, minorities, and so on, building a political agenda based on perceived (and actual) discrimination for which remediation through political activism is to be sought. Identity politics emphasizes differences.

change across the world resulting in increased social interconnectedness among different peoples.[26] This is by no means the only definition, as in places where the experience of globalization is one of a renewal of domination by international interests it is synonymous with oppression and colonization.[27] Culture, affected by experience, will color how globalization is understood. The exploitation of resources by foreign powers is not a positive experience, so that what is meant by globalization in that context signifies something very different from the Western context.[28] The arrival of a multinational corporation in a country may bring jobs and prosperity, but it may be at the expense of family life and the destruction of a community. Similarly, human rights, although universally acknowledged as important, are also contested because they are understood differently in different cultures. In cultures, for example, where family and community values are more important than individual values, group rights will be more important than individual human rights.[29]

Instead of attempting a definition of cultural identity proposing that it include such things as attitudes, religion and religious practices, dietary habits and traditional dress,[30] we shall approach the question of cultural identity by drawing on a biography of Isaak Babel. The biographical account of Babel, a Russian Jewish writer born in Odessa in 1894 and executed by Stalin in 1941, illustrates how ethnicity, language and culture interact in the development of cultural identity. In large measure a product of the social, cultural and political conditions existing in Tsarist Russia,

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[26] S.B. Twiss, "History, Human Rights and Globalization," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 1 (2004): 39-70.

[27] Martin Khor once said that globalization was what those in the Third World have for centuries called colonization, Martin Khor's address to the International Forum on Globalization (New York City, November 1999), quoted in M. Kukoc, "Democracy and Neoliberal Globalization," *Synthesis Philosophica* 42, no. 2 (2006): 375. Khor is known for his anti-capitalist and anti-globalization views.

[28] I do not wish to single out the West in this regard. China, now the largest economy in the world, can equally be said to see globalization as a process of furthering Chinese interests and so a positive process that leads to economic growth for everyone. Those who see themselves as oppressed by foreign powers will not distinguish between Western or Chinese forms of globalization.

[29] See for example, Eagleton's essay on the interplay between culture and politics, and the universal versus the local in the understanding of ourselves and hence of human rights. T. Eagleton, "Local and Global. In Obrad, Savic," in *The Politics of Human Rights* (London: Verso, 2002), 258-267. See also Kymlicka's discussion of minority rights, contrasting communitarian views with liberal views. Our point here is that the reality is that these conflicting views about the nature of human rights are not just due to philosophical differences, but also to cultural differences in the understanding of the relationship between individuals and their communities. W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Venacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17-38.

[30] S. Gupta and D. Bhugra, "Cultural Identity and Its Assessment," *Psychiatry* 8, no. 9, (2009): 334.

his writing exemplifies well the interplay between his identity as a Jew and as a Russian.

The biographical account outlines the way in which Babel's cultural identity affected what he thought and wrote and he is described as having a "Russo-Jewish identity."[31] What is salient is the description of Babel as having the identity of a Soviet writer and secondly as someone who passionately loved Yiddish. Later, Babel comes to be seen quintessentially as a Russian-Jewish writer, who retained his Jewishness, as well as his sense of belonging to Russia, since he could not bear to live outside Soviet Russia.[32] Cultural identity, it is suggested, is shaped by the individual, but grows out of a literary, linguistic and ethnic context. Its construction is always in process.[33] Babel's identity was shaped by the re-awakening of Jewish consciousness following the Kishinev pogroms of 1903 and 1905, and by events following the Russian revolution that enabled Jews to break free of the restrictions placed on them in Tsarist Russia.[34] Kishinev provided the motivation for Jews throughout Tsarist Russia to organize themselves into self-defense groups, emigrate to the United States and to settlements in Palestine, laying the foundations for the modern state of Israel. Babel's formative years were spent in Odessa, a thriving Jewish center of culture during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Odessa was unusual for cities in the Russian Empire because it placed no restrictions on Jews; they were free to worship, enter the professions and contribute to the cultural and civic life of the city.[35] Babel's early literary work identifies him as a Jew from cosmopolitan Odessa, influenced by the mix of cultures, Jewish, Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, for example, to be found in the city during the early part of the twentieth century.[36] This vibrant cosmopolitanism was later to be extinguished by seventy years of Soviet rule.

Babel was the first Jewish writer to write in Russian. His cultural identity is revealed through his published works and his innovative style of writing marks him as an author able to see Russia from the outside, though at the same time he was no outsider, since he was also immersed in Russian language and culture. Part of the puzzle of cultural identity, it is suggested, could lie in the intertextuality of modernism, that is, the text makes use of various motifs and references that constitute a subtext that will be understood by a particular cultural group, but not necessarily a

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[31] Efraim Sicher, *Borderlines: Russian and East-European Studies: Babel in Context: A Study in Cultural Identity (*Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 12.
[32] Ibid., 13.
[33] Ibid., 14.
[34] Ibid., 15.
[35] Ibid., 109.
[36] Ibid., 16.

general audience. E. Sicher, his biographer, claims that the Yiddish language breathes in the coded subtext of Babel's Russian prose.[37] The use of motifs and cultural references understood only by a particular group is a common device used where an oppressed minority is repressed by a majority culture as means of fighting back at their oppressors. More significantly, what this reveal is that one way in which we can understand the cultural identity of an individual is through the text that he or she writes, since through the analysis of the text we are able to detect the particular cultural references and motifs that he or she uses. These will often point to his or her cultural identity. Paradoxically, as Sicher comments, attempts by other Jewish writers during the twenties and thirties to sever their ties with their Jewishness and to exhibit their loyalty to Soviet Russia did not solve the problem of identity. This was because cutting their ties with their ethnic past, even changing their names, did not dispel in the eyes of the Soviet regime the suspicion that they were still ultimately loyal to their Jewish origins and not to Soviet ideology and the State.[38]

However, the text will be only a guide to cultural identity because, in the case of Babel, it was clear that he was Jewish as well as Russian, so it is not surprising to find an element of Jewishness emerging in his writing. The existence of particular cultural references and motifs will not necessarily enable us to identify individuals as having a particular cultural identity. For example, a keen Latin scholar will have an excellent knowledge of Latin and his writing may be sprinkled with Latin phrases and words, as well as references to Roman literature. This will not mean that he or she will be identified as having a Roman cultural identity. Similarly, an English scholar who works extensively in German philosophy may make significant use of German phrases and ideas in expressing philosophical ideas, but will not be culturally identifiable as German.

A further complication to the use of text as a means of identifying cultural identity is not only that linguistic phrases and motifs may be the result of extensive scholarship in a particular culture or language, but also the purpose in the mind of the writer of the text. In many cases, the intention is not to convey a covert message that only those belonging to the particular language and culture will understand, but to borrow ideas that help to elucidate a particular issue. Someone interested in Heidegger, for example, may borrow his conception of *Dasein* in order to make a philosophical point, but this should not be taken to mean her cultural identity is partially German. Neither does it mean that there is a coded subtextual narrative meant for a particular audience.

Equally, however, a text may not make use of any culturally specific linguistic phrases and motifs, but nevertheless be written in such a way

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[37] Ibid., 20-21.
[38] Ibid., 23-25.

that it is evident that the ideas come from a particular cultural perspective. It is common, for example, that philosophical papers (amongst other scholarly papers) are written in English, but not all are written by those belonging to an Anglo-American, English speaking culture. An obvious clue to this is the way in which certain ideas are put together and how they are expressed. In speech, those for whom English is a second language will often be recognizable because of their accents and forms of expression translated from their own native languages. In text, although no accent can be heard, the structure of the sentences in English will often echo a writer's native language. It takes significant mastery of a second language to avoid expressing ideas according to the syntax of a person's native language. Similarly, the subtleties of semantic import of words and expressions can be missed by a non-native speaker. In some cases, the expressions used to convey ideas point to novel meanings that do not exist in English itself. A phrase such as "human rights," for example, within Western culture has to be conceived within a context of the nature of the human person, human dignity and the duties owed to human beings. A translation from another culture may convey something with a different context and hence different meaning.

Consideration of the foregoing discussion enables us to conclude that cultural identity is not simply a matter of having mastery of languages other than our native tongue or a knowledge of cultures other than our native culture. This does not mean that we cannot have a cultural identity that spans more than one tradition or culture. Babel, who lived within a Jewish and Russian culture, is an ample illustration that cultural identity is a complex interplay of upbringing, language and tradition set within a particular social milieu. It is not, however, simply constructed through these, but it is also rooted in the physical reality of his birth into a Jewish family. He did not choose his Jewishness; it was what he inherited from his parents. In addressing the question of the nature of cultural identity, it is important to acknowledge the role played by nature. It is nature which provides the foundation for cultural identity, even though it is nurture, language, tradition and a particular community which shape our cultural identity.

This enables us to see why it is not possible to claim a particular cultural identity just because we have immersed ourselves in a culture not our own. Knowing how to speak English or French, for example, is insufficient to claim that our cultural identity is partially English. Babel, born a Jew, lived his life within a particular cultural milieu and it was this, as well as his ethnic origin, that was formative of his cultural identity. Scholars of other languages and cultures remain outside those languages and cultures because they are not formed in them; they do not live within them in the way in which someone like Babel does.

The development of cultural identity is a formative process that takes time and begins in childhood, though it is evident that it remains fluid and influenced by a variety of factors, including individuals themselves. It is possible, for example, for persons to repudiate their ethnic origins and to live their lives consciously within a host culture, identifying as closely as possible with the dominant culture. The tragedy for Jews in Europe has been the denial of their assimilation into a majority culture, as the Holocaust and other persecutions attest. This is not an isolated example, however, since ethnic and cultural tensions are, unfortunately, quite common. If we accept a constructionist view that cultural identity is constructed through the interplay of individuals and others, then the identification by others of the individual as of a particular ethnicity suggests that cultural identity is based on ethnicity. Although we agree it is a component of cultural identity, indeed a basic one, it is not necessarily the defining characteristic.

Consideration of Babel's example leads us to conclude that cultural identity is fluid and that there are a number of factors which are involved in its development. (i) Ethnic origin; (ii) language; (iii) culture; (iv) customs and traditions, including religion; (v) individual preferences; (vi) family, community and social milieu; (vii) place, including nation and time, that is, the period of history in which the individual was born and in which he or she lives. These are by no means equally influential on the formation of individual cultural identity, but are all factors that need to be taken into account in its formation. Ethnic origin, for example, is impossible to deny, especially if persons fit a particular stereotype.

Nevertheless, someone who is ethnically Asian, for instance, may be far from being culturally Asian and so his or her ethnic origin plays a minor part in his or her cultural identity. Language is important, since this is one of the lenses through which people see the world, as Wittgenstein noted. The analysis of Babel's work shows the influences of Yiddish, even though he writes in Russian and provides us with a unique window to the world in which he lived. Culture is clearly important, since this will include art, architecture, music and the expression of a way of life, including dress. Customs and traditions will include rituals, manners and particular kinds of livelihoods. In a maritime nation, for example, it might include fishing and various other sea-related occupations.

Religion also plays a significant role in establishing cultural identity and there will be a clear difference between a Russian Jew, a Russian Christian and a Russian Muslim, though they might share other commonalities. Individual preferences will also be an important guide in the development of a cultural identity. Someone who wishes to suppress his or her ethnic origins will consciously try to live in a different culture, repudiating the customs and traditions of his or her own ethnic culture, seeking to assimilate into the other culture. This is a common experience for the

children of immigrants, who are forced by circumstance to live in two cultures. The influence of family, community and social milieu is also clear. Someone might want to see himself or herself as belonging to a particular ethnic group, but those around him or her might have a different view. Someone might regard himself or herself as Asian, for example, but an Asian community might regard him or her as a foreigner, since not coming from that community. Babel's origins in Odessa during the last few years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century provided him with an environment that encouraged Jewish Russian writers to explore ideas and themes in a very free manner, an opportunity not given to others. The time in which he was born and the place where he lived had provided the context in which he was able to develop as a writer and to form his cultural identity.

Globalization and Identity

Globalization, whether for good or ill, is a means whereby there is increased social interconnectedness between people. It can also be taken to mean an increased awareness that all human beings and their activities do not occur in isolation, but have effects on those living elsewhere, both human and animal. Globalization therefore extends beyond political, economic and cultural processes and includes broader social, ethical and environmental questions that impinge on the way in which human beings interact with one another. Increased interconnectedness, the result of globalization, requires all human beings to be concerned with the impact that human activity has on the future well-being of humankind and the planet on which they live. This is not to suggest that globalization does not bring benefits, but to highlight the responsibility that human beings have for the world in which they live. This will mean using its resources wisely, looking after all living things and taking care of the environment. Globalization also brings awareness that many problems are not regional, but are global and require a united effort on the part of all people to remedy.[39]

Focusing on the social processes that affect our identities, globalization influences our understanding of ourselves, just as colonization in the nineteenth century affected how different people saw themselves. Colonialists from the Western world saw themselves as superior to the peoples that they enslaved and the enslaved also saw themselves as inferior. The logic of dominance ensures that the dominated come to see themselves as

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[39] There are a multitude of global problems that require international co-operation. Alleviation of poverty, the elimination of slavery, prevention of terrorism, the fight against illegal drugs, the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers and so on are all problems that are global. Environmental destruction, pollution, endangerment and extinction of species are further problems that are not merely local, but global.

inferior, so that unconsciously they identify their own cultures as primitive and lacking value. As a result, their cultural identity itself takes on the appearances of that of their colonial masters, diminishing, if not destroying their sense of identification with their own culture.[40] Globalization can act as regionalization, where a major culture colonizes a smaller culture, destroying its uniqueness and hence affecting the identities of individuals within that culture. There is a good reason for distrust of a globalization where the benefits seem to flow mostly to a major power and which result in centuries old customs and traditions being eroded.

Because of globalization, cultures are no longer insulated from contact with each other, though this does not mean that every culture is in contact with every other in the same way or to the same degree. Communication technology and social media have made it possible, however, for there to be much more frequent contacts between those cultures to which such technology and social media are available.[41] Television, at least of a basic variety, is almost universally available and enables even those in the most remote and impoverished regions of the world to have a window on the world. The growth in mobile phones and the technology which supports their use has meant that even the most underprivileged people in the world can have access to social media and other information through the Internet. This is not to suggest that there are not wide variations in the quality of access or that there may not be severe limitations to the extent to which people have contact with social media and information about other cultures, but it is safe to say that it is much more extensive now than at any time in the past.[42]

Although over one third of the world has access to the Internet, English and Chinese speaking users are the heaviest users of the Web, with 26.8% and 24.2% of all users, while Spanish users, the next largest group, make up 7.8% of users. What is salient is that the top ten languages used

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[40] Freire argues strongly that one of the important aims of education is to enable oppressed people to become aware that they have accepted the prevailing dominant culture's view of them as inferior. In order to fight this, people need to take control of their lives and to critically assess the prevailing orthodoxy that devalues their culture and hence, devalues them. Once they are able to do this, according to Freire, they are in a position to improve their conditions of life. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, intro. Donald Macedo (London: Continuum International Publishing Ltd, 2000), 30th Anniversary Edition.

[41] Chen and Zhang argue that the convergence of globalization and new media has resulted in the transformation of cultural identity. See G.M. Chen and K. Zhang, "New Media and Cultural Identity in the Global Society," in *Handbook of Research on Discourse Behavior and Digital Communication: Language Structures and Social Interaction*, ed. R. Taiwo (Hershey, PA: Idea Group Inc., 2010), 795-796.

[42] The most recent statistics reveal that 34.3% of the world's total population have used the internet, with the largest percentage of internet users being in Asia. See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed June 3, 2014).

on the internet constitute 82.2% of the languages used on the Internet.[43] This means that the Internet is dominated by ten languages, though there will be websites in other languages, the bulk of the information that is available will most likely be in one of the top ten languages. Since language provides a window on the world, it means that webpages provide information from a particular perspective. This is covert and not always benign because history, for example, presented in a particular language will draw on sources in that language and so will relate and analyze events from a specific perspective. Any alternative perspective from a minority culture, hence from different language, is not presented. Moreover, since English and Chinese constitute together over 50% of the languages used on the Web, cultural perspectives from minority cultures are further muted.

The language of globalization itself is increasingly English, especially in economic and financial matters.[44] There are numerous good reasons offered for using English, rather than another language such as Chinese or Spanish. One of the most obvious is that it makes it easier for transnational corporations located in different countries to converse with each other and to have a common perspective on their aims and goals. While this is not necessarily sinister, and has the practical result that people from different cultures are able to converse with each other in a common language, one unwanted consequence is the effect on culture, cultural traditions and cultural identity. For all those working in a common language, their own culture needs to be set aside and a new, common perspective from another point of view adopted. In doing this, there is a concomitant change in cultural identity, because it is not possible to quarantine one culture from another so that neither affects the other. The common language of discourse brings with it a particular perspective of the world, as Wittgenstein argued. As a result, the more the necessity to converse in a common language of discourse, the more the specific cultures of the individual participants recede, unless, of course, they belong to an English-speaking culture.

Although it is true that cultures and languages are affected by the common, global language of discourse and are subsequently infiltrated by the culture from which the common language originates, they too will leave their trace on the common culture. Babel's Jewishness, for example, affected the way in which he portrayed Russian culture and hence left its imprint on it. Babel's Jewishness is absorbed by the Russian culture, but at the same time, its consciousness of itself is altered by its absorption. That is, Yiddish language and culture become interwoven into Russian

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[43] See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm (accessed June 3, 2014).

[44] A. Johnson, "The Rise of English: The Language of Globalization in China and the European Union," *Macalester International* 22 (2009): 131-168.

culture. Similarly, common global culture, although dominated by English speaking culture, is also altered by its contact with other cultures, so that they are interwoven to differing degrees in it. Traces of these cultures can be identified in the common culture through the manner in which concepts change as a result of their different perspectives.

Global culture, national culture and local culture are in dynamic interaction and, as a result, cultural identity itself is never fixed. It will ebb and flow according to how important new experiences are in influencing individuals in the formation of their sense of themselves. New ideas and modes of thought often emerge from a particular local culture and through rapid global communication, spread through the global community. Their rapid dispersion can occur through social media, but also through interactions among corporations, academics and others in more formal settings. Cultural identity is, as a consequence, dynamic.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion enables us to recognize the dynamic nature of the interaction between peoples, their languages, cultures and traditions. The possibility of interactions, as shown above, is founded on the common nature of human beings and hence the intelligibility of their basic needs, wants and desires. It was noted, however, that these may be expressed very differently in different languages and cultures. Diversity need not imply a clash of cultures or civilizations, which, however, is not ruled out. It was remarked that cultures, language and traditions play an important part in the establishment of national identity, while observing that ethnicity is also a key component. The extent to which ethnic identity forms the basis of national identity was briefly discussed and their tangled, complex relationship highlighted. This led us to reflect on cultural identity, in contrast to national and ethnic identity, and to examine how it is formed and what influences are at work in its construction. Rather than attempt a definition, though some elements could be identified, we considered a particular individual, Isaak Babel, and the influences on the formation of his cultural identity. This enabled us to identify several factors involved in its formation. These included, unsurprisingly, culture, language, religion and traditions.

Finally, we focused on globalization and cultural identity. What emerged from this discussion was the inherently fluid nature of cultural identity. New ideas and concepts stemming from a global culture, or indeed any other, can influence our perceptions of who we are and can result in us developing a different conception of ourselves. It was observed that, while a global culture can influence and suppress a local culture, it was also the case that local cultures were often the source of new perspectives and so act on the global culture to alter it. Cultural identity is therefore

subject to a number of dynamic forces. National and local cultures are in tension with global culture and there is a responsibility to ensure that they are not overwhelmed by the colonizing tendencies of dominant global cultures.

3.

Becoming Human and Humane: Developing a Global Vision to Address Local Needs and Anxieties

THOMAS MENAMPARAMPIL

Remaining Human under Pressure from an Impersonal Economy

No doubt, the modern economy has made great contributions to human growth with the help of steadily advancing technology. All developing societies are mentally set for increased production, expanding trade and a growing edge over others in *economic performance.* However, it will be a great pity if in our eagerness for immediate advantages we forget the long term good of society, and lose our hold on the skills for remaining human. There is no doubt that economic development is important, but it should not be allowed to degrade the *human* person or weaken the *humane* dimension of society. Unfortunately, development strategies do not always focus on "human beings and peoples…but merchandise and the market…" When we hear of "*economic miracles*" we forget that every step forward has been taken at a great human price.

Helpless persons and communities have often fallen victims to the great strategies for the so-called "*national development*." If land is taken from people for the sake of "development," they have a right to ask whose development it is that is being sought. We can well think of the pain of those who are forced to migrate because of dam construction, those whose traditional livelihood is ruined as a result of plantations, and those who lose land for airports and road construction.[1]

Unfortunately, we speak more of the "needs of development" than the *needs of peoples* and of communities and of their participation in the endeavor. We are in danger of falling victims to an insensitive sort of development at the expense of human beings and their environment, calculated not in terms of human benefit but merely in profits and sum totals!

People become so excited about acquiring the latest gadgets and the most tempting consumer goods that all their life gets oriented to the processes of earning and owning, consuming and displaying their new acquisitions. "Over consuming, overbuilding, overborrowing, and overlending all became the new normal during our post – Cold War" period.[2] In this

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[1] John Clammer, *Culture, Development and Social Theory* (London: Zed Press, 2012), 168.
[2] Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat, Crowded* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 5.

rat race, they leave no room for growing more human: cultivating *human sentiments* like compassion of heart, joy in relationships, helpfulness in mutual dealings, and preserving an intelligent and balanced worldview. Suddenly they discover that they are no more than mere robots at the service of the economy, without heart and mind.

Remaining Human under Pressure from Impersonal "Development"

The Frankensteins of wealth-building in the globalized economy are hunting down those who have brought them into existence. This form of modernity *devours* its own children. Developed nations are free and prosperous, but their societies seem to be disintegrating.[3] However, things have deteriorated further: degrading poverty in industrial areas, heartless child labor, slum squalor, street violence, trafficking in women, new types of diseases, lack of opportunity for education and skill acquisition, gross inequality and damage to environment. People are growing *insensitive* to each other by ignoring their own cultural heritages and undermining those of others.

A new "*development ethics*" is required to rekindle hope and offer more of care than control. For that, a deep understanding and appreciation of culture is a prerequisite.[4] Just to take an example, it has been found that the medical bureaucracy creates ill health by generating increasing stress "by multiplying disabling dependence, by generating painful needs, by lowering the levels of tolerance for discomfort or pain…"[5] Gradually it is becoming evident that culturally ill-informed development practices are a threat not only to health, but also to "lifestyles, memories, rootedness and a strong sense of the self."[6]

People grow equally insensitive to nature. Gradually they become blind to the fact that they are *tearing apart nature's* intricate patterns that sustain life and cosmic relationships and imperiling their existence together as human communities. Thomas Friedman says that the Great Recession of 2008 was "a moment when the Market and Mother Nature got together and told the world's major economies…This cannot continue. Enough is enough."[7]

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[3] Gurucharan Das, *India Grows at Night* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2012), 4.
[4] Clammer, *Culture, Development and Social Theory*, 183.
[5] Ibid., 189.
[6] Ibid., 188.
[7] Friedman, *Hot, Flat, Crowded*, 6.

Retaining Human Sensitivity in the midst of Anger

Similarly, when great business enterprises tread on the interests of *indigenous people*, displacing communities, damaging local markets and destroying inherited values and traditional cultures, disrupting religious traditions, they are inviting a violent response. And once violence breaks out, it is not easy to bring it to a conclusion. Many of the modern tragedies like religious and ethnic conflicts, genocide and ecocide, are inter-related and are due to the lack of *human* sensitivity.

Today's leadership knows only one way to stop violence, no matter the cause: violence to suppress violence. Governments speak of "fighting terrorism." The global world order seems to believe in the same pedagogy. Very few see it as a strategy to expand the market. Friedman is frank in confessing that the hidden hand of the market cannot survive without the hidden fist.[8] Gradually anger mounts on both sides. Pankaj Mishra sees similarity in the pattern of anger of all ideologies.[9] Insensitivity constitutes the common core of all calculated anger. Stalin speaking of the need for violence in a revolution was emphatic, "You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." Condoleezza Rice called bombs a part of the "birth pangs of a new Middle East."[10] Insensitivity has many dimensions. Once colonies were conquered; today even countries are just bought.[11]

Cold, insensitive, calculated anger is different from spontaneous anger before a negative experience. Spontaneous anger is the energy that nature provides to solve an immediate problem. It has to be wisely guided and intelligently used, keeping in mind the good of all persons concerned. A fact that we can never forget is that we belong to a cosmos that exists as a "*web of cooperative and symbiotic relationships*" and that everything is connected to everything else. When we forget this truth, we are heading for trouble. The future belongs to those who carefully handle situations of anger, harmonize opposites, cultivate *sensitivities*, bring communities together, and promote *human* values even in the midst of intense difficulties.

Weakening of Humanity amidst Inter-Community Tensions

As neighboring communities work their way forward towards development, they often ignore this reality and land in tension among themselves. The same thing happens not rarely among neighboring countries. If they do not keep their expectations realistic, they are likely to collide with each other. A partial understanding of immediate realities can lead

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8 Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2017), 289.
9 Ibid., 288.
10 Ibid., 292.
11 Parag Khanna, *The Second World* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2009), xxiii.

to a *perceived clash of interests* at the first stage and real clashes at the second. Conflicts can also arise over claims to natural resources.

People are on the move today. The mobility of job-seekers as a result of rapid commercial and industrial growth has led to the enfeebling of family bonds, social relationships are religious guidance which used to be nourished by the family, extended family, the local school, neighborhood communities and religious mentors. The result has been the *erosion of cultures* where *human* values were generated.

There is further a breakup of families and communities through which ethical perceptions were handed down. This has reduced the effectiveness of all traditional patterns of social formation and weakened the handing on of *social codes* that used to keep families and communities together. Religious inspiration too has become greatly marginalized. That is what makes communities seem helpless when conflicts break out within or between communities and inhuman situations arise. What is most threatened is the greatest treasure to be unguarded: Human Sensitivity.

Cultural Self-assertion as the Affirmation of One's Humanity

Speaking of inter-community tensions, we referred to differences over economic interests. But what is even more important is to pay attention to the *ethnic and cultural dimensions* of the problem. Cultural groups all over the world, especially ethnic minorities, are making their voices heard these days when they feel their interests are not attended to by the majority community, e.g., the Basques in Spain, Scots in the UK, Quebecois in Canada. Similarly, smaller nations representing smaller ethnic groups feel threatened by the larger ones in the neighborhood.

Wrong handling of ethnic grievances has often led to major conflicts, as has happened between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Africa more than a half million people may have died. From time to time we read of uneasy relationships between the Dutch- and the French-speaking people in Belgium. Uzbeks have been moving away from Kyrgyzstan due to ethnic tensions. Something similar happened to the Armenians in Syria. Such incidents reveal the power of ethnicity and the centrality of culture in the political life of a nation and of inter-community relationships in a pluralistic society. There are not many countries in the world that do not have to deal with violence related to ethnic and cultural differences. It is in such contexts that we must help each other to retain our *human sensitivity.*

Where ethnicity and culture had been ignored for a long time, as it happened in Russia during the Soviet regime, self-assertion of minorities became much stronger as soon as the controlling forces weakened. The reason is easy to understand. Ethnicity defines for a community what it holds as most precious: its identity. For every community their own identity and *culture* are unique. Alexander Solzhenitsyn used to say that the

best way to destroy a people was to uproot them from their culture.[12] Cultural identity is the ground of their selfhood and collective existence, it promotes the values the community lives by. It helps them in their *search to be truly human* and find a place in the wider human society. That is why anthropologists consider the self-affirmation of communities as something healthy, even necessary. We should not look at this phenomenon negatively. It provides the energy that a community needs for its very survival and self-enhancement. It serves a psycho-social purpose in ensuring solidarity within the community in times of danger and motivation for its continued existence.

Even weak cultures have survived when their communities succeeded to preserve a fierce *sense of uniqueness* about their identity during the course of their history. A self-perception of being chosen and elect gave them the needed strength even in the most adverse circumstances to struggle on and survive, as was in the case of the Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, Welsh, Irish, Poles, Tibetans and others. Every community has a right to be proud of their collective self and their cultural heritage. If they feel that their ethnic, cultural or historic identity is undervalued or threatened and that their political or economic interests are ignored, they become restive.

The Aspect of Being Cultural Minorities at the Margins

Restlessness in communities are all the stronger if they happen to be *minority groups*, especially those at the borders of countries or margins of society (like the tribal people or the humbler castes in India, African Americans in the US), for them have too little shared history with the mainland society or the dominant communities. The smaller ethnic groups in any nation are inclined to resent the indifference and unconcern of the dominant society to their problems. It is for that reason that the assertion of ethnicity and culture has become a discernible trend almost in every part of the world: in Russia, France, Pakistan, Australia, etc.; by the Scots, Welsh, Tyrolese, Basques, Catalans, French Canadians, Flemings, Tamils, Kurds, Baluchis, etc.

This phenomenon has been gathering strength in recent years, and has acquired the name *Identity Politics* on the world scene. Such self-affirmation can take a violent turn when it is not given scope for legitimate self-expression or when the concerned parties make up their mind to take their claims to extremes, as it happened in ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Georgia, Indonesia, Chechnya and Sri Lanka. It is often said that violence is the eloquence of the weak.

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[12] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 77.

Border communities feel that they had not been a part of the events and processes that gave shape to the national identity and culture, and that their shared history with the majority community has been too brief and the common heritage too small to make them feel a sense of togetherness. In consequence they have developed a *weak sense of belonging* to the nation concerned or the society of which they are part. Marginal communities feel that they had too small a share in shaping the history of their society of which they have generally been victims.

The emotional distance becomes even more when there are memories of hostile relationships between them and the dominant communities in the past, or they sense a threat to their cultural identity. Tensions mount when border people express their sense of alienation further, *wanting to secede* from the control of the dominant cultural group and constitute a new state. Threat of secession in this case is an affirmation of difference. The Plebeians wanted to withdraw from the Patricians in Roman times.

There are a number of communities today that want to secede from a bigger political unit for reasons of *cultural or historical differences*, or economic or political deprivation: e.g., the people of Aceh and Irian Jaya in Indonesia, those of Chechnya in Russia, the Baluchis in Pakistan, Muslims in South Thailand, Muslims of Mindanao in the Philippines, Kurds in Iraq and Catalans in Spain. The Scots parted ways with England and South Sudan with the North. In some cases, there is violence on the side of protesters, but in other cases it is the State that takes the initiative in going hard on the minorities. Sometimes the secessionists take rigid positions and there are times when the representatives of the Government likewise remain inflexible.

Even nation-states with long histories like the UK or France had gone through these stages in the shaping of their national identity. Such collective self-questionings in younger countries need not be considered unusual in the development of a national consciousness. However, if we do not make place for the cultural dimension of these problems, we will not be able to bring solutions to the anxieties that afflict these regions. Just as India cannot be like China, nor Greece like Germany,[13] a Naga cannot be like a Munda, a Muslim cannot be exactly like a Hindu.

Emotional integration of smaller ethnic groups and humbler communities calls for a strong sense of *human sensitivity* and cultural understanding on the part of those who guide the destinies of the states. Economic packages alone are inadequate. Respect for the selfhood of the community and for their concerns is far more important. The same norm would remain valid at the global level as well.

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[13] T.N. Ninian, *The Turn of the Tortoise* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2015), 37.

Being Human Means Leaving Space
for Each Other as Communities

In a fast-changing world, ethnic groups/nations sometimes feel that their identities have to be re-defined and the relationships with neighboring ethnic groups/nations sorted out. Competing interests of other communities/nations in the neighborhood can lead to tensions. Such tensions are built on perceptions of political, economic, psychological or cultural *exploitation of their group/nation* by a stronger one. Some of these may be true and some exaggerated.

In a multicultural society, communities that may have had the advantage of *early education* or a specialized skill which has become a part of their heritage are quick in taking up financially rewarding jobs. For example, some are good in the cultivation of certain cash crops and grow rich, others have developed business skills and begin to prosper, while others have built up a knack for political maneuvering and capture power. These communities may be perceived as exploiting others, or may actually be doing so. Those who feel left behind build up grievances. If, on the contrary, the neighboring communities begin to consider these aptitudes and skills complementary, the chances of conflict become greatly reduced. What we have just said would equally be true of two neighboring nations in competition. In all these situations, far-sighted leaders certainly can help. They can encourage learning from each other. All can learn from their neighbors in advantaged positions. It is said that the Persians learnt from the Egyptians and the Medes when they were defeated. The Greeks learned from the Persians. Others learnt from the Greeks. Marx urged workers to learn the spirit of innovation from their masters.[14]

However, a word of caution may be useful about learning from one's rival/competitor only the skills of war, as Germany and France did after each defeat. Germans learnt from French philosophical thought and social reflections after the Revolution. Two generations later the defeated France was eager to learn about the German reforms from the University of Berlin. In 1918 the Germans proposed to learn from the way that the French learnt from them after their earlier defeat. These are what Arnold Toynbee would call "unfriendly services" to each other.[15] Later England became a role model for the colonial and imperial aspirations of European nations.[16] However, just as we can learn negative things from others, so too can we learn positive things. Forward-looking leadership not only encourages learning from others, but also place talents in relationship with others.

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[14] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat* (London: Granta Books, 2004), 34.
[15] Ibid., 241-42.
[16] Ibid., 173.

It is not rarely that minority communities/smaller nations *feel marginalized* in the wider economic competition in reference to the majority community or to the stronger ethnic group/nation in the neighborhood. Their discontentment manifests itself in various forms of protests. As we said earlier, there may be truth in the allegations, but there are times too when minority leaders (or leaders of weaker nations) keep alive their discontent in order to retain the political loyalty of their communities. Occasionally there is a *third party* that fans these inter-community/international tensions for their own political or economic interests.

Leaders Ought to be Human and Sensitive

In a community persists the perception of a threat to their identity, culture or interests, it does not emerge from anxiety too easily. A stormy and troublesome period is ahead. The horizon looks dark. But if they are humanely treated and given space to grow, develop and express themselves, they gradually learn to take their place side by side with others, begin to recognize the cultural assets of other communities as complementary, respect their rights and interests, accept to live and work in collaboration with them, and join hands together towards a common destiny. This period of transition is very sensitive. People can be led astray by *self-interested leaders* or those inspired by ideologies that lead to no future.

If, during these troubled times, there are *intelligent* and *sensitive leaders* on either side, who adopt a *human* and humane approach to provide an inspiring and complementary vision, the communities concerned can easily move forward with a great sense of serenity and self-confidence. It is said that after the conquest of Persia, Alexander was full of courtesies to the Persian leaders, showing respect for local culture and customs. He took pride in restoring the tomb of Cyrus.[17]

When power respects culture and religion, a response is also usually normal. However, there is a great deal of difference between actually respecting religion and culture from merely bribing their adherents. It is different still to burn their holy books and directly insult their religious traditions. Taj Hashmi says such things merely invite a radical response.[18] The *human* element cannot thrive in such contexts.

We need sensitive leaders who respect people of various cultural and religious traditions within a country (and weaker nations on the world scene) and their concerns. People in general are looking forward, not only to their development but even more to the *recognition of their dignity*. If this fails to happen, neither the flourishing of culture nor the development

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[17] Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads* (London: Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2016), 4.
[18] Taj Hashmi, *Global Jihad and America* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2014), 79-80.

of the economy are possible. Many opportunities for the enhancement of the identity and culture of the community will pass them by.

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Reasons for Tensions:
Communities Reduced to Inhuman Conditions

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Let us look at another reason for trouble. If the weaker communities/nations feel that the *natural resources* in their areas are taken away from them without adequate compensation or without any advantage to them, or if *their land* keeps going out to Business Magnates or is hastily turned into Special Economic Zones, resentment is bound to build up. The announcement of *dams* and other *mighty projects* with little consideration to the needs or difficulties of local communities sends a shiver through their spines. As war and violence leave behind psychological trauma among the victims, so too arbitrarily imposed forms of development cause indescribable suffering on affected communities if they have led to the erosion of cultures, *displacement of peoples,* deprivation of land, enforced urbanization.[19] These are things that are taking place too frequently in developing countries.

Conversely, *delaying projects* that can bring common economic benefits may put off development and long-term wellbeing for everyone indefinitely. The pros and cons of a particular project may need to be studied and discussed, guarantees given and honored, but closing doors to new economic initiatives may leave one's community/region/country far behind. Total isolation did not help Afghanistan or Tibet in earlier history, nor Cuba or North Korea in our times. Only *intelligent openness* to wider realities and to ever widening opportunities can pave the way to prosperity. That was the law of economic development in any period of history in any part of the world.

Similarly, if fast changes in *the demographic pattern* of a region/country due to industrial immigration cause indigenous people's proportion to fall significantly, there is bound to be a sense of alarm. In the same way, if the organized sector is developed mostly by capital and labor from outside the region, indigenous people become mere observers of the major economic drama as it develops; people keep wondering whom the regional economy is meant to benefit, who owns the economy and whom it serves. That happens more easily when business houses, civil servants and politicians establishes too cozy a relationship. In many countries, large *business houses* come to have excessive power.[20] Thomas Piketty points

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[19] Clammer, *Culture, Development and Social Theory*, 165.
[20] Das, *India Grows at Night*, 158.

out that "top managers by and large have the power to set their own *remuneration,* in some cases *without limit,*" even without any relation to their contribution to productivity and profit.[21]

No wonder, people take it for granted that, though the market is efficient, it is not moral.[22] There is too little sense of fairness. In the US the *CEO earns 263 times more* than the worker, in the UK 81 times.[23] As people at the upper notches of such an economic structure have been indulging in snob goods and conspicuous consumption, 46 million in the US, it is claimed, sank into poverty.[24] It is Trump who tapped into the electoral resource of their discontentment. The new economy is leaving countless numbers in poorer countries in poverty. At the same time, it must be admitted, that it stirs weaker communities/nations to go beyond their agricultural aptitudes and *develop other skills* that are needed today, related to free enterprise and innovative economic ventures.

Mistakes on Either Side and an Invitation to be More Human

There are many ways in social processes in which things go wrong: when leaders adopt wrong policies, when they make a *wrong use of right policies*, when unfair things are done in the name of national security. Also, when movement leaders misinform and *misguide* their people in self-interest, when they develop on their communities' grievances and foment anger and hatred, when they exploit their own people for the sake of their personal interests, or when the ideals they place before their followers are never seriously followed. We must not forget that after the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789 there were six decades of violence and repression in the same country and around.[25] That was clear violation of all the rights proclaimed.

Recent history gives many examples of how good things have been used for wrong purposes. For example, World Powers have invoked human rights to *interfere in the destinies of sovereign nations*, or claimed to act in defense of democracy when they wanted to take advantage of weaker ones. In the same way, dominant societies pretend to be safeguarding national integrity and security when suppressing or silencing minorities within national borders; nation-states have invoked the sovereignty principle to *suppress human rights*. On the opposite side, leaders who claim to be leading a movement to defend their community and culture

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[21] Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017**)**, 24.

[22] Das, *India Grows at Night*, 159.

[23] Robert Skidelsky and Edward Skidelsky, *How Much Is Enough?* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 30.

[24] Ibid., 31.

[25] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 40.

have been taking advantage of their followers or compromising their interests for their own personal interests. Thus, right and wrong have been on either side.

Experience has shown how even democracies can become illiberal, *intolerant of minority communities/dissenting smaller nations,* can silence weaker voices, connive at and even provoke ethnic conflict, and have recourse to state-violence. On the other hand, it is also true that dissenters can place themselves under petty tyrants and self-interested political leaders for obtaining some personal benefits. Communities have been known in addition to have recourse to various strategies to establish their victimhood before stronger communities. They develop a *martyr-complex* and try to convince themselves and others of the criminal intent of everyone else and of their own total helplessness. In all these cases, when one begins to look at things from others' point of view, one moves further on the way of being *human.* This is how Columbus described the indigenous people of America whom he was meeting for the first time: they "are very gentle and do not know what evil is."[26] That was just being *human*. But that was not how the Native Americans were treated.

Being Human by Becoming Peace-makers, Culture-translators

The unrealistic expectations of some assertive groups/nations may have led them too far in the view of others and brought the communities/nations concerned into conflict with each other. We need men and women of peace. However, we are living in an era when peace-makers are hard to find. Ideologies inspired by the concepts of Hegel, Marx, Darwin, Gramsci and others have given young people another message. The *fighter is the hero today*. Fighting for justice, for human rights, one's people, culture, nation, etc., provides the ideal for the young people of the day. Working for peace is not a popular mission.

What confuses the issue most of all is the fact that two persons/groups/nations in collision can have different understanding of justice in a concrete situation. What happens when *perceptions about justice collide*, and when people who are fighting for perfectly good causes in behalf of their own people come into conflict? What happens when justice according to me fights against justice according to you? Can we adopt a creative form of dialogue which I call critical dialogue with the opponents: listening, affirming, appreciating, questioning and searching together? That is being human in contexts.

Dialogue itself is not without problems: giving importance to less important questionable things, making odious comparisons based on eth-

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[26] Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 210.

nicity or culture, using political clout, being caught in stereotypes, or humiliating opponents. We need *bridge-builders, culture-translators* to enable minds and meanings to meet. Humans should learn to be human to each other. Failing which, we have what Hannah Arendt foresaw in the 1950s: chaos and violence, homelessness and rootlessness.[27]

Respecting and Befriending the Opponent

Heroes like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King approached knotty political problems with absolute respect for the persons who represented the other side, even for the direct opponent. They had the ability to tap the good will buried in the deepest recesses of the opponent's inner being. They appealed to the humanity, *natural goodness,* in the heart of their enemies and *did not embitter them with denunciations*. They tried to befriend their foes. They made sure that their demands were fair, their assessment of the situation objective and their statements true. They avoided exaggerations, threats and any form of violence. While they claimed their own rights, they did not ignore the rights of others.

We need peacemakers…that is the way of being human today: those who esteem others, even their enemies; those who win sympathy and support by the *uprightness of their conduct* and truthfulness of their argument; those who transform hearts and make a valuable contribution to the common human heritage; those who, by the *human touch* with which they handle even the most sensitive problems, delivery confidence; those who have the ability to identify and separate real issues from ego-requirements, rigid ideologies and pre-determined positions.

Being Human as Persuasive and Creative

The skill of the leaders on either contending side lies in their ability to search for motivations that will bind their communities together for a common purpose, *not by force but through* persuasion. The sheer need for emerging together from relatively an underdeveloped condition is a good motivation. The present state of backwardness of a community or a country is not necessarily a setback, but a good starting point. Francis Fukuyama holds that late modernizers have an advantage; the beginners bring with them *values* that provide the backbone of success: industriousness, sparing habits, accommodating and non-confrontational ways, readiness to work hard and take trouble, an eagerness to please and win collaboration and support, willingness to takes risk and innovate and other similar qualities. They do not grow complacent too early, because they cannot afford to do so.

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[27] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 40.

Innovative leadership searches for new ways of making diverse interests find a meeting point. The emergence of the *European Union* and the economic success of *ASEAN* tell of how people can hold their differences in abeyance or seek to express them in new and creative ways. New such alliances are arising these days, but they must explore and discover advantages in doing so. Discoverers are motivated by success…by their sheer eagerness to succeed, not by money.[28]

Recent economic trends are showing that even the weakest country or community can have something to *specialize in*, and that they derive the maximum advantage when they combine themselves with other people who are different, and precisely because of their different natural endowments. Creative and insightful people have evolved ways of transcending even major differences for common benefit. If India, China and Pakistan could show that this can be done instead of opting for conflict, the future of Asia, of humanity could be different.

Being Human Means Valuing Togetherness

There seems to be a law in nature: *talents reveal themselves in clusters*. There were a number of dramatists in London during Shakespeare's days. Explorers and adventurers crowded the Portuguese and Spanish court at a particular period of history. Florence, Venice and Milan had bunches of painters in the peak era of art. Turin was the home of a number of saints during the 19th century. Paris was crowded with social thinkers at some stage, Berlin and Vienna with musicians. In India, Vikramaditya had his nine famed intellectuals and Akbar a host of scholars in their court.

Similarly, modern business too has been coming up in clusters. The Asian Tigers would be a good example. Some see a similar dynamism at work among US, Europe and China. Parag Khanna says that "The three together have come to resemble conjoined triplets, where severing any artery hurts all sides." Their economies have become mutually dependent. The same conclusions can be applied to other nations at the regional or the global level.[29] The African cultural philosophy of Ubuntu, "A person is a person through other people," provides a great foundation for *social togetherness and collaborative action*.[30] What is interesting, in addition, is the thesis of F.S.C. Northrop that the East and the West are by their nature meant to complement each other in the formation of a future world civilization.[31]

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[28] Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2012), 112.

[29] Parag Khanna, *The Second World* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2008), xxii.

[30] Daniel Buttry, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* (Michigan: Read the Spirit Books, 2011), 31.

[31] Christopher Dawson, *Dynamics of World History* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2002), xlii.

Being Human Means Being Responsible

A sense of responsibility seems to be the most needed value in public life today. For example, a community's/country's eagerness for identity-affirmation should not lead it to collective self-centeredness. Everyone must have respect for the larger interests of the wider society/humanity. If the pursuit of *self-interest* becomes too important for a community/country, it would soon land in trouble with other communities/counties and move on to the path of decline, if not immediately, after a while.

That is what happened even to the mightiest empires in history when they adopted a policy of *consistent confrontation* with neighbors. Unfortunately, there are always some who adopt this course, giving evidence to the absence of a sense of responsibility towards him/her and towards others. The Roman Empire in later years had become merely a predatory state; it was bound to decline as Greece had done. Ernest Renan and other French intellectuals reminded Prussia in 1870 how the "hubris" of Louis XIV and Napoleon had ultimately led to the decline of France. Similarly, Heinrich Mann spoke of the "curse of victory" which had plunged Germany into an abyss.[32]

Or again, *exaggerated assertion of self-interest* can force a community/country into a ghetto, and close the minds of its members to new ideas, possibilities, creative organizational structures and technologies. This would render their mental outlook rigid, and consequently incapable of meeting the challenges of changing situations. Meanwhile new, creative communities and countries come up, accept emerging challenges, confront them courageously with rising confidence, and brush aside the closed-minded. Albert Schweitzer, who spent the major portion of his life in interior Africa, believed that all of us "should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others." How different is this culture of global economy that prevails today of *privatizing gains and socializing losses*, this may be called a "culture of the grossest irresponsibility."[33]

Being Human Means Being Above Partisan Interests

Political parties will show a sense of responsibility when they make sure that they do not allow their parties' interests to have precedence over the interests of the nation, and of other communities. Playing cheap politics in this context of community-tensions is playing with national/*wider interests*. This would be true also of the interests of an individual nation in relationship to those of the human family as a whole.

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[32] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 20.
[33] Friedman, *Hot, Flat, Crowded*, 18.

We have sympathy for younger nations that are struggling to ensure good governance. Their experiments with democracy have not always been successful, especially where politics is forced to move along with ethnicity, tribe, caste, religion, region and language rather than ideas and ideologies. In such situations, everything depends on *social connections, family influence,* was dynastic loyalties, and winability in the next elections. Unfortunately, *criminalization* of politics has become an accepted fact with storm-troopers and street-fighters in many places. Big contracts and access to mineral resources will go to those who are well connected.

Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* speaks about newly modernizing states with a record of their military coups, prolonged insurgencies, civil strife, turmoil, and corruption.[34] In situations of helplessness, the poor seem to fall back on leaders who will get things done for them, even when they collide with values and wider interest. Thus, opportunities for *corruption* have increased even as commerce and industry have been expanding.[35] Nor have the developed nations always escaped the danger of playing partisan games. More careful social analysis has revealed that ideologies that astounded us were no more than ethnocentric, predatory systems responsible for the *destruction of traditional civilizations*, for persecuting independent thinkers, for the dichotomy of body and spirit, and for the mortal divorce between humans and nature.[36]

Creativity and innovation can also be in the area of being non-partisan and objective in such complex situations, when leaders bring a sense of mission to these challenges. Interaction among such committed leaders can stimulate interest, provide know-how, and encourage effort in new directions. One learns from the other. Suddenly there can dawn an *age of energy and optimism*, of accomplishment, expansion, growth and development for communities in despair. Young people can learn to move their present agitational energies in the direction of social harmony, economic productivity and non-partisan public life.

Being Human Means Respecting People Who Differ from Us

While much of the global anger today is against the ruling elite and their legitimizing ideologues, the official ire in response is against dissenting groups and non-accommodating nations. However, the use of the *strong arm method* against those who think differently from us can be *counterproductive,* especially when dealing with communities that are religiously inspired and set a great score by their honor. Young people

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[34] Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays* (Noida, UP: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2017), 48.

[35] Ibid., 51.

[36] Alain Danielou, *India: A Civilization of Differences* (Rochester, NY: Inner Traditions, 2005), xxi.

among them can be provoked to accept the challenge and adopt a violent response. The more they are called terrorists, the more they appear to their own people heroes/heroines. And yet people in power find it hard to resist the temptation of indulging in a show of strength and of issuing threats. History provides us with enough examples of communities that chose to die to the last man than be humiliated. Sensitivity can be absent in this regard in some persons representing authority at the national or international levels. In this context alone can one understand why after spending $3 trillion (some say $6 trillion)[37] on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and with more than 750 military bases round the world, a Great World Power still feels insecure.[38]

History will question the wisdom of the Cold War strategists who paid and trained Islamic forces in Afghanistan which later came to form the core of Taliban and ISIS. Solving today's problems by laying foundations for long term anxieties is not a good strategy. Being casual about the sufferings one has inflicted on the other is not sensitive. Not less than 500,000 children died due to the sanctions imposed on Iraq. Madeleine Albright the US ambassador to the UN admitted that they had caused more deaths than at Hiroshima. Nevertheless, she claimed, "I think it is a very hard choice; we think the price is worth it."[39] *Insensitivity* on the one side leads to the hardening of positions on the other.

The greater danger in the world today is that arms-producers ultimately come to decide the destinies of nations. In 1961, before laying down office, President Eisenhower had warned against a takeover of his country by a military-industrial-Congressional Complex.[40] If that happens, even national *leaders will be owned by the weapon-producing conglomerates*. Friedman is more forthright in pointing out how his country was born out of war, how it strengthened its economy during the two World Wars, and has continued to thrive on a war-related economy ever since.[41] Some other countries are merrily moving in the same direction. And a time comes or has already come when companies are competing not so much against companies as against countries,[42] while weapons-producers decide world politics.

Media people too show scant sensitivity when they take the liberty of linking the name of a tribe/community/religious group with the words like miscreants, thugs, rogues, anti-social elements, or terrorists which they would never do in reference to dominant communities. The skill of the peacemaker is to search the inner psyche of communities to remove

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[37] Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 504.
[38] Hashmi, *Global Jihad and America*, 129.
[39] Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 491.
[40] Hashmi, *Global Jihad and America*, 132-33.
[41] Ibid., 135.
[42] Ram Charan, *Global Tilt* (London: Random House Books, 2013), 7.

the anger that has accumulated over a period of time for the hurts and humiliations they have undergone from harsh words and deeds. Those who have the ability to *heal the collective memories* of communities, are truly prophetic personalities.

Being Human Means Developing a Vision for the Future

Economists begin to speak of the worldwide growth of an ambitious *middle class* in the world. As their purchasing power increases, they will constitute a growing *market* as well. In the same way, the number of young people of working age is growing faster in developing countries than elsewhere, and will constitute the *biggest workforce* in the world. If this mighty human power could be trained, motivated and guided, they would lead world economy.

The rise of the Asian Tigers demonstrates that later modernizers are actually advantaged relative to more established industrial powers, just as earlier liberal trade theories had predicted.[43] More and more observers note that *wealth is moving from North to South, from West to East*, and so are jobs. Peter Frankopan compares the discovery of oil in the Middle East to the discovery of America which radically changed the economy of the times along with the political order.[44] Investors are heading east and south. Starting from 2003 especially, hundreds of millions of dollars have gone into the emerging markets, even beyond the Middle East.[45]

The main reason is that companies in the emerging nations have a fierce entrepreneurial drive. Many are reveling in double-digit revenue growth, bringing jobs and prosperity to their home countries.[46] Late comers have a golden opportunity to adopt the most rewarding economic models, introduce the most remunerative working styles, and install the latest and the best model of infrastructure. "A lifetime of scarcity and tight margins has *taught them discipline*."[47] The future, then, belongs to those who make the right options whether the change they choose "is moving in productive or destructive directions, and whether it is creating *balanced growth across income classes*, ethnic groups, and regions, or precarious imbalances."[48] Preserving that Balance is the mission of persons with a sense of responsibility.

The enthusiasm for making the right, balanced and courageous decisions comes from *thinking leaders*, prophets, poets, writers, who provide

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[43] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 101.
[44] Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 332.
[45] Ruchir Sharma, *Breakout Nations* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2012), 7.
[46] Charan, *Global Tilt*, 5.
[47] Ibid., 101.
[48] Sharma, *Breakout Natio*, 12.

a stimulating philosophy for action, insisting on giving a positive response to problems, developing the *human element* in human beings. It depends on *dedicated young people* who inspire their colleagues to help their communities to make the *right choices* at strategically important moments. In this way, they give a new direction to history. When opportunities open up before a rising generation, the story of violence, corruption, agitations, religious conflicts, ethnic tensions get left behind and gradually forgotten. And a new era of peace, Balance and co-prosperity is ushered in.

Human beings have always been *interdependent*. Those who recognize this truth readily see the importance of fostering not ideas of *confrontation but of collaboration*. "The growing ties between nations over the last decade have made every one of them less inclined to allow their trade partners to go under."[49] Those who propagated philosophies of contention and led movements of struggle against other classes, communities, and the established order are beginning to rethink their propositions. They see that every human struggle in history has been in the larger context of "collaboration," and those who reconcile and motivate others for collaboration make the greatest contribution to human growth and social development.

Conflict is an aberration in human affairs; collaboration is the law of natural human processes, and collective self-enhancement. Can people be assisted to bring a *non-confrontational approach* to problems? Ancient epics were about daring conquests and empire-building. Modern epics have been about struggle for freedom, emancipation and equality. Time has come for us to move on to enacting and recording for future generations grand "Epics of Reconciliation." Can we build up the *Creative Minority* that will take this initiative?

Being Human Means Being Spiritual

In human history, the rejection of the spiritual always provoked an exaggerated reaction for the restoration of the spiritual, which ultimately ended up in various types of fundamentalism, or led to strange beliefs in the weird, the sensational, the curious, or the odd. However, no civilization ever prospered that ignored man's daily concerns, nor survived that was blind to his/her spiritual destiny. It was a *spiritual vision* that brought the great civilizations of the past into existence, and its motivating and strengthening power cannot be ignored even today.

Historians have traced out an *unpredictable element* in the development of civilizations. Some have referred to it as "chance" that gives an unforeseen opportunity to communities and nations; Adam Smith saw an *invisible hand* in economy; Mahatma Gandhi spoke of the *inner voice.* Recently some thinkers have proposed the "chaos theory" presenting what

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[49] Ibid., 252.

appears like chaos in fact a creative force transforming the entire old order and bringing into existence a new and happy state of things. Spiritually minded persons see a deeper design in everything leading history's processes to an ultimate destiny. After the painful experiences of the present days, we need to hold on to a Hope that gives us confidence.

When religion is marginalized, it not only withdraws from society the *psychological support* which it needs, but also leaves it vulnerable to movements of violence against its social structure and the values it embodies.[50] Spiritual blindness gives rise to "a kind of hubris which leads to the frustration of social idealism," and that society turns away from the principles it professes to be following.[51] Indeed, The *Death of God* has consequences.[52]

Spirituality, as we have seen, is about making the right decisions at critical moments of history. Lech Walesa said, "Victory can be achieved by various means. It can be gained with tanks and missiles, but I think that one wins better with *truth, honesty and* logic…This is a new weapon."[53] Vaclav Havel had a similar message, "It is very a clear understanding that the only kind of politics that truly makes sense is one that is guided by *conscience*."[54]

Whenever we say a kind word or perform a kind deed, whenever we whisper an assurance of forgiveness, whenever we bring together communities/societies/classes/nations alienated from one another, whenever we offer encouragement to the weak and a correction to the strong, whenever we call people to reflection and self-correction, whenever we try to ease tension and explain one group/civilization to another, whenever we promote *human sensitivity* and the virtues of compassion, kindness, generosity, fairness, and concern for others in ourselves and in others, whenever we commit ourselves in people's service…we make a small contribution to bringing people together, we build up humanity, we light a spiritual lamp, to strengthen the human element within the human family. We bring to concrete life-situations the message we heard long ago, "Love one another, just as I love you."[55]

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[50] Dawson, *Dynamics of World History*, xxxvi.
[51] Ibid., xxxix.
[52] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 301.
[53] Buttry, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, 272.
[54] Ibid., 300.
[55] Jn 15:12.

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4.

Rediscovering the Universal Human in Raúl Fornet-Betancourt's Philosophy of Interculturality

TONE SVETELJ

Globalization should not be seen as a unilateral process based on consumerism and profit, but as a process based on dialogue and movement toward a union of cultures and nations economically, politically, socially and spiritually. When talking about globalization, Raúl Fornet-Betancourt with his philosophy of interculturality emphasizes the importance of culture, which is the realm of freedom, creativity and realization of each human being. All these cannot be reached through abstract principles, but through a historical contextualization of human life in a given culture.

Following this logic, when the globalization process is seen as the process of encountering between different cultures, this process offers us a myriad of new options of how to express ourselves as free, creative and realized agents. Not every human expression, however, should be taken for granted or placed as qualitatively equal to other similar expressions. A globalization based only on the principles of economy, politics, free market, capital, neutrality of values, removal of borders, and so on, are weakening our comprehension of the true nature of a human agency. A solid interculturality does not simply tolerate the otherness of others, but looks for what makes us all in the process of conviviality – not only co-existence – more creative, realized and fulfilled and consequently more human.

Introduction

The globalization process offers many previously unimaginable benefits, which include among others a much broader, universal and holistic self-perception of the human agent. R. Roberson defines globalization as "the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole."[1] The same globalization process with its shifting away the traditional borders, however, creates also new tensions and previously unknown challenges on different levels in and between individuals and nations. Nobel Prize winner J.E. Stiglitz in his book *Globalization and Its Discontent Revisited* states that globalization should not be taken

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[1] Roland Robertson, "What is Globalization?," http://readanddigest.com/what-is-globalization/ (accessed December 27, 2017).

as a process of removing the borders because borders do matter. Depicting the global picture, Stiglitz claims that, despite the many benefits of globalization, the big winners of globalization are only the global one percent – the multimillionaires and billionaires, some big multinational corporations and the new middle classes in India and China. There is a growing inequality in and between countries that have been following the principles of liberalized and globalized free-market economy, which is unable to deliver benefits for large portions of the population. While decades ago, the local factories were the source of prosperity, education of younger generations and racial integration, this is not the case anymore. By pushing the differences among people to higher levels, the necessary basis for creation of local community and personal identity are weakening. If this is the case, then the rules of globalization have been poorly designed and the entire process of globalization has been mismanaged.[2]

How to become more human in such a world of globalization is the key concern of this chapter, based on the philosophical reflection of the Cuban philosopher Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, the main representative of the philosophy of interculturality. This philosophy mostly emanates in the German speaking parts of Europe, based on the need to integrate other cultures into one's own philosophical reflection and create an intercultural perspective. The aim of this chapter is to analyze the philosophy of interculturality proposed by Fornet-Betancourt. The first half of the text presents an examination of his key terms (culture, interculturality, philosophy); the second half focuses more on the search of what it means to be human within the process of globalization.

Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, born in Cuba in 1946 and currently professor of missiology in Aachen, Germany, has been from the very beginning of his life in touch with many cultures: European, Hispanic and African.[3] His philosophical thought belongs to the tradition of ethical humanism, rooted in the Jewish-Christian tradition, and enriched by the philosophical thought of Herder, Marx, Levinas, Martí and the theology of liberation. The philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, especially his distinction between the subject and the other, is particularly influencing Fornet-Betancourt's reflection. These and other directions within philosophy are in Fornet-Betancourt's eyes expressions of the Latin concept *humanitas* or the Greek *philantropia*, which literarily means "loving what makes us human." *Humanitas* is a dynamic term, designating the process of formation of human existence with and through other humans. In Fornet-Betancourt's words, formation of a moral subject is always defined through

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[2] Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017), xvii-xxv.

[3] Michelle Becka, *Interkulturalität im Denken Raúl Fornet-Betancourts*, Interkulturelle Bibliothek 43 (Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz, 2007), 13-18.

their relationship with other subjects, which is in this case not an abstract notion, but a concrete and living subject.[4]

Even though Fornet-Betancourt focuses a lot on Latin-American philosophy, his interest is not limited to this continent. For him, philosophy as such cannot be the domain of a certain culture or continent; philosophy has to become something that transcends and unifies different cultures in such a way that nobody feels to be superior or inferior. The task of philosophy for Fornet-Betancourt is to recognize the diversity of all cultures and through this recognition to create a new framework for a peaceful conviviality of different cultures, i.e., a new humanism.

Fornet-Betancourt's philosophical inquiry finds its inspiration in Kant's book *Logik* with his four famous questions: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? What is the Human Being? These are the questions that we cannot ask with personal tranquility or cultural equilibrium; these questions are shaping our anthropological inquiry, our position in this inquiry, as well as our history, present time and future.[5] In the anticipation of our conclusion, Fornet-Betancourt wants to bring the conceptions of human being to the intercultural dialogue, which should help us ask anew the meaning of the human being.

To accelerate our comprehension of his philosophical thought, let us focus separately on the meaning of culture, interculturality and finally his philosophy of interculturality.

Culture

The meaning of "culture" is in Fornet-Betancourt's reflection one of the key elements for a new understanding of who we are as humans. Culture is an open and dynamic concept, far from a monadic or static unity determining our essence as humans. Culture is the source, as well as the horizons of history and actions of concrete people in their daily lives.[6] The dynamism of this concept is such that it can never be in position of retirement and live out of its pension. Any one-sided emphasis of one's own culture or its sacralization leads to cutting off the life-dynamism of the

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[4] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *Interculturalidad y Globalización, Ejercícios de Crítica Filosófica Intercultural en el Contexto de la Globalización Neoliberal*, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 8 (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 109.

[5] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Menschenbilder interkulturell. Kulturen der Humanisierung und der Anerkennung*, Dokumentation des VII Internationalen Kongress für Interkulturelle Philosophie, Concordia Reihe Monographien, Bd. 48 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008), 27-29.

[6] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., "Einführung," in *Kulturen zwischen Tradition und Innovation. Stehen wir am Ende der traditionellen Kulturen?* Dokumentation des III Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 11 (Frankfurt, 2001), 22.

same culture. Culture represents the substantial power that orients members of a culture towards fulfillment of their life necessities and realization of their life plans, which includes also daily coping with their worries. Culture is the reality in which humans' goals and values exist. Through these goods and values members of a community define themselves and create social organizations, which are reflections of their contextual and material universe.[7] If people's material necessities are scarce and limited, it shakes and threatens the foundations of a culture and its members. No wonder why the globalization process, if based exclusively on the internationalization of production and economy, menaces the profoundly material livelihood of nations, cultures and individuals, as well as their identities.

The identity of an individual is intrinsically intermingled and connected with their culture. No human exists without a specific culture. This connection, however, is not an absolutely determined one. As a culture shapes its members, so members can shape their own culture. This idea is crucial for Fornet-Betancourt's understanding of philosophy; as every form of human thinking is always imprinted by the cultural background of the thinker, as we will discuss in the section on interculturality.

In addition, Fornet-Betancourt does not understand culture as a monolithic block, but as a play of plurality of different traditions within the same culture. These traditions with their opposing and conflicting forces create dynamism within a culture, which Fornet-Betancourt calls a dialectic of liberating and oppressing lines of traditions inherent to a culture.[8] Consequently, when we talk about a culture, we inevitably talk about a certain tradition within that culture, which is apparently so strong that with its dominating presence it determines the rest of that culture. A certain tradition or sometimes even more traditions and the correlated interpretations of those traditions, gain priority over other possible traditions or interpretations. As such, it determines what the essence of tradition or interpretation is, and how it differs from other traditions. In every culture, therefore, there is a double ongoing process of delimitation of not only what belongs to our and their culture, but also what delineates and shapes our culture within.[9] For this reason, it is very naïve to believe that our understanding of the others or a foreign culture can be based on a conceptual description. Our understanding of cultures is always based on a certain level of banalization of their position, influenced by exotic statements

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[7] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *Transformatión intercultural de la filosofía*, Palimpsesto: Derechos Humanos y Desarrollo 11 (Bilbao: Desclee De Brouwer, 2001b), 181.
[8] Ibid., 187.
[9] Ibid., 258.

from the tourism industry, threats from the tabloids and politics. Conceptual understanding is a useful tool, which at the same time hinders our understanding of cultural reality.

Every culture includes certain liberating forces, which are opposed to the dominant mainstream practices. Fornet-Betancourt calls this phenomenon *cultural disobedience*[10] – which can find different expressions, such as critique of the present cultural forms, overemphasis of the rights of every member of the culture, including also the right to have one's own worldview. Hopefully members will realize that their worldview is not the only possible one. Critique, rediscovery of one's right, creation of one's own worldview as well as discovery of other possible worldviews are in Fornet-Betancourt's reflection an invitation to discover other cultures and reexamine one's relationship to their own culture. Hence cultural disobedience leads to new practices of liberation against the stabilized and sacralized understanding of culture.

Fornet-Betancourt's reflection makes us aware that the concept of culture is a complex construct, which includes ideas of openness, different dynamics, inner transformation and life-orientation as well as exclusion, delimitation, stasis and the impossibility of a conceptual comprehension.

Interculturality

What does the term "interculturality" mean? If we follow the logic of the Occidental scientific culture, centralized on conceptual definitions, then our definition of interculturality will introduce a new boundary in front of those cultures which do not admit to conceptualization such centrality as the Occidental cultures do, Fornet-Betancourt claims in his book *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*.[11] In addition, every conceptual definition refers to delimitation, fragmentation and subdivision. As much as these categories are necessary in the advancement of human knowledge, they can present an obstacle in comprehension of interculturality. Human sciences, such as pedagogy, literature, linguistics, politics, sociology, philosophy, theology, etc., can definitively analyze the meaning of interculturality. With their fragmentation and subdivision, however, we risk losing the substance and historical dimension of interculturality. Even more, by conceptual definition we might reduce interculturality to an object of scientific study, as something placed there in front of us. In this case, we are following the logic of dualism, based on separation of the object, which is reduced to something external in front

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[10] Ibid., 186ff.

[11] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie, Concordia Reihe Monographien, Bd. 37 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004), 19-21.

of us, and the subject observing the object. By following this logic, we risk reducing interculturality to something objective, upon which we reflect from a certain distance. Consequently the cultural practices and daily life of concrete people in a certain culture become objects of our observations and knowledge; the same knowledge becomes at the same time an impediment for our comprehension of what is central to that culture.

No wonder why Fornet-Betancourt approaches the definition of interculturality with caution. If we get stuck in subject-object logic, the observed reality escapes an adequate understanding. Whatever definition of interculturality we choose, it cannot be understood as the final definition, but as the starting point of our common conversation about what "intercultural" might mean from our perspective as well as from the perspective of the interlocutor. Our search of the meaning of intercultural should be much more than an exchange of different concepts and theories on interculturality. Our search for the meaning of interculturality is not something that takes place outside us; a process that first takes place within us, starting with our struggle to define the meaning of interculturality. This struggle transforms our comprehension of ourselves first, and then, our understanding of others. In other words, our search of the meaning of interculturality is a process of the construction of interculturality.

To be more specific, Fornet-Betancourt describes his definition of interculturality as a definition of contrasts,[12] which as its starting point suggests a dialogical understanding with other cultures. Following this idea, he sees the term of interculturality as a methodology that allows us to study, describe and analyze the dynamic interaction between different cultures. It is a process of real life, or a form of conscientious life based on an ethical position in favor of conviviality with differences. Such a methodology can consequently become a political project, as an alternative to the present asymmetrical distribution of world powers, as well as a cultural project based on a reciprocal recognition.[13]

In other words, Fornet-Betancourt's interculturality cannot be understood in a narrow conceptual way. His reflection on interculturality is far from a comparative study of different cultural positions. Fornet-Betancourt presupposes that no culture, as well as any philosophical reflection, is complete in itself. This basic insight calls for a dialogue. A culture, when aware of its limitations, is willing to share its wisdom and richness with other cultures, on the one side, and on the other, does not look for imposition of its own ideas over the others. Fornet-Betancourt's understanding of interculturality is basically a description of an attitude of how to encounter and deal with other people and their way of thinking, living

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[12] Ibid., 12.
[13] Ibid., 13.

and practice. A beneficial encounter leads to a mutual correction and enrichment of the present practices.[14]

Philosophy of Interculturality

One might say that this kind of philosophy is as old as philosophy itself, if we consider the fact that philosophers in different times and traditions looked for an answer to the question of how to live with foreigners. With Fornet-Betancourt, however, the philosophy of interculturality reaches new dimensions. Philosophy as such should not be an abstract science dealing with imaginary problems; rather it has to reflect about the challenges of its time in an authentic and engaged way, or more specifically, it should take care of people who coexist and struggle to find a better way of living together. Authenticity and engagement in this case do not mean an outside creation of a new theory and its imposition upon people; rather they mean to take care of people's real life, especially of their precarious, helpless life and life of necessities; and means to reflect seriously about the disadvantaged lives of those who have been humiliated in society.[15] Such engagement is based on the condition that we are willing to assume interculturality as a life and thinking position, which will most probably upset the thinking habits of our present monocultural socialization and learning processes.[16]

Even though Fornet-Betancourt belongs to the group of Western philosophers, it does not mean that his philosophy of interculturality is limited to the Western hemisphere. Every culture, tradition, religion, or continent is in our time of globalization facing the challenges of how to integrate the other or the foreign into one's world of living. Thus, we can talk about intercultural philosophy in Africa, Asia, the Arab world, Latin America, Europe, or in countries, like Canada, the United States, or China.[17]

Every form of philosophical thinking is always contextual, i.e., dealing with the life of real people living in a certain community. Contextual thinking is the fundamental and constitutive moment of philosophical thinking, based on thinking with people in a certain situation but not

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[14] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Unterwegs zu einer interkulturellen Philosophie*, Dokumentation des II Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie, Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1998), 8.

[15] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 21-22.

[16] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Interaction and Asymmetry between Cultures in the Context of Globalization*, Documentation of the IV International Congress on Intercultural Philosophy (Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität), Bd. 15 (Frankfurt, 2002), 30.

[17] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *Zur Geschichte und Entwicklung der Interkulturellen Philosophie*, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Inter-kulturalität, Bd. 39 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2015).

simply for people. Such thinking is complex and dynamic, involving a critique of the present cultural, social, economic, political, religious and academic practices through which people try to justify their life's aspirations. In addition, contextual thinking reexamines the so-called ideals of modern society, such as ideas of autonomy, the primacy of individual freedom, disenchantment of the world and human being, individualism, etc. If we inherited these ideas from the previous generations of philosophical thinking, maybe it is time now to correct and complement them with ideals of responsibility, community and gratitude.[18]

Is Western philosophy ready for a philosophical paradigm primarily based on coexistence and dialogue in, with and from different cultural worlds? Fornet-Betancourt supports his affirmative answer with an overview of different directions of the postmodern philosophical thought within the European context.[19] These directions are, in Fornet-Betancourt's reflection, expressions of the *Zeitgeist*, indicating surging emergencies and explications of a new horizon of thinking and acting. The philosophy of interculturality reads these expressions as the steps towards a dialogue between different paradigms of thinking and creation of a new way of coexistence. There is a group of European philosophers (Wilhelm Dilthey, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger) who try to comprehend and transcend the central pillars and coordinates of modernity. The second group is engaged in the so-called linguistic turn, or reconstruction of our understanding of discursive or communicative reason (Karl-Otto Apel, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas). New understanding of communicative reason stresses the importance of necessity of differences and universality, which in Fornet-Betancourt's eyes leads to construction of a new paradigm of dialogue between different traditions. The third group of philosophers features Paul Ricoeur with his narrative, interpretation and opening to the others. This group includes also an action toward balance of justice and love, and reaffirmation of the human person as the best horizon for philosophical argumentation. As the fourth group, Fornet-Betancourt refers to Xavier Zubiri and his dialogue with other grand traditions from our past, as well as to Edmund Husserl with his phenomenology and "return to the things themselves." The next group presents Emmanuel Levinas with the question, "what did you do to your brother?," calling us to a new freedom of responsibility. The sixth group includes the authors of critical theories in the area of aesthetics, communication, music, and politics, whose common denominator is a critique of capitalist mentality and society based on sensations. The seventh group represents those who are thinking about the construction of new political and cultural unities, such as European Union, which includes also

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[18] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 23.
[19] Ibid., 31-34.

the integration of strangers and immigrants. The last group presents the philosophy of Raimon Panikkar with his emphasis on intercultural reorientation.

Fornet-Betancourt does not pretend to suggest an exhaustive list of philosophers; his list is rather an attempt to find some "seeds" in Western philosophical tradition, in order to introduce new dimensions within the philosophy of interculturality. Fornet-Betancourt suggests a similar list for Latin-American philosophy, which is again conditioned by its own contextuality, and at the same time nurturing ideas, appropriated for philosophy of interculturality.[20] There is no doubt that similar lists can be made for philosophy on other continents, always respecting their contextual frameworks as well as their openness to something transcending their contextuality.

Why do we need a reorientation of philosophy based on interculturality? Interculturality is nowadays a fact, not a possibility. It challenges us to construct a humanity of peaceful coexistence and universal solidarity, which overcomes dissimilarities and asymmetries, and creates a culture of political, economic and cultural equilibrium. The reorientation of philosophy, with its goal to create a peaceful coexistence, has to face the primary and most fundamental option, which is realization of justice through eradication of inhuman poverty. This option is not just one among many other options; this is the only option, which should reorient our hermeneutics, politics, metaphysics, ethics, liberation, feminism and other fields of reflection and action.[21] Such a reorientation has to keep in mind the intercultural dimensions of dialogue and its contextualization, i.e., specificity of time and place of the persons in the dialogue. In other words, the intercultural reorientation of philosophy calls for an open dialogue between different philosophies, contexts and human universes in view of the creation of new possibilities to make our world a better place.

For this reason, intercultural philosophy is not a philosophy of dialogue, but a dialogue of philosophies in, with and from different cultural worlds. Intercultural philosophy is a philosophy through which the entire humanity looks for a solidary realization of the humane in each human being. The contextual and cultural diversity of humanity should be seen as the source of an immense richness and undiscovered human potential, not the reason for separation, limitation and domination.

Such reorientation of philosophy will not take place by itself or by chance. It will happen if we learn anew how to teach philosophy, i.e., how to establish a new contextual and innovative relation with philosophical traditions. This will lead us not only to a deeper conceptual knowledge of our past, but also to an appropriation of our past and consequently to a

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[20] Ibid., 35-39.
[21] Ibid., 41.

transformation of ourselves in the present.[22] The history of philosophy should not be considered a museum of untouchable ideas, but an open space of different philosophical traditions, calling us to "touch" them anew. Once familiar with the ideas of different traditions, we need to establish a relationship with them that introduces a new path of argumentation, interpretation and design of reality. This approach should not be limited to a simple paraphrasing of their ideas; philosophy has to become a process of appropriation of their ideas in our time. This appropriation can take place only in our present time. We, here and now, are in front of a historical project which takes place through us in our time. This is a project of liberation and creation of a humanity that is more humane, better coexisting and in a deeper solidarity.

This entire process of teaching and studying philosophy is at the same time a process of contextualization. As philosophers, we always belong to a certain space, time or context, which condition and permeate our present reflection. Correspondingly, even our teaching of philosophy always remains contextualized and conditioned by our time, history and daily life. Philosophy, as well as philosophers or human beings in general, should not be considered as abstract entities transcending temporal and special frameworks; but always belong to some spatial temporal coordinates. Consequently, awareness of the context in our teaching of philosophy is the primordial principle of the entire process of the appropriation of philosophical teaching. It follows that contextualization as such represents the remedy for the chronic infirmity of certain types of philosophical studies in our time, in which we are able to read entire libraries of new ideas, sometimes even in different languages, but unable to comprehend the present time and space. Even more, the process of contextualization and appropriation is a process of formation of humans in a way that they become deeply aware of their belonging to their community, tradition and contextual framework. The same awareness will open them to novelties and the creation of something new.

On the one side our teaching of philosophy pays attention to human belonging to the local contextual reality, on the other side we need to take into consideration the context of globalization that requires from us a completely new process of contextualization. Fornet-Betancourt calls this "re-contextualization" of the present study program and traditional ways of studying interculturality. To reach this goal, Fornet-Betancourt challenges the present academic institutions, especially the faculty of philosophy,

(1) to cease to be the centers of westernization;

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[22] Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 51.

(2) to find a new way of teaching how to be competent in interculturality;

(3) to help students confront not only a given text but first of all their own contexts;

(4) to reformulate the ideal of education as the formation of the human person interculturally;

(5) and last but not least that the so-called intercultural study programs and research projects should not be measured with the paradigm of "modernization" of peoples and cultures, but as an instrument for the universal or cosmic humanization of human beings.[23]

Philosophy of Interculturality in Search of Human Beings

Philosophy of interculturality is not an end in itself, serving only to the professionals of philosophy; its goal is to serve the world.

> We want to transform philosophy interculturally because we believe that it could and should help to transform the historical world of human beings of today.[24]

This philosophy with its intention to transform our world leads us to find the meaning of primordial wisdom anew. This will refresh our understanding of who we are as humans, and what practices make us humans more humane. Besides philosophy, theology in the 21st century should follow a similar path.[25]

Following this logic, Fornet-Betancourt's philosophy of interculturality is essentially an ethical project with an appealing demand of "taking care of" others. Interculturality with its goal of building a peaceful coexistence and conviviality among different nations and individuals calls us to a proactive engagement with people's real life challenges, especially of those whose life is seriously disadvantaged and impoverished due to the globalization process, because such a process has been primarily ruled by trade and economy of financially stronger companies and nations. Fornet-Betancourt describes this type of globalization as follows:

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[23] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Interculturality, Gender and Education; Interkulturalität, Gender und Bildung; Interculturalidad, Género y Educación; Interculturalité, Genre et Éducation*, Dokumentation des V Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 19 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004b), 19-20.

[24] Fornet-Betancourt, *Interaction and Asymmetry between Cultures in the Context of Globalization*, 30.

[25] Raúl Fornet Betancourt, ed., *Theologie im III. Millennium – Quo vadis?*, *Antworten der Theologen. Dokumentation einer Weltumfrage*, Denktradition im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 7 (Frankfurt am Main: 2000b).

> Forget what you know, forget your memory, forget your con-
> textual knowledge, break with your 'tradition' and your 'capac-
> ities', and learn everything anew in the school of modernity and
> under the guidance of an omniscient teacher: the market.[26]

In opposition to the humanity based on the principles of economic globalization and hegemony, Fornet-Betancourt talks about humanity in terms of "universality without a signature."[27] Such universality grows as a consciousness of solidarity between differences, which mutually recognize, respect, correct and transform each other. This consciousness is aware that to be universal means to share and give up the idea of possessing or controlling the entire process as their own property. This can be symbolically expressed as to put one's own "signature" under the entire process as the sign of their own propriety.

To these two steps, namely, the ethical appeal to take care of the disadvantaged and to become aware of universal awareness, Fornet-Betancourt adds the third one, i.e., the crucial role of religion.[28] There is no religion without a culture, and every form of interreligious dialogue takes place within intercultural dialogue. It is true that generally speaking religion as such transcends the boundaries of a certain culture, nation, tradition, or race. Because of this, religions represent a force of unification and harmonization between different cultures and nations. At the same time, it is true also that religions cannot live, be practiced, communicate, or be in dialogue with other religious identities without mediations of culture. When we talk about religions, cultures and different traditions, we talk about references for one's identification, which provide us foundation, reasons and meaning for their life. These foundations offer orientation and direction for our creation of history. Without them, humans would fall in universal arbitrariness, as this is the case of those in favor of extreme relativism and moral neutrality. By knowing our own foundational values and principles first, we can enter in a dialogical relation with other religious and cultural traditions.[29]

Interculturality and interreligious dialogue are, therefore, intrinsically connected. The former with its peaceful and enriching dynamic between different religious traditions can help religious traditions and religious identities reshape their mono-cultural frames, in which they seem

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[26] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 73.

[27] Ibid., 74.

[28] Ibid., 94.

[29] Cf. Erika Prijatelj, "Religija, posebno krščanstvo, v dialogu s kulturami in drugimi religijami" (Religion, especially Christianity, in Dialogue with Cultures and Other Religions), *Bogoslovni vestnik, Theological Quarterly, Glasilo Teološke fakultete v Ljubljani* 77, no. 2 (2017): 309.

to be locked. While the latter can provide a new orientation for intercultural dialogue, especially in those cases when two or more cultures are struggling to recover and create liberating memories. This is another point where Fornet-Betancourt refers to the religious memories of the poor and those who are humiliated in the world. It is not possible to work for human coexistence and peace without deciding to work for and with the poor as the light for our cultural and social transformation.[30]

The goal of the philosophy of interculturality, with dialogue as its main principle, is to "interculturize" the question concerning the human being, i.e., the search for new horizons facing the task of humanization of the human being, or the universalization of what is human in each human being and in cultures of humanity. This is an uncertain, uncontrollable but very hopeful search, in which the finite and contingent *condition humana* enters in dialogue with the Infinite to realize its potential humanity.[31]

From here we can understand why Fornet-Betancourt's philosophy of interculturality is basically a critique of multiculturalism, transculturality and the understanding of cultural and religious differences in terms of violence.[32] "Multiculturalism" is a term that describes a factual reality of presence of different cultures in a given society. This term presents one of the key principles in liberal political strategies that try to keep an asymmetry of power between different cultures by preaching respect for cultural and religious differences. Advocates of the multicultural rhetoric like to overemphasize the importance of respect, tolerance, indifference and fragmentation of cultural, linguistic, religious and traditional differences, on which a hegemonic cultural order should be established. Such understanding of multiculturalism with its imposition of freedom as the grounding principle of a new social order is very limited and one-sided.

In Fornet-Betancourt's reflection, multiculturalism is an expression of a semi-colonialist ideology which is consecrating the dominant culture (Western) as a meta-culture, which benevolently grants some space to other cultures. The same dominant ideology claims that cultural and religious institutions are the origin of violence and tension between cultures and religions. Simultaneously this ideology forgets its instrumental use of different cultures and religions for creation of a capitalist hegemonic order.

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[30] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 103.

[31] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., "Gutes Leben als Humanisiertes Leben. Vorstellungen vom Guten Leben in den Kulturen und ihre Bedeutung für Politik und Gesellschaft Heute" (Good Life as Humanized Life. Concepts of Good Life in Different Cultures and their Meaning for Politics and Societies Today), in *La Vida Buena como Vida Humanizante. Concepciones de la Vida Buena en las Culturas y Sus Consecuencas para la Política y la Sociedad hoy en Día*, Dokumentation des VIII Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 30 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2010), 26.

[32] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 98-99.

Interculturality is also different from transculturality, or the post-modern idea that every individual can simply build their identity by following their taste or personal preferences, and for as long as they wish. Transculturality is based on two principles: first, members of a society are completely autonomous, and second, they are able to move from one culture to another. Interculturality does not negate these two principles, but integrates them in a different way. The differences between cultures should not be seen as different independent units, but as the moments of meeting, solidarity and support, which we need to cultivate in view of a peaceful coexistence. If transculturality likes the idea that different cultures look alike, interculturality prefers working for a pluralistic world of differences in interactive relationship.

Interculturality points to communication and qualitative mutual interaction between cultures and traditions. This is much more than a simple factual coexistence of different cultures in the same space, as propagated by multiculturalism and transculturality. At this point, let us be even more specific. Coexistence as such is not an added dimension to human life; it is the factual foundation for human existence and any type of agreement between humans. How do we give meaning to this coexistence? How do we establish the conditions that can make possible a transformation from coexistence to a space of conviviality? Conviviality in this case presents a horizon of the practice of "agape-love" as practiced in the primitive Christian communities.[33]

To summarize, the goal of interculturality is the hope and creation of peace as the alternative to violence, especially to the violence of neoliberal globalization, which is in Fornet-Betancourt's eyes forgetting and neglecting the importance of the contextuality of our lives. Intercultural philosophy, with peace as its primary goal, is an expression of our hope that all cultures can contribute knowledge on how to live together in equilibrium of the intercultural world.

Our efforts to reach new levels of peace can be summarized with Fornet-Betancourt's "change towards a world with spirit," based on the triad "justice, knowledge, and spirituality."[34] The most important in this

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[33] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., "Das menschliche Zusammenleben: Probleme und Möglichkeiten in der heutigen Welt. Eine interkulturelle Annäherung" (Living Together: Problems and Possibilities in Today's World. An Intercultural Approximation), in *La convivencia humana: Problemas y posibilidades en el mundo actual. Una aproximación intercultural*, Dokumentation des IX Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie. Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 32 (Mainz: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011), 29-30.

[34] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Gerechtigkeit, Erkenntnis und Spiritualität; Justice, Knowledge and Spirituality; Justica, Conocimiento y Espiritualidad*, Dokumentation des XVII Internationalen Seminars des Dialogprogramms NordSüd, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und Interkulturalität, Bd. 38 (Mainz, 2014), 18-19.

triad is spirituality, which does not suggest a Neo-Platonic or esoteric understanding of spirituality, nor an egoistic escape from the world. Spirituality in Fornet-Betancourt's reflection refers us to a critical experience that makes an individual or a community guard against any kind of instrumentalization or transformation of our life relationship into an object. Our study of different traditions of spirituality should offer us a new platform for liberty for all human beings and a better understanding of what is threatening us, which leads us to a deeper understanding of justice. Our present understanding of justice is according to Fornet-Betancourt, narrowly conditioned with a hegemonic knowledge supported by an epistemology based on a capital system, which within the framework of globalization devalues the reality of life and different ways of living. The same hegemony struggles to integrate spirituality into the process of human knowing because spirituality cannot be reduced to things submitted to the laws of the market. As a solution, Fornet-Betancourt suggests that raising the spiritual knowledge of humanity will enable us to break the prevailing epistemic totalitarianism and reverse the course of history with a spiritual renewal, which cannot be predicted, but can become a sign of our hope.[35]

To achieve this goal, abstract philosophizing is not sufficient, something else has to be done. Following this logic, Fornet-Betancourt's philosophy of interculturality can be seen as a continuation of so-called "popular philosophy," i.e., a movement among German philosophers in the 18th century, which emerged as a reaction against philosophy taught in the academic world and universities at that time. They sought to use the scientific method to solve real problems of people and challenges of their time. This popular philosophy wanted to act in a way that its intervention would change the conditions of the world, without treating the people as minors.[36]

As a limit to Fornet-Betancourt's reflection, one might say that this reflection remains on the level of general inquiry lacking any normative guidelines or confrontation with some urgent intercultural challenges, such as fundamentalism, especially religious fundamentalism. How can intercultural ethics help us solve intercultural tension and wars and eradicate poverty?[37] Fornet-Betancourt's intention is not to provide us with new guidelines but to elaborate new perspectives for a new methodology, as well as new hermeneutics.[38] These perspectives are primordially based on the options for the poor as understood within the theology of liberation.

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[35] Ibid., 20.

[36] Fornet-Betancourt, *Filosofar para nuestro tiempo en clave intercultural*, 115-128.

[37] Gregor Paul, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Philosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), 121.

[38] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Befreiungstheologie: Kritischer Rückblick und Perspektiven für die Zukunft, Kritische Auswertung und neue Herausforderungen* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1997), 379-380.

The same perspectives, however, provide us not only a new methodology and hermeneutics, but first of all with a new anthropology for our endeavor to become more human within the context of globalization.[39]

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[39] Cf. Elisabeth Steffens and Annette Meuthrath, eds., *Utopia hat einen Ort. Beiträge für eine interkulturelle Welt aus vier Kontinenten. Festschrift für Raúl Fornet-Betancourt* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2006).

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5.

The Human Being as a
Moral Culture Consumer

CARMEN COZMA

"I am and I create myself, therefore I consume" rather than
"I consume, therefore I exist"

Could "consuming" be the main interest of the contemporary wo/
man? Is nothing else of interest? If we admitted an outright "yes" reply,
then perhaps it is necessary to ask "what" is the object of consumption,
paying attention to the human actor in its integrality and, by priority, in
its potential to manifest as a creative be(com)ing. Could commodities be
the only things that count?

In a world permeated by consumerism, in which too often we face
the cliché "I consume, therefore I exist," it could be appropriate to ap-
proach this catchline in its circularity, to bring to the foreground and em-
phasize the reverse formulation: "I am and I create myself, therefore I
consume." Thus, we could avoid being labeled as units of consumption,
trapped in the phenomenon of buying more and more, spending on and
accumulating stuff, and risking to transform ourselves from consumers to
consumed ones in the end. If consumerism has become a way of life, then
why not explore it in its entirety, also considering that the wo/man of now-
adays could very well consume everything not only on the materialistic
level, but on the spiritual and intrinsically moral one as well.

In fact, we could better explore and use our responsible status in the
context of such a dominant social and cultural actuality that is consumer-
ism, revealing ourselves as awakened beings endowed with moral voca-
tion (among other features). In this horizon, each of us – defined by
Jankélévitch[1] as "moral subjects" living "in a universal way" – has to
firstly take care of the peculiar *human* self-creation and self-fulfillment in
the course of life.

"Consuming" moral Culture:
A Right and Obligation of the Contemporary Human Being

Living in the ever-increasing "picture" of the 21st century excessive
culture of materialistic consumption. Materialistic consumption, attempt
to create "a market globalism" and the "spread of consumerist values

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[1] Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Le paradoxe de la morale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981).

around the world" which emerged in the 1990s with its "global imaginary" coined by Manfred Steger[2] to stress the idea of consciousness of belonging to a global community. We choose to raise awareness on the fact that even though it would appear to be somehow just an obligation, consuming moral culture is essentially a right of *human* self-creating and fulfilling at the personhood and community levels. Not everything or, fairly, not that which is the most important to living a human life stands to be valued by a response to the frequent question: How much does it cost?

While admitting, for example, a slogan made by the pop artist Barbara Kruger: "I shop therefore I am," we should try to seriously question: OK, I shop. But namely what? As consumers we are able to manifest ourselves not just as carriers of a financial consuming organ for material comfort, but also as beings interested in spiritual things and activities. "I shop" also engages to drawing upon – even at first glance *à outrance* – education and self-education especially in terms of moral payoff, which is something of utmost importance regardless of particularities of a certain time. Undoubtedly, it is not about what we can valuate for nothing else than money, as in the question: "What is the price of love?" If the answer were: "Not a penny," it would not mean that we do not value love. We do not wonder whether something valuable is or is not at stake. Unquestionably, there are *values* impossible to be converted to money; and the case of love is a good example in this respect.

It is certain that not everything is in connection with financial transaction(s). Taking the example mentioned above, we know that *love is not for sale; love is free*, a truth that does not lead to a bitter and perhaps amused conclusion that we would not value love. On the contrary, it leads to the fact that many things and experiences are priceless. As the *moral* beingness-in-becoming *is* to be understood, the *homo ethicus* ascertained as *homo moralis*, resounds with the Greek *ethikos* and with *ta ethika* (study of *morals*) as Aristotle acknowledged it in its core.

Such a stance implies to transcend the image of *homo economicus* centered on the *utility* commonly resumed to a satisfaction obtained by the orientation towards the consumption of material goods and the accumulation of financial capital, and it should go further by not forgetting that the rational and intuitive, the praxico-pragmatic and poietico-poiematic structured unity of the human *creative* – actual and virtual – condition, aiming towards "happiness" forever, belongs to an integral and dynamic comprehension of *homo sapiens*. In turn, this "name" articulates, by priority, a fascinating insight into the power of gaining theoretical and

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[2] Manfred B. Steger, *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

practical wisdom (the Latin *sapientia*) in life, which is intimately connected – *inter alia* – to the grasp of the ethical meaning of "utility" as "the greatest happiness principle" according to John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* (1863).

It comes as no surprise that we live in a "new age consumerism," in a mass-produced culture:

> Consumption has become our model for dissent, our model for freedom, our model for political activity. All alternatives to consumer culture – the simple life, the spiritual, the traditional, the local – become variant consumer fantasies. Consumption is a social problem and it is offered as its own solution.[3]

A new *ethos*, linked to the impulses of a consumer culture, emerges with "the consumer as sovereign and as dupe" alike.[4] According to Goodman and Cohen,[5] there are inevitable contradictions in the "global consumer culture" On the one hand, "the consumer is the sovereign director of globalizing consumer culture" and, on the other hand, the same consumer is not at all free, seeing that s/he is subjected to the temptation of an increased consumption highly promoted and artificially maintained by an invasive advertising that induces desires for unnecessary stuff. Hence "it is clear that people are not making completely free choices about goods."[6]

We must recognize that it is all about an "ethos" void of moral and spiritual substance, which is associated with a sort of alienation from the very own *human*. Behind the present urge to consume for living with "much fun and excitement," there is a "little joy in the midst of plenty" showing signs of loneliness, anxiety and depression, an "inner vacuity…because life in some way doesn't make sense."[7]

Carefully observing our close proximity, we identify a critical situation marked by the risk of becoming what Alessandro Baricco[8] names "barbarians" or "predators with no culture or history" who "invented the horizontal man" with a pronounced orientation towards sur-faces, simplicity and simultaneity rather than depths, complexity and singularity, surfing the waves of profound thinking and experience. Somehow, the

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[3] Douglas J. Goodman and Mirelle Cohen, *Consumer Culture: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 70.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 64-65,

[6] Richard Wilk, "Consumer Goods as Dialogue about Development," *Culture and History* 7 (1994): 79-100.

[7] Erich Fromm, *On Disobedience and Other Essays* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981).

[8] Alessandro Baricco, *The Barbarians: An Essay on the Mutation of Culture*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (New York: Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2013).

contemporary wo/man endangers her/his being by self-plundering its own humanity, eventually weakening the creative impetus – firstly concerning the human moral self-fulfillment.

Only as a sovereign person, in freedom, respect and dignity, the human self-creation is to be designed. And it claims the moral law to bear upon human improvement. Thus, people would be able to reach the Kantian ideal of "ends in themselves," following the categorical imperative in the "formula of humanity":

> So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.[9]

On this account we try to point out that "consuming moral culture" represents a right and an obligation of an authentic free wo/man able to self-create by seeking *self-fulfillment* in its individual and social dimensions, which – by both "aspiration-fulfillment" and "capacity-fulfillment" modes – means, in fact, "to seek for a good human life."[10] Representing the "actualization of potentialities," self-fulfillment contributes to the intrinsic value of human life. The complete apprehension of the actualization of human potentialities that the ideal of self-fulfillment requires is impossible without holding the significance of morality as a central aim of what wo/man can and should aspire towards, and do in a constructive/creative way. According to Alan Gewirth, the achievement of self-fulfillment is related to three kinds of moralities: universalist, personalist, and particularist.[11] Beyond these, we have to understand the importance of building our lives by identifying and getting together our triangular *human* reference of becoming: to ourselves, to our peers, and to transcendence.

In the present-day circumstances, we have to deal with what has been imposed as "the consumer-style of living," but why would we not think and manage to reach the thorough contents, not merely as regards material values, amusement and appearances of things (generally speaking), but also the spiritual ones, the work and the essences of the latter. We should look for authenticity and disclose what really matters for the development of human potentialities and, thus, for the general advance, instead of making illusion(s) and deceiving ourselves over a spurious image of commercialization.

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[9] Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, *Întemeierea metafizicii moravurilor*, trans. Nicolae Bagdasar (Bucharest: IRI Press, 1995), 238.

[10] Alan Gewirth, *Self-Fulfillment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[11] Ibid., 59-157.

Indeed, we need to become more aware of the damaging approach that everything would be for sale which affects almost each aspect of our life. There are "moral limits of markets" as Michael Sandel rightfully draws our attention: It is coming into sight that during the past decades we reached to live in "an era of market triumphalism" when "almost everything can be bought and sold….We did not arrive at this condition through any deliberate choice. It is almost as if it came upon us."[12]

Now it is time to earnestly doubt about and to enact a clear consciousness that "markets are the primary means for achieving the public good" because they "have become detached from morals and we need somehow to reconnect them…we need to think through the moral limits of markets."[13]

It is time to worry "that we are moving toward a society in which everything is up for sale" because not only is the "inequality and corruption"[14] are obviously destroying the chances for a *fair polis* – speaking in terms of Plato's *Republic* – but also shaping a certain mentality and unfolding an education are claimed by the veritable *human beingness-in-becoming*. The primacy of the vital interest is to reveal and develop the good moral character as "human excellence," respectively the "excellence of soul"[15] on which, eventually, it is possible to build a life worth living. This is basically what we can and must do. We may find from wise teachings the beginnings of the moral philosophy, to structure our endeavor in a deep understanding of the importance to continuously elevate ourselves in the proximity of the "ideal soul." This is much needed for a good life as individuals and society likewise; much more sensitively being concerned with the common good sharing a common life overall.

There is an insidious contagion of consumerism which claims a measured prevention, seeing that some people spend a lot of time, energy and money to obtain goods and leisure services not because they need them, but just because they "have to have," in a compulsive manner of behavior: part of the people have already become

> enmeshed in the process of acquisition – shopping – and take some of their identity from a procession of new items that they buy and exhibit.[16]

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[12] Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (New York: Farrar. Straus and Giroux), 5-6.

[13] Ibid., 6-7.

[14] Ibid., 8.

[15] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Etica Nicomahică*), trans. Stella Petecel (Bucharest: Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1988), I. 1102a13-20.

[16] Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 2nd Edition, vii.

What happens, in these conditions, with the responsibility of *be(com)ing* in a creative *human* manner? To not lose it, a cue response is to pay more attention to the attempt of registering and activating ourselves in this world by a particular gained knowledge, by understanding and using the offer of moral philosophy that enlightens us as a safe helm in having life worth living. And we try to, take the moral culture, valuing and sharing it out of the fact that "everything and almost everybody" seem to be "for sale." At stake is something really priceless, which is impossible to be measured by money or traded in markets: namely, our *moral identity* to be revealed in a continuous process of building and strengthening that, accordingly, sustains the human struggle to give meaning to life. Acquiring the inner beauty and goodness, amplifying and deepening them cannot ever be for sale. We just need to realize their great significance and work for making them actual defining human qualities.

Being really interested in "the good of things," and pursuing happiness or human flourishing as the overall goal in life. It is only by free will and reason that one is able to achieve the aim s/he wishes, without dependence on external circumstances, but rather the inner sources. This is a precious teaching we find in Aristotelian ethics, for example, which guide towards the importance of developing a strong character and demonstrates the capacity of choosing to act virtuously. In fact, it raises the old matter to be traced within "the choice of Heracles" accounted by Prodicus of Ceos: Coming to a crossroad which, at a point, challenges us to deliberate in the course of life, what path is to be taken? It is not the easy one but, meditating on the long-term benefits, the way to opt for certainly appears to be that of Virtue/*Arete*; just because following this way, happiness or wellbeing which become possible through *self-realization*. "You are the one who possesses the power to realize the complete happiness."[17]

Attaining the chief happiness or wellbeing needs freedom as autonomy but not independence because freedom gives authentic individuality.[18] This supposes "deliberation, which precedes and determines choice that is an act of the rational wo/man."[19] And what is the most important – because, according to Aristotle, is that the rule is

> to deliberate not as regards the aim but the means…It is the rational one, who deliberates over the possible and measures in making choices that best serve not only the individual but likewise the community.[20]

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[17] Prodicus, paraphrased in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, 2.1.21.
[18] Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *Omul ca libertate la vechii greci* (*Human Being as Liberty in the Ancient Greeks Philosophy*) (Bucharest: Bucharest University Press, 2014), 113.
[19] Ibid., 112.
[20] Ibid., 113.

If we are truly concerned with "the good of wo/man," and the *human profit* – of which we, each of us and also the (global) community, are in need, then we should consistently learn from the moral culture, starting with the ancient philosophers. Nothing is too much, as effort, to learn to conquer and grow the status of free and responsible creatures in this world, who are endowed with reason, will and sensibility, no less with proper skills to act for what makes the good life, for health and safety. Eventually, we consolidate a constructive and affirmative style of living as *conscious consumers of moral culture*; not losing the most precious "possession" we are the carriers of that which makes our very own identity in its greatness beyond the fragility of our finite being, and with which we have to relentlessly strive for the *spirit* that give and sustains life for human beingness-in-becoming.

Like the legendary hero Heracles at the crossroads, it is time to insert in the existential first-plane and to expand the potential of choosing to be(come) moral culture consumer(s). This is our duty. For *humanity* we claim is at the heart of our life. It is time to remind, in an emphasized manner, that as humans we are chiefly meant for making progress in moral life. Here comes to our creative condition: to inquire about our status within the whole existential plan, to train up character strengths and virtues, to perform as keepers and developers of morality in a world adrift, which is in search for a valuable direction in progression.

In the context where consumerism became a kind of virtue, we are troubled with the decline in moral values and the loss of moral sensitivity, with the lack of identity and of the meaning of life, in a "society of the spectacle," as Guy Debord named it in 1970s our society accompanied by such threats as: "degradation of human life," not "living" but only "having," "unity and division within appearances"; "commodity fetishism" and social alienation; cultural homogenization due to mass media oriented toward "spectacular images and language"; easy pleasures of mass-produced culture and marketing, a society driven by consumer culture and a media landscape hit by digital technologies with many images, of the so-called "*tabloid realism* in contemporary international politics and culture" that gives "glamorous stories, scandals, exceptional events" as "entertainment" in fact, nothing new.[21] All of these are fundamentally altered by the power of advertisement that sells commodities and distraction, the *moral culture* is a chance for us.

Getting into contact with and appropriating moral culture help us, even while admitting the status of the so trendy "recreational shopper" position as one who shops for pleasure, to experience the value of pleasure in its ethical meaning as well. Once again, the Ancients give us points of

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[21] François Debrix, *Tabloid Terror: War, Culture, and Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 2008), 47.

reference. Aristotle, for example, discussed the issue in his *Nicomachean Ethics*[22] about the person of good character. The Stagirite used to highly value the spiritual pleasures such as freedom from tension and anxiety, moderation, wisdom, tranquility, devotion, friendship, etc. that are needed in order to attain happiness/*eudaimonia*, as the "highest good" for human being.[23]

In the Hellenistic period, the types of pleasure Epicurus distinguished are more than useful today. Being tied closely to satisfying our desires, the "moving" and "static" pleasures on the one hand, and the physical and mental pleasures on the other hand deserve to be appreciated by balancing our "natural and necessary desires" that we can fulfill. To banish the addiction of "natural but non-necessary" and especially the "vain and empty" desires, bring us much more pain and, finally, the loss of wellbeing or happiness.[24]

The Moral Problem of Wo/man
in a Materialistic Consumerist World

Consumption, in its modality that has exploded since the late 1950s, has become a serious problem of present times by showing more undesired facets for the entire life on the Earth. Focusing on the human condition that is profoundly touched by the characteristics of a consumer who almost has an obsession with material wealth, we appreciate that the "status of consumer" itself needs to change in the advantage of humanity development. For this, our call for knowing, appropriating and practicing moral culture, for the affirmation of human being as a *moral culture consumer*, is firmly expressed.

The use of the phrase *homo ethicus* is thus synchronized with *homo moralis*, turning to the original meaning of the Greek *ethos* translated by the Latin *mos, moris*, which highlights the value of the moral character. We refer to *homo ethicus* as an ethical and a moral agent alike, knowing that "ethics without moral is an empty word, and moral in itself is blind."[25]

Prior to any considerations, wo/man – also as an eternal consumer – is "the active bearer of her/his own forces and riches."[26] Humans drift between the "having" and "being" modes of existence within "a society of notoriously unhappy people." Instead of cultivating and becoming imbued

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[22] Book X.

[23] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a15.

[24] Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (*Despre viețile și doctrinele filosofilor*), trans. C.I. Balmuș (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Press, 1963).

[25] Vlăduțescu, *Omul ca libertate la vechii greci*, 233.

[26] Erich Fromm, *On Being Human* (New York and London: Continuum, ([1972], 2005), 34.

with the quality of aliveness, they grapple with loneliness and anxiety, dependence, depression and self-destruction.[27] To not completely fail in an "unhappy" meaningless living, we could orientate ourselves towards the moral power with which we are endowed. It is time to turn ourselves more into consumer(s)-subject(s) regaining consciousness and appraising spirituality, challenging and achieving the *homo ethicus* position in this world.

Some questions arise: What can ethics (or moral philosophy) do at the critical point of the consumerist identity we have arrived at? What things are really important but are just ignored? Why is it worth to obstinately search for our spiritual capacities and inclinations? How should we look for satisfaction, even happiness, for autonomy, creative uniqueness, by developing the moral sense of identity, and further appreciating the moral sense of the other(s) within the intercultural encounters? Why would we stop trying to compensate for spiritual weaknesses by acquiring all kind of stuff even though not necessary, and eventually not satisfactory at all? Of course, many other similar interrogations can be formulated.

The response/s can be found in the framework of a generous philosophical teaching unfolded over centuries. Through the moral culture, in its axiological and normative coordinates, no less in its theoretical and practical operationalization, we might give up illusions and a chance to (re)discover moral strengths and virtues as a lasting foundation for the quality of our life, for personal and social wellbeing, for the so much desired happiness.

We really need to value and implement ethical values and principles, such as: kindness, moderation, integrity, responsibility, care and compassion, mutual respect, wisdom, love, etc. For these, it is not money, but education that has the main role. Nonmaterial things cannot be something for sale. They cannot enter our life by letting us stunned and confused with floated slogans like: "Shopping makes me happy"; "Happiness is just around the corner!" and therefore, "Work harder"; "Earn more money"; "Buy more things"; "Keep going and shopping."

We mostly agree that money is a means to achieve wellbeing and not an end to be pursued for itself. This is also the case of misunderstanding even pleasure, which is reduced to the sensitive and excitement at the level of commodities and distractions, looking for fun instead of joy. Unfortunately, what Erich Fromm alleged many decades ago in his *A New Humanism as a Condition for the One World*,[28] it is a reality of today that

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[27] Ibid.

[28] His 1962 lecture given in Sherwood Hall in La Jolla, California. See Fromm, *On Being Human*, 61.

many people look "for power and property, instead of growth. They want to *have* much, and *use* much, instead of *being* much."[29]

As the title of 2008 book signed by Zygmunt Bauman asks "Does ethics have a chance in a world of consumers." We think that a vital imperative comes to the fore: ethics – broadly taken as moral philosophy – is mandatory. Ethics must show its responsible function to guide us in the dominant materialistic consumerist world in which we are caught by offering a humanistic alternative of which we are in need. How else, without a robust moral culture, could we protect and develop more our humanity?

Consuming and practicing moral culture does not have to be only an ideal and an abstract learning but something fundamental for living a *human* life, cultivating all the faculties and skills suitable for developing the web of moral awakening. By following the Golden Rule: "Do as you would be done by" we are able to become not only good fellows for the human being, but also good partners of nonhumans, good stewardship of the Earth. Consuming, in itself, always implies a moral choice and, likewise, a responsibility. This is one of the reasons to engage an ethical basis throughout education. This represents a path to avoid our transformation into "monsters that consume themselves," but to explore and enable true human needs and wants, and to liberate us from the experience of emptiness and despair, in front of temptations.

The focus is on self-education, which unfolds consuming moral culture in order to promote a flourishing humanity and to become an ethical mature human being. In fact, a moral education is mainly what makes us and empowers us by shaping the character, which enable individuals to live a good and successful life as autonomous persons able to live as social beings in the world. Over times, the *moral culture* represented – we tend to think – the most significant investment to strengthen and fulfil the *human* potential in the effort toward progress and prosperity.

Education in its present multidimensional flux has a catalytic impact on each human dimension of living, especially ethical action. The entitled call for lifelong, lifewide and lifedeep learning assures us to find and follow the way of personal fulfillment and deliver the individual and public good, contributing to the societal advancement.

Moral culture is provided by education in its various types and, to the utmost extent, by self-education, thanks to a permanent learning from book-knowledge, meetings with admirable personalities and one's own experience. It is not necessary in exchange of money, because of our will tends to persevere our human becoming under the auspices of an ideal, that is to permanently work for improving and beautifying life in its entirety. In this regard, the importance of *spiritual capital* does not need additional arguments. It fundamentally operates for human wellbeing, in

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[29] Ibid., 40.

connection with the commitment to noble goals and moral standards. It leads to self-fulfillment, prosperity, social cohesion and harmony, and above all the common good.

In completing other forms of capital, material, social, financial, intellectual, experiential, cultural, living, the *spiritual capital* works on the side of wealth that does not resume to money, but supposes a kind of enriching life in its deep human components[30] to create prosperity through virtuous means. Therefore, a powerful affirmation of *moral culture* on which the growth of material, financial, but also foremost and above all spiritual satisfactions, is based in the web of our time's "revolution of consciousness," is totally justified.[31]

Moral culture makes the nucleus of "spiritual capital" together with the "SQ or the spiritual intelligence" ass "our moral intelligence," which gives us "an innate ability to distinguish right from wrong. It is the intelligence with which we exercise goodness, truth, beauty, and compassion in our lives. It is…the soul's intelligence" which attains and maintains *wealth* – not as usually is explained as (the) material one, consisting in getting a great quantity or store of money, but – as "that which we have access to that enhances the quality of life." Tying the concept with the Old English *wealth*, it means "to be well."[32]

We refer to *wealth* as a source and means for human accomplishment and eventually human happiness or wellbeing. Spiritual capital (SQ) is something of paramount importance for the development of the human capacity for meaning, vision and value. Spiritual capital is "wealth we can live by, wealth that enriches the deeper aspects of our lives. It is wealth we gain through drawing upon our deepest meanings, deepest values, most fundamental purposes, and highest motivations, and by finding a way to embed these in our lives and work." The spiritual capital is actually "the fund of beliefs, examples and commitments that are transmitted from generation to generation through a religious tradition, and which attach people to the transcendent source of human happiness."[33] With or without reference to any religious tradition, spiritual capital is important for human wellbeing because it makes the articulation and the (ideal) content of the vertical dimension of living *humanly*.

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[30] Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2004).

[31] Frank M. Wanderer, *The Revolution of Consciousness: Deconditioning the Programmed Mind* (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 2015).

[32] Zohar and Marshall, "Introduction: Changing Ourselves to Change the World," in *Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By*.

[33] Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, *Spiritual Enterprise: Doing Virtuous Business* (New York: Encounter Books, 2008), 11-12.

Admitting the place of "spiritual enterprise" and "virtuous business"[34] in the present society, it is worth noting that spiritual capital sustains values and principles required by a healthy and sustainable communitarian and global market, such as: respect, fairness, moderation, sense of justice, discipline, perseverance, patience, courage, self-control, gratitude, humility, etc. We can and should orientate much more even towards business as a moral endeavor and create wealth through moral virtues for a prosperous society. Thus, we eschew the risk of becoming prisoners of an illusory world of forms and shapes, and manifest oneself as veritable agents of freedom and responsibility. Consequently, we reach a moral life that epitomizes not merely a matter of what we can have and do, but of what we can *be(come)* within our deepest humanity.

The risk of identity being seized, lost and damaged by overplaying the hedonistic dimension of quality-of-life is at times quite critical for the mankind –in the web of hyper-consumerism that seriously affects human identity. And if the quest for pleasure seems to be so natural, why not shift away from an anthropological (focused on the fan-object relation) approach that exploits the appetite of consumer(s) to satisfy desires – mostly unnecessary and artificially inoculated – of entertainment and brand marketing so much influenced by the media and primarily by the advertising industries. And why not try to direct consumer desires – at least part of them – towards genuine needs and wants, valuing the offer of the ethical hedonism in terms of Epicurus for it: aims at decreasing life's pains, liberating us from anxiety and fear, fructifying "philosophical contemplation" and gaining the healthy inner tranquility (*ataraxia*), as pursue natural pleasures wisely in accordance with moral behavior, whereby the eternal goal to achieve is happiness or wellbeing.

When Epicurus underlines the saying "pleasure is our first and kindred good," "the end and the aim of a happy life," he does not mean "the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation." By pleasure is meant "the absence of pain in the body and trouble in the soul….It is rather sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs that lead to the tumult of the soul."[35] The ancient Greek philosopher states that "the first and the highest good is wisdom," and "a pleasant life cannot be separated from virtues."[36]

Our reference is not essentially to the so-called "ethical consumer" guided by the imperative of making "ethical choices" in order to conjure up an "ethical identity." There are obvious limits of such a status centered, for the shoppers, on a slogan like: "it's for a good cause." Nor is it about

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, 129, 132.
[36] Ibid., 132.

environmental concerns, charitable contributions, human rights, global inequalities, care about child labor, etc. Sometimes these prove to be rather a failure than something good, and not rarely eventually leave the door open for the emergence of unethical actions and behaviors. The underlying interest this paper goes beyond this issue; it goes to the consumer of a peculiar type of culture, which is undoubtedly an ethical one, heading more towards *moral* nucleus implied.

Due to appropriating and enacting moral culture, "the ethical consumer" will be no longer be "a myth," and "ethical consumerism" will not remain just an appeal, by paying attention to the mutuality of the fact that "we are what we choose" and "we choose what we are."[37] Rather it means that we should not confine ourselves just to the routine "archetypes" of consumer, such as rational informed processor, quasi-rational reactive purchaser, quasi-rational co-producer of value, and actor for the adaptive unconscious.[38] However, last point deserves a peculiar account because it steers towards the conundrum of "confabulation" which is empty of any reason to explain when we made certain consumption choices (not the optimal ones!). As a result, we had a mismatch between what we truly aimed on the one hand and what we ended up doing, somehow in a fictional manner, on the other hand. The "confabulation" is to be considered not only as a phenomenon tackled by the "interpreter consumer research" and the relatively new "consumer culture theory," but also as a possibility supported by the lack of moral culture. It is nothing about literature or art production, but about a daily reality we experience. For the well(ness) and long-term effects we need to show a healthy and safe ability to choose and to have a certain decision-making style because our status of consumers in the today context is so much contaminated by the fervor "to go shopping."

Thanks to a well-made *moral culture*, the "ethical consumer" becomes an authentic conscious and free agent able to invest her/himself in the content of the ethical dimension of beingness. S/he becomes the one who knows and understands what really matters for human living and therefore works more profitably in developing the individual and social wellbeing. At the same time the respects and caries for the environmental wellness and, finally, enlightening her/himself as regards the value and the meaning of life.

A *moral culture* keeps us out of a lot of mischiefs and troubles, and gives us the necessary support to search for the "*highest good* in all matters of action" that is, according to Aristotle, human wellbeing or happiness (*eudaimonia*) It is closely linked to the virtue of character or *ethikē*

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[37] Timothy M. Devinney, Pat Auger and Giana M. Eckhardt, *The Myth of the Ethical Consumer* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 37.
[38] Ibid., 41-42.

aretē, the human excellence: "a perfect and self-sufficient – *téleion kai aútarkes*.[39]

Instead of a Conclusion:
Revealing Our Creative Human Condition as Moral Culture
Consumer(s) within a Global Consumerist Culture

Being caught in the flux of a massive unprecedented phenomenon of consumerism and dubbed "full-blown consumerism," people "become enmeshed in the process of acquisition – shopping – and take some of their identity from a procession of new items that they buy and exhibit."[40] Hence, we might easily fall in delusion of what really matters for human wellbeing. An increased sensitivity helps us to eschew the illusory satisfaction thanks to an exclusive orientation for buying more stuff – little meaning for human fulfillment – and decipher paths that are safer and more conducive to happiness, even in the position of consumer. It can also enable us to cultivate a certain acumen, to realize the meaningfulness of morality, and so, to rediscover the major truth contained in Heraclitus' Fragment 199: *ethos anthropos daimon* (*character is human destiny*).

The urge would be: to live a life of moral decency by boosting the consciousness of equilibrium as the most important point in the moral plane; to the pursuit of wellness depending on external circumstances but on one's own internal strength of character; understanding and practice virtue(s) when facing inherent challenges, ambiguities, contradictions, risks, conflicts, etc.; to learn from failures and setbacks and to overcome afflicted moods; to unravel and to improve the spiritual human potential. It is worth paying attention first of all to human beingness in becoming, because it might and ought to be(come) encompassing and nurturing the *moral* potential, and to decipher what truly matters to be disclosed and fulfilled with a boundless trust in keeping secure *humanity* in current circumstances.

Let us just think that "For being ourselves, we have to perform with all our power as *humanity* and as agents of *humanizing* the world"[41] we should try to educate ourselves as "moral consumers" (among other *qualia*) within the current hyper-consumerism, at least as a promise to acquire freedom by not losing the sense of our authentic spiritual self.

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[39] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.1095a15, 1097b20.

[40] Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*, vii.

[41] Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *O istorie a ideilor filosofice* (*A History of Philosophical Ideas*) (Bucharest: Scientific Publishing House, 1990), 220.

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Part II
Encountering the Cultural Other

<div align="center">6.</div>

Re-learning to Be Human for Global Times: The African Experience

<div align="center">Ernest Beyaraza</div>

Introduction

Globalization or "Global Times" have descended on the contemporary world swiftly and firmly. Some have compared its great influence to that of "the cold war era," "the space age," and "the roaring 20s." This paper examines the contribution of 'Intercultural Encounters' to globalization with special reference to Africa. According to Ali Mazrui,[1] although the term "globalization" is new, its process has been going on for centuries. He identifies the expansion of religion, the rise of empires, the triumph of technology, and the internationalization of the economy as the engines of globalization in history. He specifies two forms of globalization which have attracted special attention at the beginning of the 21th century. First is the information super highway through the computer and the internet. Second is the economic super highway through global capitalism, transnational corporations and international trade. Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers[2] give the most comprehensive definition of globalization as all change which is leading the world towards a global village; globalization is the "villagization" of the world.

It is because of this "villagization" of the world that there is a need to "re-learn to be human for global times." However, God has not said, let the world be a village, and it is so. The world has not woken up to find itself a small village. It is intercultural encounters that have (re)shaped the contemporary world. The questions of interest for this paper, therefore, include to what extent Africa has participated in these transformative intercultural encounters and how it features in the ensuing village. The major question to be answered is the nature of Africa's participation in the global world. Thus, the paper critically examines the African experience in the globalizing world.

The paper concerns itself with issues of intercultural encounters, both at home and abroad. Globalization has created new methods of work. There is a new outlook on life. The question of our interest now is what

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[1] Ali Mazrui, *Pan Africanism and the Globalization of Africa: A Triple Process* (New York: Little Brown and Co., 1986), 16.

[2] Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village* (Oxford University Press; Oxford, 1992), 21.

effects these changes have made on cultures. Traditionally, human mobility was slow but steady. It was not easy for one society to overwhelm another. In this slowness, the "interculturing" societies learnt from each other and achieved mutual growth and development. Thus, one could talk of "cultural encounters" in the sense of "meeting" of cultures. Even when colonialism and imperialism waged war on "other" cultures, in the name of "civilization," there were no viable means of destroying the besieged cultures. The colonizing forces were few. They had to resort to local collaborators. In this process, colonialism and imperialism which were bent on undermining culture ended up resorting to the same culture. Almost all the chiefs and other members of administration could not speak the colonists' languages. There were also deliberate efforts not to teach colonial languages. The narrow and shallow education covered reading, writing, and arithmetic. These were the skills one needed to serve the colonial masters. Although reading and writing were new skills, what was read and written were vernacular languages. Means of transport, foods and beverages, the general understanding of life among other cultural aspects of life, therefore, survived the onslaught of colonialism and imperialism.

Globalization, instead, is equipped differently. Science and technology have improved greatly and are at the disposal of globalization. Means of transport make a tremendous difference. The break-up of Christendom led to independent European countries. This independence led to the first global organization, i.e., the Universal Postal Union, along with Telecommunications. Some of these independent countries became industrialized. As will be elaborated below, industrialization led to colonialism and imperialism that has created the new world order that has resulted into problematic intercultural encounters. Capitalism led to the World Wars whose atrocities, in turn, led to such international organizations as the United Nations and its Security Council, among others, thus creating a universal governance of the world. Politically, economically, educationally, healthwise, religiously, communication-wise, etc., the world has become closely united. Just like the Platonic tripartite theory of a person and a state, there is a sense in which not only an individual, or a society/nation, but the whole international community is united rationally, spiritually and emotionally. Today's nature of work, employment opportunities and other aspects of work ethos are in a better position to bring the world closer. Chances for social transformation are greater than ever before. Thus, intercultural encounters have become common events. While this is a worldwide phenomenon, the major problem that remains a big challenge for us is the African participation in globalization.

Taking part in global affairs, or anything else, implies being actively engaged – not merely observing the situation or following orders. Participation means being included in the decision-making process. Africa, instead, remains tethered at the receiving end of ready-made ideas, theories,

practices and products, among other things. Thus, although ethnic blood ties, languages, and a number of belief systems persist, different interests, new world views, media, public information and organization, etc. have substantially affected the traditional life. In the new world order, there are civil societies that are local, national, regional and international. The issue of participation raises a number of challenges, including the clash of traditional and modern methods of doing things. To make matters worse, these clashing methods are often employed at the same time. For example, knowledge acquisition and transmission differ, yet they are applied to the same problems within the same situations. Consequently, there are cultural ideas, practices, systems, etc. that clash on a daily basis. Evidence of these clashes is available in fundamental institutions such as marriage, education and organizations such as social, wealth, health and so many others. Just as there is no social cohesion in a given country/nation state, there are no common positions and practices on vital issues. Therefore, there is a dire need to examine to what extent intercultural encounters have transformed and reshaped the African world, and what can be added or subtracted.

Views on Globalization

Reactions and attitudes to globalization range from fear to praise. Three important observations inform these attitudes. The first observation emphasizes globalizing everything, including traditions, cultures, politics, economics, etc. The second observation points out an approach of globalization which is "top-down." Those who fear globalization fail to distinguish it from colonialism and imperialism. Hence, it is regarded as a strategy for stronger societies to exploit weaker ones or re-colonies them. Globalization is seen as a process of denationalizing markets, politics and political systems in order to establish a global economy. However, those who approach globalization from the business point of view see companies as participants in the emerging global economy. These companies should establish themselves in foreign markets. The problem is that given the prevalent top-down approach, the issue of who dictates and gains what in the global economy becomes an obvious scare.

Those who praise globalization focus on its benefits mainly in terms of products, communication and information. Due to international trade, different societies enjoy a variety of products made in other societies. Those who fear globalization cite the issue of one-sidedness in the world of trade. There is much more carried from Africa than brought in. Evidence of this is containers which deliver goods from abroad and end up being turned into structures. This has resulted in some areas called "container village." As there is not enough to export, the containers come never

to return. The one-way traffic of imports also negatively impacts on local industries.

The third observation is centered on communication. Those who praise globalization argue that communication is not only the transport of goods. The communication of ideas, the transmission of events and other aspects of this type of globalization have transformed the world. The world is changing much faster than the proverbial break-neck speed. The "global village" adage is already obsolete. The key tool of the current social engineering is information technology. Ideas and practices are easily shared. Communication has changed our life. There is a need to initiate a culture whereby more participants can share ideas instead of one person trotting the world. Inhibiting distances, cumbersome human mobility, people's separation by borders, mechanisms of social isolation and control, limiting ideologies, among other hindrances to the united world are now non-issues. The united world is so real that one can follow world events – wherever, whenever, and however they take place – without leaving one's home. Even a home has ended up being too big. One no longer needs a radio or television set in a common seating room. One can free oneself to a bedroom and watch whatever one wishes – all alone. Long distance movements have become very easy with fast aircraft.

Those who fear globalization retort that as one watches, one can be watched. One can be listened to. We watch television sets that watch us even clearer. We publish our unready and ready thoughts as we deliver them typing them out. We listen to our cell phones as they listen to us. The good old tales of windows having eyes and doors ears have gone stale. Our computers also are in the game – wide awake and very busy. Even bulbs record what they light up; tread with care in air-ports, air-crafts and public rest places. The terror of surveillance has been compounded by the craze of terrorism. Individual freedom, too, is seriously globalized. At this rate, modern science and technology might directly hack into people's hidden thoughts, ideas, plans, and other personal secrets.

Modern vis-à-vis Traditional Knowledge and Communication

There is an idea that "knowledge" must be factual and characterized by science. Thus, "knowledge" which cannot be "scientifically" explained and defended is disregarded and dismissed. This view makes knowledge of other minds, for instance, one of the biggest problems of modern science and philosophy. Just as science uses a laboratory to establish knowledge, philosophy uses reason to establish rational grounds for knowledge. Modern science and technology use analytical methods to establish facts. Factual knowledge is regarded as the most reliable. Whatever beats logic and cannot be scientifically established or explained is

thrown out of the window. As a result, many traditional ideas and practices are dismissed as superstition, conjecture, baseless, and a host of other ruthless attacks.

Modern science and technology have taken such giant steps that they are invading and globalizing private life. School education is characterized by disciplines which are classified into theoretical and practical. The former inquiries into nature and reality. They provide knowledge as an end in itself. Practical disciplines provide answers and knowledge for action. Thus, physics, chemistry, and biology provide theories on which engineering, architecture, medicine, etc. are built. Through these theories and practical skills based on them, a person can be seen as a composite of systems each of which is a composite of organs. Each organ comprises of tissues that are composed of cells. This "analysis" pertains to the human body. Regarding a person as matter and mind is outside the ambit of scientific analysis. It is due to dependence on this scientific analysis that hacking into a person's mind becomes a problem. Although philosophy and psychology pertain to the mind, some thinkers apply the definist theory of terms which is related to analysis. In defining the term "good," a "good" person, for instance, is "analyzed" or reduced to verifiable characteristics of behavior such as being generous, kind, forgiving, etc. Once one fulfils these conditions, is good.

However, there is also the intuitionist theory which cannot be reduced to analysis, and yet delivers correct information about people. Thus, without any prior knowledge of a person, one can correctly intuit that the person is trustworthy or not. There is a related issue of premonition which cannot be subjected to a laboratory. A look back at the history of Western philosophy reveals that modern philosophy or scientism had a problem with such fundamental issues as love. It has admitted its limitations as is evident in the return to such trends as Scholasticism in contemporary philosophy.

Similarly, modernism/scientism faces deep challenges when compared and contrasted with traditionalism which is characterized by intuition. The traditional approach is more holistic than analytic. Certainly, science and technology are important and necessary, but cannot apply to and explain everything. Above all, great thinkers appear to intuit things first and then explain or scientifically analyze them after. There are instances when we need the scientific analytic methods and when we need intuition. For example, the knowledge of other minds is a problem to modern philosophy, science and technology because of the analytical method. To begin with, metaphysics, under which concepts/ideas of mind, soul, matter and related issues are discussed, is outside the ambit of physical science. It is "meta" or beyond. There are attempts to question and even deny the existence of such things. Secondly, minds are difficult to subject

to scientific analysis. Consequently, the knowledge of other minds is a perennial philosophical question.

Throughout the Renaissance and Enlightenment there was an explosion of knowledge and religious sects within Christianity. Human thought and practice have since then been reduced to the two definist and intuitionist theories. Issues of specialization and generalization are in vogue. However, this polarization cannot explain all human thought and practice. While these fall under modernism, there is serious science and technology in "other" cultures. A big difference is that in Western thought and practice ideas are identified or associated with individual thinkers. In Africa the practice of communalism disallows such individual ownership. Certainly, ideas, practices, skills, and other innovations do not fall from heaven. Someone, somewhere, somehow thinks them out. However, as soon as they emerge and take root, they belong to an ethnic group. Thus, we have ethnic languages and regular changes in them, stories, songs, dances, etc. without recognizing their inventors, innovators and those who carry out improvements. There are so communally owned that copy rights and similar laws on them are none existent. This communal ownership sustains innovations while individually owned ideas and practices have only been sustained through records such as writing. African innovations are lived, not studied. Such are the accomplishments which the so-called Western "civilization" destroyed, distorted, and hindered. The world will hardly ever comprehend the knowledge, storage and methodological loss that have been suffered due to the Western selfishness that led to this myopia.

The myopia is not accidental; it is a way of controlling other people. Thus, Western "civilization" means doing things in the same way, i.e., the way of the controlling forces, socially, politically, economically, institutionally, and otherwise. This explains the command that no one has the right to choose not to be civilized. This choice is tantamount to claiming independence. Dubbing "other cultures" satanic, illegal, uncultured, uncouth, etc., therefore, is strategically intended to bring other people's thoughts and activities under the scrutiny of the controlling forces. Knowledge is power. People's knowledge, in itself, is power to these people. Knowledge of this knowledge to the controlling forces is power over the people. The world must be governed in the same way, not because there is only one way of doing it, but because there is only one controlling force. Everyone must speak and behave in the way this force understands. Policies, rules and regulations, etc. fall under the ambit of control. The question of meaning, significance, effectiveness, among other considerations of culture does not arise. Many cultures, cultural practices and products are a real envy to colonialists and imperialists. They have to give way to Western products for economic purposes, but also political and other institutional control.

Thus, in Africa, accessing other people's ideas, plans, practices and other secrets is regarded as a routine game of hide and seek. Skills of knowing other people's minds are countered with skills of being an artful dodger to protect one's secrets. There are means and techniques of both opening and closing doors into other people's minds, as exemplified by the following.

First, mentally, the African practice[3] of *kusisya* refers to hacking into people's ideas, plans and practices. The hacking is accomplished when the victim is asleep. When you are awake conjuring at a distance can throw you into deep slumber in order to make you answer relevant questions willy-nilly. In this process, the interviewer orders the interviewee to touch his or her head so as to erase the memory of the interviewer and the interview details. What is required is the internal world of a victim to be exposed to the external observers. With this technique, crime is curtailed and the idea of detectives is redundant.

Second, physically, *kumunga* refers to the treatment of the body, such as bone-setting, which can be performed at a distance, i.e., without a patient being physically present.

Third, in temporal terms, i.e., beyond the personal psychological and physical phenomena, *kuragura* is the art of looking into the future in order to plan for events or avert misfortunes.

Fourth, *kuroga*, at the psychological level, is the ability to teach wrong doers a few manners, regardless of their secret hide outs, secret intentions, activities, etc. At the physical level, the same *kuroga* is the ability to influence events, activities and other realities.

Fifth, *kuzinga* literally means to tie, i.e., to stop, hinder or delay growth, development, achievement, etc.

A case from Congo is a good example of non-scientific activities that pose a great challenge to modern science and technology. A locally hunted man tried to escape by fleeing the country and was "flown" back. The "aeroplane" that brought the fugitive back home – from an international

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[3] Concepts such as "Africa," its regions (North, South, Eat, West and Center), all the modern nation states therein, all the boundaries between these countries – some of which cut through well-established civilizations; the grouping of people, naming, counting them, among many other arrangements were concretized during the colonial rule. Today, people identify with this categorization as if it were God-ordained. The argument of this paper is that true "intercultural encounters" took place when people were truly independent and used their cultural achievements for cross-fertilization. Using such terms as "African adage" only reflects "intercultural encounters" which make cultures and civilizations a reality. The usage, in no way, suggests Africa as one entity with one and the same philosophy, culture, language, etc., as colonialism and imperialism suggest through stereotypes and other generalizations. The Kiga expressions cited are shared with other civilizations dubbed "African."

airport was found to be a rough sketch or imitation of an aeroplane like those made by creative children. There was no way such a thing could fly. The construct was too small for even a baby to enter. But it was indeed an aircraft that flies, lands, and takes off from modern and sophisticated airports incognito.[4]

In the current "Great Lakes Region" live pygmies – a people considered the most backward and uncivilized. Yet, it is the stone they invented that sophisticated people use when bitten by snakes. A snake is colorblind. Everyone is a candidate to its bite. You place the stone where you are bitten. The stone sticks as it sacks the poison. When all of it is out, it drops on its own accord. You put it in milk to clean and get it ready for further use. It is the same "backward" pygmies who discovered the plant that sophisticated "modern" people fence their modern houses with to keeps snakes at a bay. More interestingly, however, the pygmies, in turn, had copied the art from birds which protect their eggs from snakes by placing the plant's leaf at the nest's entrance. Pigmies are people whose morals are impeccable. Their preservation of the forest that is "their every-thing" or means of livelihood is remarkable. Yet, "civilization" is reserved for copy cats, immoral crooks, thieves, murderers, sheer artificial actors, true and empty enemies of humanity – people devoid of human values – people destroying mother earth by fathering global warming. In the new world order, to be civilized is to be modern. To be modern is to disregard shameful activities. Manners are absent in the dictionary of the modern. Being scandalized is a sign of backwardness.

It is important to note that this paper does not argue for traditionalism for its own sake. The paper's concern is the effects of intercultural encounters which have left Africa neither fully modern, nor traditional. Although the practices mentioned above are alive and kicking, there is a way in which many are distorted and even fake. The ushering in of material and monetary values has adversely affected these practices. Many who know nothing about them pretend to be experts just to earn a living. The effects of capitalism on the work ethos apply to these practices, too. Most alarming, however, this anomaly has strayed into modern institutions and enjoys a heavy presence therein. In modern education subjects many academics are qualified mechanics with skills to perform specific duties. There are not many philosophers – like Socrates – but sophists using or

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[4] The stories of the bush aircraft and snakes with Pygmies arose during a discussion on rationality at an international conference on *Rationality* which took place in Nairobi, Kenya. Most of the time people learn from the book of nature, copy from one another, and even animals. This paper accepts these positions. We need to see things better from other people's shoulders. However, those we copy from may not have copied. There cannot be copying ad infinitum. The paper, therefore, insists on the individual person's freedom of thought and creativity.

even misusing philosophical ideas and skills for material and monetary benefits, as will be demonstrated further on.

The traditional practices, such as those mentioned above, have ended up being hidden and uncommon due to the stigma attached to them – thanks to colonialism and imperialism. To colonial governments the good old practices became criminalized. They were crimes severely punishable in various ways. Christianity dubbed them sins. They are dismissed as the work of Satan – a term that does not exist in the African dictionary. All the same, the latter is more effective. The former can only open prison gates for you for some time, or preferably, make you pay a fine. Even if they kill you, it is only the body they kill. The latter is deadly. It opens the gates of the dreaded hell where you will burn for eternity. The idea of painful fire has, ever since, performed miracles. Above all, the "educated" have been effectively taught – and they have learnt – to look down upon them as ridiculous, superstitious, unscientific, based on ignorance. True. They are outside the ambit of Western science. A number of problems arise from this polarization. First, modern science cannot be the only explanation of reality. Second, those forced to shy away from traditional practices resort to them. Secrecy in returning to these practices has not only strengthened the practices, but also made them a milk cow.

Due to the rampant material and monetary values, many smart fellows thrive on deceiving people, claiming they possess the supernatural powers that defy modern science and technology. It is in this regard that an exciting episode recently took place in Mombasa, Kenya. The event was widely published in newspapers, YouTube, television, and other forms of media, and is a typical example of twisting and misusing African thought and practice to deceive unsuspecting people for personal and selfish benefits. A gang of thieves hatched a sophisticated plan in which one became a car owner, the other two robbers, and the fourth a witch doctor. The car owner reported "theft" to the police. After five days, he "resorted" to the witch doctor. Immediately, a miracle happened. The "robbers" emerged from their "hideout" naked and dancing in one of the busy streets. One had a huge snake dangling round his neck and the other carried an object in his hands. The drama took its course as everyone knew these were the robbers the police (modernity) had failed to trace, and the witch doctor (tradition) had not only exposed, but also humiliated. However, the first class acting, still showing, graduated from praising witchcraft, instilling fear, and demining the police to sheer fun and amusement when the police arrested the gang who confessed their creativity and intentions.

Part of the concern of this paper is the lasting effects of intercultural encounters issues experienced by Africa through colonialism and imperialism. The first issue is the undermining of traditional culture and replac-

ing it with modern culture. It looks into the pros and cons of both traditionalism and modernism. The second issue is participation. The term encounter implies participation. There is a meeting of two sides. But modernization is a top-down – one-way-traffic. The third issue is affordability. Western culture is tantalizing. It is so attractive, but not a charitable institution. The fourth issue is maintenance. It is not easy to maintain what one has not initiated and developed. Thus, a lot of expensive Western products are white elephants in underdeveloped societies. The fifth issue is dumping. It is expensive but affordable to destroy industrial toxic materials, expired products such as foods, drinks and drugs, but there is an unexplainable preference to offering, or even selling them, to innocent and unsuspecting people. The sixth issue is the short-sightedness brought about by lack of moral values by the corporatist agenda. This has resulted into the rampant and dangerous genetically modified crops, environmental negligence, abuse of NAFTA and other world market exploitations that modernize diseases and death. The seventh is the misuse of important international organizations such UN, SC, IMF, WB, etc. The eighth issue is the continuous interference in the African affairs by "former" colonialists. Neo-colonialism, many organizations such as NGOs, multinationals, etc. undermine Africa. Africa, as a victim, right from colonialism and imperialism – and still a huge candidate for exploitation, thanks to its natural resources – has rightly become wary and suspicious of globalization, regardless of its benefits.

The Meaning of Culture

Culture means a way of life. People, wherever they exist, respond to their natural environments. They do not simply become part and parcel of the natural order, but adjust themselves to it. They creatively develop a new order that suits their needs and interests. They superimpose the cultural order on the natural order. This external culture reflects the internal culture behind the creative activity. The visible culture betrays the invisible culture. There is a relationship between physical and mental phenomena. There is, therefore, science and technology behind all human artefacts. There is a rationale, or philosophy, behind all people's world views. This development strictly pertains to ethnic groups which are cemented/held together by world views and the cultures emanating from them. Each ethnic group may be identified by its endogenous culture.

This leads to ideas of endogenous and exogenous cultures. The endogenous culture of an ethnic group is exogenous to other groups. The encounters of these endogenous and exogenous cultures have taken place from times immemorial. Intercultural studies reveal common trends in various cultures, for example, in Africa. There is a cross fertilization that has built these cultures to the sophistication levels they have attained. This

growth of cultures has been slow and steady. The concern of this paper, however, is recent cultural encounters that falsify the idea of culture. While culture is human and natural, efforts have been made to distinguish between modern and traditional cultures. Western cultures are strategically reduced to "one culture," influenced by science and technology, and the rest as "other cultures" influenced by traditional methods and approaches to things. The fact remains, however, that just as there are African cultures, there are Western, Eastern and other cultures. All these have been affected by the irresistible globalization that has placed the world right under an individual's nose.

Before globalization, science and technology are part of all cultures in the world. Each culture develops its own culture which entails science and technology. The difference is that the various trends of thought emphasize modern science and technology, which the West has not initiated but developed in their specific ways and misused to exploit the rest of the world. Moreover, these modern trends of thought have been contributed to by human thought and practice, not specific ethnic groups, or even "civilizations" which have copied ideas left, right and center. This science and technology scenario may be comparable to languages. Each language has attained perfection in its own way, including the elasticity to accommodate other languages, ideas, concepts, etc. This has led to cultural encounters at home and abroad. Yet, unilateralism came up with a lie that all languages are "lined up," at the apex of which are Western languages like English. This forced a mentally colonized visitor to admire children who spoke perfect English. Back home, he declared, "We shall never catch up with them. There, even a child speaks perfect English!" As part of mental colonization, the West has falsely claimed science and technology development, thus leaving such enlightenment founders as Ibn Rushd out in the cold. There is a lot of plagiarism committed. This falsehood is also evidenced by the fact that science and technology neither spread uniformly in the West, nor are they a monopoly of Westerners. Above all, the West, too, is hit by negative globalization. The cultural encounters initiated by capitalism are unique. The African experience shows that the meetings are more of invasions than encounters. Encounters by nature are balanced. The African experience reveals a one-sided movement from the West to Africa, where Western languages are spoken, Western products used, Western policies followed, except for the looted artefacts, slavery – both at home and abroad, the exploited natural resources, brain drain, and not vice versa.

Africa is historically presented as pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. In this presentation, there is an assumption that the first two pertain to the past, and only the third belongs to the present. In practice, however, the three are not clinically distinct. They are not divorced from each

other. They are historically conceptualized in this manner, but remain intertwined aspects of one and the same societies where the intertwinement varies in magnitude. As a result, Africa boasts of countries that are more traditional or modern than the others. In the same countries, rural and urban areas differ. In the same urban areas, one merely crosses a street to find oneself in a different world. In the same families, there is a marked rift between the "educated" and the "villagers." But, even in the same individuals, one part may be modern and the other traditional. A missionary once observed that ostensibly an African is modernized, has a Christian name, dresses like a Christian (Westerner), behaves like a Christian, but when faced with serious issues of life and death, he becomes traditional. The explanation is modernization which has waged war on traditionalism for well over a century now without uniform effects. The differences in one and the same Africa may be comparable to those triggered in some individuals to make them different. Some people become insane, or even just drunk, and differ from their normal selves.

Pre-colonial Africa is the real Africa. It is the original Africa that has been transformed through colonialism and imperialism with great successes and glorious failures. The successes and failures have made the same Africa assume different identities. Pre-colonial Africa is the real and authentic Africa that reveals itself in traditions and cultural activities like languages, music, dance, and drama. Its philosophy, religions and related belief systems, geography, history, and other fields have attracted research with enlightening findings, and found their way into school syllabi and university programs. Other areas still lie in limbo.

However, there is still a great problem of colonial hang-over whereby globalization of the successes of Western culture in the form of science and technology is in vogue. This attitude hinges on the polarization of the world. Science defines modernism. Lack of science defines traditionalism. Civilization means taking people across from traditionalism to modernism. It is conceived as a liberation of some sort. This narrow approach to life still promotes unilateralism and justifies the attack on "other" people's traditions and cultures.

School education is of Western origin and follows Western methods, theories, tenets, standards, guidelines, etc. The superimposition of Western education on African culture has produced a confusion of systems, institutions and practices within one and the same society. Indigenous people have their own systems and methods of doing things. Modern science and technology dismiss tradition as unscientific and therefore inaccurate or even deceitful, and superstitious. Modernism has furiously fought to eradicate traditionalism; traditionalism has resisted. Yet, none has succeeded in eliminating the other. Both are practiced side by side, thus creating confusion and conflict. Associated problems include inefficiency. Discouragement and even prohibition of traditional practices have

led to the practices being carried out in secrecy. This leaves practitioners at liberty to exhibit shoddy performance, since there are no mechanisms to follow and check their activities. In any case, they are sought after by desperate people who cannot be heard complaining in such a secretive business.

The situation has been made worse by capitalism which promotes the paradigm shift from human to material and monetary values. First, the fight against traditionalism has interrupted the elaborate systems within which the prohibited performances were carried out. Traditional societies had well trained leaders, fighters, religious leaders and medical practitioners among other experts. Their belief systems worked. The institutions were intact. Shoddy work due to secrecy was not possible. Everything was done with respect, trust, and therefore, in the open. A traditional priest was respected and welcome to a service that was performed without fear or suspicion. A medicine man or woman and other practitioners were confident and proud of their work. All this changed with the onslaught of colonialism and imperialism which effectively undermined the practices.

Second, the work ethos was adversely affected. Traditionally, a practitioner knew what to do and performed his or her duty to prove his or her expertise and the worth of the art. They performed to serve. Division of labor ensured security of service. There was never any worry about the work force, except fear of being overpowered in case of an armed conflict. This is suggested by the African expression, *Engabo zaaba nce, ngu abagurisi tubaihemu!* The expression literary means when fighters are not enough you cannot be heard to say old men should be removed. The issue of the work force arose during colonialism when labor was enforced on the people. Lack of emphasis on quality of work is evident in the expression, *Ogwo kijungu gwita otagiireyo*, meaning with European work, all one needs is to report. Workers were known by their numbers, not expertise. Even how much they did was not an issue as what mattered was to be present when a roll call was made. This graduated into the corruption of ghost workers.

However hard capitalism and imperialism worked to undermine African culture, there was no total destruction of this culture. They mainly succeeded in confusing belief systems, shaking foundations of institutions and disorienting practitioners. In the end, there is a mixture of traditional and modern ideas and practices. This mixture is reflected in practices that are neither African, nor Western. Insisting on Westernization has been hindered by lack of work force training and the availability of Western materials and equipment. This has led to questionable results when Western methods are applied to solve problems. Many practitioners are challenged. When they fail to perform, their clients resort to African methods.

Material and monetary values are the worst effects of capitalism on the work ethos. While the human values they uproot and replace are the

foundation of virtues such as selflessness, kindness, love, respect, service, treating people humanely etc., material and monetary values are the foundation of vices such as selfishness, greed, competition and similar disvalues which have dealt a blow to *Buntu*[5] and undermined work ethos. Many people no longer think of work beyond being a source of material and monetary gain. This attraction of sheer gain other than the value of work in itself has resulted into imposters, forgery, corruption, shoddy work etc.

The changed attitudes of people to themselves and their culture top colonial and imperial agenda. Indigenous cultural objects are authentic and a lot more genuine than many modern products. Yet, they attract less monetary value. It is clear that appealing to science and religion to undermine culture was strategic. In a similar manner, prohibiting the science and technology of making food, drinks and preserving them was deliberate. Other deliberate prohibitions include the science and technology of the herbal medicine that healed the Whites as well and ended up being copied by them. Many artefacts were looted. All the same, making more, architecture, implements and a host of other products were legally prohibited and religiously dubbed satanic. The strategy, easy and simple, is that they had to give way to factory products. The very reasons for the partitioning of Africa in the first place still stand. The effects of contemporary intercultural encounters need to be discussed along these lines. It is due to the historical background of these encounters that Africa is depicted as three in one. We may now look at these encounters within this pattern, beginning with indigenous Africa.

Instinct, Intuition and Culture

The ideas of "response to the environment" are not limited to human beings. Everything tends towards its nature. Thus, stones do not roll upwards. They adhere to the law of gravity. Plants grow towards light. Birds build nests. Wherever you find certain birds, you recognize them by the shape of their nests. Similarly, many people are identified by the way they build. Many retain their cultural practices. They are proud of being associated to their culture. For instance, they jealously guard their languages.

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[5] The concept of African philosophy, i.e., philosophy in the sense of foundation, origin, or underlying principle, is summed-up as "Buntu." The term is derived from "Muntu," which means both a person as an entity and one with qualities of a human being, i.e., human values. A human being must have 'Buntu' or be humane to others. "Buntu, therefore," can be rendered as humaneness. One without "Buntu" is relegated to the animal level. One can be told off, *Tori Muntu ori ekikooko!* You are not a human being but an animal – when one is overcome by emotions instead of having self-control through rational and moral principles. The same is said of a rich selfish person.

All this is deliberate. Unlike the brutes, "intercultural encounters" characterize human beings. They are our ways of life. People learn and copy from one another to develop.

Specific birds build the same nests wherever they are. They do not change. They do not interact with others. They only instinctively respond to their environment for survival, not development. They are not creative. "Intercultural encounters" have no room amidst them. Intercultural encounters, therefore, pertain to humanity. They are as human as human values.

Human values underlie human dignity. When human beings live by these principles, egalitarianism follows suit. This equality leads to recognition; recognition leads to respect, respect to accommodation. This accommodation is "intercultural encounters." Through such encounters, cultures leave an enduring mark on each other. This additional mark means cultural growth and development. This is highly marked in traditional civilizations. The onslaught of colonialism and imperialism has made endless attempts to destroy, retard or distort indigenous cultures and reverse their encounters. Traditionalism and modernism, therefore, have not had a smooth relationship due to this interference. The meeting of the West with Africa lacks genuine intercultural encounters.

The philosophical position of this paper deliberately puts special emphasis on the individual. An individual comes first. I am; therefore, we are. Individuals live in society. There is no society without individuals. Yet, one cannot say, "and vice versa." There are individuals all over who need one another, not to be, but to live better. To live better one must first be. An individual and society are different entities. You can say hello to me, but not to my society. Weak societies comprise of weak individuals. Strong societies comprise of strong individuals. This explains why colonialism and imperialism heavily rely on the education of the young. Mental colonization has entrenched colonialism and imperialism more than any other means, including force through conflicts and wars, became this individualistic approach has nothing to do with Western philosophy; it is natural as part of human desire.

There is a concept of society as an entity characterized by a central government. This is true of modern nation states whose governance is successful or unsuccessful depending on the management of the common good. However, traditional societies are organized differently, and their success depends on human values whose absence characterizes the failure of modern nation states. In line with the concept of culture emphasized by this paper, the human response to natural environment leads to different institutions, social, political and economic, among others. Consequently, societies in deep forests differ from those on grass lands, in the deserts, on river banks, on islands, amidst snow, etc. Thus, Africans who needed big families to survive develop the marriage system of polygamy. When

monogamous populations immigrated and met hardships in mountainous and rocky Utah, for instance, they had no alternative but to adopt polygamy. The Eskimos need no population to survive. For them, the fewer they are the better. Naturally, polyandry became the medicine. A woman with a multitude of husbands can only become pregnant once. In the final analysis, creative minds set up civilizations in their various ways, depending on their circumstances. The miracles through "intercultural encounters" discussed in this paper are possible through the observation and creativity of individuals. Individuals' minds meet. Societies cannot. Thus, claims, such as *The Mind of Africa* can be good only for flames of fire, unless they are properly explained.

The position of this paper is that by nature human beings are philosophical. They reflect on the natural order, themselves, and the whither and thither, thus coming up with ethno-philosophy. Human beings are cultural beings. They are never patterned to the natural order. They create their own cultural order and improve on the natural order with this cultural order. They create skills and use social roles to organize themselves and achieve their needs. Thus, they are political animals. Due to their thinking beyond their immediate environments and needs, they are religious beings. All these lines of thought underline an individual person. Thinking and creativity are individual activities. Spirituality is an individual affair. It is difficult to behave morally when alone. One needs to relate with others. All the same, there is no social conscience that blames one for immoral life or approves of one for moral behavior. The social approval and disapproval roles are external. One can be approved of or blamed while one laments inside.

Laws are for society, but must bind individuals if they are to succeed. A good example is moral laws which are enforced by the individuals they bind. They are, therefore, the most successful. One is bound whether one is watched or not. Similarly, social norms, religious commandments, and positive laws are directed to society but must begin with an individual. Just to use Christianity as an example, only three of the Ten Commandments vertically bind a person with God. The other seven horizontally bind an individual with others. Prophet Amos insists that no one should turn to God before one mends fences and straightens one's relationship with others. Jesus Christ completes this by teaching only two Commandments: love and unity. In these, an individual comes first. Love one another as you love yourself. The standard measure is "yourself." As regards unity, the beginning, again, is the self. It takes equal parts or entities to build unity. Thus, a person cannot build unity with a brute, a tree, or a stone.

Forgiveness from God demands repentance. Reconciliation with others calls for admitting wrongs, remorse and promising better manners. Each of these hinges on individual efforts. One must, therefore, firmly

compose oneself mentally, spiritually and emotionally before one can successfully interact with others. I have argued elsewhere that a strong society needs strong individuals just as a strong building needs strong bricks. Just as bricks come before a structure, individuals come before society. The difference is that society is in charge of building itself through empowering individuals. This has led to the struggles between rulers and thinkers, conservatives and progressives, among others. These struggles affect the growth and development of societies. Such struggles and their effects are absent among other creatures.

Regarding people as individuals dissipate unfair thoughts and practices. All fallacies of generalizations about human beings become obsolete. All stereotypes die a natural death. Racial, ethnic, religious, sexist and other forms of discrimination are kept at bay. A person dreams of a chance to merit what life promises. One looks forward to getting what one deserves. Hope is kept alive. "We" remains the meaningful plural of "I," not the dignified form in which even crooks can rejoice, and not the hiding place where the cowardly often take cover. Regarding one as not more or less than an individual is total human liberation.

The Three-fold Intercultural Encounters in Africa

Pre-colonial Africa

The concepts of "interculture" and "encounter" imply, first and foremost, the existence of the meeting entities. They also imply experience or the cultural development of what each share with the other when the relationship has been entered. Whatever form this relationship takes, it is a matter of give and take. In traditional societies, there was no imposition of ideas and practices of one ethnic group on the other. Even if the ethnic groups were involved in a conflict, they ended up learning skills and tactics from each other. There were normative mechanisms that guided conflicts, just as there are legal provisions guiding pre-war, war and post-war conditions. The intercultural encounters compared and contrasted their world views and theories and practices that had emanated from the world views. The true independence of each culture in the intercultural encounter ensured the participation each ethnic group enjoyed during the interaction. The participation, in turn, ensured cultural growth and development. Each group had been around enough as to develop the cultural contents it compared and contrasted or shared with others in the course of intercultural encounters. While each group had developed its culture by responding to its own environment, it developed its culture further by copying or looking down upon what the other had developed. This occasion also provided the chance to criticize and discard certain tenets and practices. This development is in accordance with the principle that human

beings live and change by learning from one another. Even at personal level, it would be impossible for men to know they were men if they did not see women. It would not be possible for a group to reflect on their language if they did not hear other languages. Each group develops its ethno-philosophy through which it establishes harmonious relationships. These relationships pertain to people in society, people with nature, and people with God. Thus, social justice prevails in ethnic groups held together by specific world views, religious tenets, and related practices. Through this solid existence and authenticity, original Africa intercultural encounters both at home and abroad have left an indelible mark on the world.

Today, the concepts of endogamy and exogamy are misnomers as one tends to think of traditional societies on hearing "endogamy" and modern or Western societies on hearing "exogamy." The true reality is that over time immemorial, an ethnic group developed its 'endogamous' culture which became "exogamous" when neighboring cultures interacted. This is the 'intercultural encounter at home'. I emphasize this point because it underlines my line of thought right from an individual person to society. The emphasis is that an individual needs freedom of thought, creativity, and development. When this is achieved, a person critically assesses himself/herself to discover who, what he/she is, why and how. Accordingly, the person interacts with others, critically assessing their views and social tenets. Without this, a person, despite age and status, remains a "child" of his/her society. This explains why people in important positions with high regard betray themselves by being sectarian, among other *infra dignitatem* dispositions. The meaning and significance of philosophy developed here stems from this understanding of a person, his/her relationship to others and society as a whole. That is why it is important to understand that "I am, therefore, we are," and not vice versa.

Like a person, a society attains maturity. It is difficult to say how long a given ethnic group has taken to establish its world view and cultural aspects like the perfect language that characterizes it. Such developments are achieved through interaction with other similarly developed cultures. Thus, African ethnic groups have so much in common. This is possible through cultural encounters. Historical, social, economic, linguistic, and other back grounds of these encounters are very long, wide, deep and intricate. This is what colonialism and imperialism failed to recognize when they forced these civilizations into artificial modern states. Any hasty pretense to examine these civilizations risks suffering defeat and failure. This failure is evident in many anthropological attempts to "expose" or even "explain other cultures." These attempts are hampered by myopia, bigotry, bias and other ideas influenced by misconceptions such as racial superiority or inferiority, and the "civilization" mixed up with modern material and monetary values. The truly civilized indigenous people have

often been shocked by the uncivility of those who preach "civilization" while behaving to the contrary.

The African legacy is multidimensional. In indigenous societies, human values and dignity are the principles of life. Work ethos pertains to personal and social development. One acquires and employs skills to serve. Such expertise and services make performance fulfilling. People live for each other. Means of production are communal. Social cohesion is ensured. Tension, pressure, stress and similar social hazards are kept at bay. People are cemented together by blood relationships (*obuzaare* and *emiryango*) from the nuclear family to the clan and the ethnic group. The relationship is also cemented by status and social roles. Thus, in a family a husband, wife, and children clearly know their positions and roles. This nuclear family differs from the Western concept which is rather narrow, as African traditional marriages are polygamous. Thus, a father, wife, son, daughter, etc. go far beyond the biological relationships. Marriages are based more on social than personal considerations.

At this juncture, we need to realize that looking at intercultural encounters, or endogamy and exogamy from the ethnic interaction stand point, needs to be narrowed down. Like a civilization, an ethnic is quite wide. It comprises of clans, which, in turn, comprise of families of individual persons. Each person is an industry. Individuals live in personal worlds where they are happy or unhappy. Each has a personal way of life, or culture. This internal world is the starting point of endogamy. It becomes exogamy when it is transmitted to others. This leads to personal growth. Families, too, have their own cultures. They interact with other families, learn, and develop. This sharing and intercultural encounter extends to clans and ethnic groups – or "nations" – which, currently, conglomerate into nation states.

Experiences of a specific cultural or ethnic group are shared with other ethnic groups through intercultural encounters at home, i.e., in the African set up where ethnic groups live side by side. Such mechanisms as intermarriages (*obushwere*), "blood" relations with non-blood relatives (*okunywana*), friendship (*omukago*), and other binding practices create inclusiveness, thus easing conflicts. Any ethnic internal or endogamous values are external or exogamous to the neighboring group that share it. Hence experiences from endogamy to exogamy, and vice versa, before colonialism and imperialism, were the order of the day in Africa. The extension of these mechanisms beyond Africa is evident in the creation of new social groups such as the Swahili through Arabs and Africans intercultural encounters, mainly intermarriages. Other people of African origin went to the Americas, long before slavery; to Europe, long before colonialism and imperialism; and to other parts of the world such as the Middle East, Far East, and Australia from times immemorial.

The mistaken view of "endogamy" as traditional or African culture vis-a-vis "exogamy" as modern or Western culture came about through either utter ignorance, or deliberate biased stereotypes and generalized views of Africa by some lazy and shoddy academics whose duty was to provide false information as ammunition in the hands of selfish strategists. Armchair anthropologists, despite their lies on Africa, have been so effective that many foreigners still view Africa as a country or even an ethnic group with one and the same world view, culture, belief systems, practices, etc. There are even debates, and academic debates at that, about whether we should talk of African "culture" or "cultures," "philosophy" or "philosophies," among other wastages of time. This myopia has left us with knowledge gaps about Africa. What has been touched above far falls short of indicating what Africa truly is. It is a mere pointer to the neglected reality. This takes us to Africa number two.

Colonial Africa

Whereas to understand traditional Africa one needs to access indigenous and authentic Africa, to understand colonial Africa, one needs to start with the external factor – the West. The current picture of Africa has nothing to do with original Africa. It is more myth than reality. The picture has been fabricated and painted through theories concocted to justify colonialism and imperialism. The industrial revolution culminated into the 1885 Berlin conference where Africa was partitioned and shared by a handful of Western countries. Due to capitalism, the colonialists later fought and revised the sharing, thus confusing Africa even further. With capitalism, the originally peaceful intercultural encounters turned into invasions, destruction of traditions and cultures to disorient, control, and make the people dependent. Raw materials, cheap labor, markets for industrial products and other strategies guided the form the colonies and the modern African state took. Scholars such as Karl Polanyi,[6] Karl Marx,[7] Walter Rodney[8] and other students of society have already made this field of study a beaten path.

We have noted that true intercultural encounters entail a true exchange of cultural developments. With colonialism and imperialism, such 'exchange' does not feature. There is no give and take. There is no interaction. As mentioned above, all there is a one-way traffic. The idea of

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[6] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1945), 47.

[7] Karl Marx, *Preface to a Contribution to the Critic of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 3.

[8] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1973), 32.

exploitation implies a relationship where one takes away without giving back.

Thus, Africa, which is at the top of the world when it comes to natural resources finds itself at the bottom when it comes to human development. As has been elaborated, intercultural encounters are carried out through equality and recognition. The West descended on Africa with a fixed complex of superiority. Ostensibly, they came to teach. In secrecy, they collected whatever cultural objects interested them.[9] They stole knowledge and skills. They used people as guinea pigs in the search for cures of their deadly and rampant venereal and other diseases. Modern medical care was introduced in Uganda in 1889 by the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), a trading company which originally brought doctors and nurses to look after its staff. Missionaries, instead, started medical services for Africans. Dr. Albert Cook opened the first hospital at Mengo. By 1909, three health centers had been established at Mulago, Mityana and Masaka dedicated to the treatment of venereal diseases, a new epidemic brought to Uganda by Europeans and Indians.[10] As they were hypocritical and acted in secrecy, one of their scandals was mutilating women elongated sexual organs – a highly valued cultural practice – wondering what new disease they had landed on. Loudly they castigated practices which they quietly admired. A settler woman once confessed how they wished they knew what the "natives" thought and planned so that they could predict when they would launch attacks and escape in time. Given the African attitude to other people and the generosity extended to them, they would have learnt a lot if they had not pretended that such practices were devilish. In the final analysis, the colonialist learnt nothing and only destroyed or distorted other people's cultures. The hypocrisy and secrecy created a rift between the West and Africa whose cultural contact did not quite qualify as a "cultural encounter."

With such an attitude and approach, the real meeting or even clash of cultures was not possible. Only a selective handing down of one culture took place. Theoretically, the West came to teach, not to learn. This process became problematic in many ways. First, genuine learning usually starts from within, and it is a change of mind. One achieves the psychological "Ah" when one attains it. The selective imparting of skills produced mechanics who were not equipped to delve deep into issues. The one-way approach to learning has resulted into the rampant cram work which ends with a sigh of relief when one passes an examination. Many do not want to see a book after "passing" examinations. As results come

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[9] According to BBC, Nigerian terracotta figures were looted. There is also a court case by Ethiopia against Italy for an Ethiopian Obelisk. One was returned after Ethiopia won the case. The other example is of Kikuyu artefacts taken by some Italian missionaries and still in their mother house in Turin.

[10] Sam A. Okuonzi, "A Journey of Health in Uganda," *New Vision*, September 27, 2017.

out when one is in the field, one is not surprised about the rampant dad work. Many institutions do not carry out research and end up applying inherited skills and equipment that are outdated where they originated. The superiority of indigenously acquired skills over those attained from school bookish knowledge is evident in work done in slum areas. An example of this is a slum in Kampala called Katwe[11] where local mechanics were far superior to theoretical physicists. This exemplary performance tempted academics to transform this slum into a university. Whether the university status candidature was a promotion or a demotion is a matter of verification and comparison of the old and new performances.

However, school education, despite its limitations, has opened individual and societal windows and doors wide to the rest of the world. The "explosion of knowledge" that took place as a result of the "renaissance" and "enlightenment" periods, along other developments, has spread all over. Thus, there is a globalization of education. There are universally shared educational systems and knowledge. With this, sub-cultural orders have emerged and run side by side with traditional cultures. Many belong to both, but someone may find he or she has more in common with members of a sub-culture than members of the traditional culture. These cut inroads into the various cultures, bringing out their tenets to the rest of the world, thus forging the desirable unity. This desirable unity has led to the idea of "cutting roots." According to this paper, however, the more 'rooted' one becomes the one which is able to interact with others. Intersubjectivity begins with subjectivity and ends with subjectivity. A subject has to be before "inter" subjectivity taking place. The quality of intersubjectivity depends on the quality of subjects both before and after their encounters. The cardinal principal human is I am; therefore, we are.

While such education has developed individuals and their societies – making them part of the rest of the world – Africa still needs to contend with a number of issues. The African experience shows that the modern state, supposedly in charge of the common good, law and order, among other responsibilities, faces an uphill task. First, the undermining of traditional culture and replacing it with modern culture succeeded only half way, thus opening doors to class conflicts, and even split personalities where one has a foot in either camp. Balancing traditionalism and modernism has implications, such as financial. There are parallel systems with pros and cons. The challenge remains sorting them out, developing relevant policies and implementing them.

Formulating and implementing policies pertain to a participation in globalization which is inhibited by exploitative interference. Planned

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[11] Katwe is an African word that refers to 'head' or mental work. The argument of this paper is that this is natural creativity that needs promotion, not interference. In colonial days such creativity and innovations were illegal.

modernization is a top-down, one-way traffic bedeviled with sabotage. The relationship between many Western structures and African is still highly characterized by hidden agendas that threaten Africa independence. With the undermining of African culture, the affordability of the replacement remains a challenge. Even what is afforded or donated becomes difficult to maintain. This is made worse by dumping and other destructive activities that have created tension between Africa and the West. Stronger countries have created the habit of misusing international organizations against weaker ones. International law which is already weak due to implementation issues is even weaker due to being applied one-sidedly. This proves the accusation that law catches only small insects. The misuse of sanctions, the dragging only Africans to International Criminal Court – including their respectable leaders, deliberate impoverishing of the continent using all sorts of excuses and hidden agendas together with many other forms of continuous interference have seriously poisoned the relationship between the West and Africa. Africa has become tempted to seek alternative partners, collaboration and cooperation particularly in the world of trade.[12]

Exploitation has changed the West for the better and Africa for the worse. It was only due to the world-wide pressure which supported the concerted efforts of African freedom fighters, that colonialists were forced to grant fake independence.[13] This "flag" independence is characterized by interferences such as enforced wrong policies, arm twisting of leaders, sabotage, conflicts, regime change, and other issues that have failed the African modern state through the "top-down" approach to affairs. Africa's biggest challenge, therefore, is independence. Political and economic independence is an uphill task due to Africa's abundant natural resources,[14] but the war must be won.

Just as a bee that robs a flower of its nectar fertilizes the flower, Africa, too, has benefited from intercultural encounters. In East Africa, through intercultural encounters, a new cultural ethnic group of the Swahili was born. In South Africa, a new language, Afrikaans – a mixture of Dutch and some African indigenous languages – is in existence. In West African countries, which are geographically closer to Europe than many other African countries, the Creole language – a mixture of English and

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[12] The North-South and South-South Cooperation set ups have emerged.

[13] Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005), 54.

[14] During the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, some African countries, such as Ghana and even Sudan, were far ahead of countries which were later abandoned due to lack of natural resources. Ever since, truly independent countries such as China, Japan and Korea have become superpowers. Africa continues to suffer because it has never been left alone. Despite all odds, Africa never stopped seeking for true political and economic independence.

local languages – and a number of dialects are spoken as mother tongues. This closeness has also led to the development of activities, such as sports. The best football teams, for instance, are found in West and North Africa due to their proximity to Europe. The modern systems such as educational, socio-political and economic, medical and many others are in vogue.

In terms of the international encounters involving Africa, this paper focusses on these and similar benefits. Africa still struggles for independence and needs to be optimistic. Africa needs to seek truth, keep hope alive, be aware that not all participants in the encounter were/are exploiters, many associate with universal organizations fighting for humanity, liberation, unity, love, peace, tranquility, citizenship of the world, among other ideas motivated by human dignity and values. The paper opts to focus on the positive side of the encounter such as the above organizations, ideas, and activities. It emphasizes the positive globalization based on the sub-cultures such as academic systems, subjects, research and similar activities that universally unite people. Besides subjects and their truths, sub-cultures include religions held together by doctrines, belief systems and world views; politics streamlined by autarchy, ideologies and other benefits. Many Africans speak foreign languages in addition to their mother tongues. Their social and economic status fits within global standards that make the world a better place to live in.

Post-colonial Africa

Although "post-colonial Africa" is a misnomer, there is a sense in which the modern African state and its organizations have a freer hand to reorganize things and choose who to collaborate with. This has led to some new intercultural encounters internally and externally. The colonial hungover is so strong that attempts by "independent" countries to forge alliances with countries that never participated in colonization have often been thwarted. Colonizing forces guard their "former" colonies jealously. Thus, one can assert with certainty that it was only pre-colonial Africa that enjoyed true independence. Preparations for "independence" included looking for allies, sometimes in the form of weaklings who would easily follow dictates, thus sustaining colonial rule.[15] This explains why some leaders were arrested and emerged from prison to the presidency.[16]

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[15] According to Meredith (*op. cit.*), Equatorial Guinea had one of the worst experiences in this regard. The first president was selected by the Spanish colonists due to his incompetence. He eventually did not only miserably chase away his masters, but also murdered his competent ministers and ruined the country.

[16] Ghana, the first African 'independent' country (1957) saw one of the most interesting rivalries between leaders that had organized themselves and those who had been organized by the British colonial masters in preparation for 'independence'. It is due to this that under

The first African true leaders concentrated on African issues. The major issue with these regimes was sectarianism as parties were created more according to sectarian considerations, such as religion, ethnicity, etc. This has led more to issues of social justice than corruption, as efforts were made to make ruling parties a success. Real corruption problems arose with regime change policy that ushered in military rule. That these changes were made to benefit colonial masters is evident from the fact that the military regimes worked very closely with the colonists. Even when these regimes were castigated to the extent of having sanctions clapped on their countries, serious "traded" between these colonies and their masters continued unabated. The ignorant military rule gave away their national riches in exchange for weapons to subjugate the citizens. They opened bank accounts in foreign banks even when they could hardly read and write. Their shopping spree in foreign lands was envied by fellow ignorant citizens. This led to yet another round of liberation and wars organized by those who understood what was happening. Many of these succeeded in toppling the dictators only to be subjected to wrong policies that impoverished more than helped to reconstruct the ruined countries.

Thus, when the West celebrated half a century of peace, after the disastrous World Wars, Africa was being seriously destroyed through orchestrated conflicts. The atrocities visited on Congo by the Belgians, Angola by the Portuguese, Namibia by the Germans, Equatorial Guinea by the Spaniards, South Africa by the Dutch, North West Africa by the French, East, West, and Southern Africa by the British, Somaliland by the Italians, among other colonial masters were repeated in a worse way through Neo-colonialism. Proxy wars, conflicts, and civil strife ravaged the continent. Examples of these include Congo (1960-1965, 1969-1972, 1993-2009), Sudan (1963-2009), Nigeria (1967-1970, and currently Boko Haram), Rwanda 1959 and 1994), Burundi (1973, 1993-2006), Uganda (1971, 1979-1980, 1980-1986), Angola (1975), Ogaden War (1977),

Mozambique (1976-1990), South Africa (1963-1994), Sierra Leon (19912002), Liberia (1989-2003), Somalia (current), Kenya (2007), etc. All this is taking place when the scars of the Slave Trade, Colonialism, Imperialism, Apartheid, Enforced Labor (being enslaved at home), etc. have hardly healed. It is partly within this context of repeatedly touching the raw wounds that we need to think of the meaning of re-learning to be human.

Contemporary Africa faces the dilemma of having one foot in traditional Africa and the other foot in the modern world. Which way to go is a real issue. It is quite difficult to return to the past, although ethnic groups still have a lot of traditional life to uphold. World views, belief systems,

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Ghana, in Meredith's book, the title is 'From Prison to President' in reference to Kwame Nkrumah.

cultural practices, languages, among other things still exist. The problem is ethnic groups exist side-by-side in the same nation states, under unitive policies, laws, norms, sub-cultures and others. This makes it difficult to create homogeneity. Social exclusion emerges as it is not easy to balance development. This has led to special policies and practices for balance, such as quarter systems whereby admissions to institutions, recruitments for jobs, etc., reflect various regions, districts and other social divisions in order to cater for as many groups as possible. This often undermines standards. There is also imbalance between urban and rural areas. In urban areas are institutions such as schools, work places, common residences, etc. where various cultures meet and some unity is forged. Rural areas, however, remain dominated by the same ethnic groups. Most of the time pragmatism, in the sense of "what is true is what works," is applied.

Despite the serious interferences, mainly with the African modern nation state, "post-colonial" Africa can boast of intercultural encounters different from those ushered in through colonialism and imperialism. The World War atrocities led to a change of heart in many ways. Colonial subjects who had always been made to believe that their masters were only second to God saw incredible weaknesses during the wars. The weakened colonizers could hardly resist independence demands. Missionaries, whose job was to convert, or "Westernize," learned a new meaning of "conversion" – internal conversion – whereby they were candidates as well. Other cultures became freely accepted in their own right. This was extended to liturgy, education, and other areas of human concern. African subjects such as African History, African Traditional Religions, African Philosophy, African Literature, African Languages, among others found their way into academic syllabi. It is at this juncture that one can sense a semblance of "intercultural encounters." Sub-cultures have become more meaningful. Globalization has become less one-sided.

Science and technology have not only benefited the West through subjugation, but also enhanced knowledge, ideas, practices and other benefits that are universally shared. Information and the fast means of communicating it have made the world more meaningful and united. As negative globalization is too powerful to be resisted by single nations – however strong they may be – international organizations to counter this menace have become a reality. This reality boosts the hope of subjugated countries to be independent and control their own destiny. Thus, the world has, certainly, become a much better place to live in through positive globalization.

Re-learning to Be Human

"Re-learning to be human" means that we are no longer human. We need to learn, once again. The questions we need to ask, therefore, is in

what has dehumanized people and how. Who is dehumanized? What needs to be learned to regain the status quo?

The answers to the questions may include the following. First, the undermining of human values is a double sword that has dehumanized people. Those who lack these values – Buntu – are dehumanized. They have become inhuman to their fellow human beings. This is evident in the broad day robberies of other people's property. "Cut-throat capitalism" tells the tale. "Capitalism without a human face" brings out the message. "Capitalism knows no boundaries" exposes the insatiable spirit of greed and selfishness that focusses on consumerism and even undercuts patriotism. It is this spirit that the misuses of material and monetary values. Material and monetary values, tampered with human values, are beneficial to humanity. Thus, there is a marked difference between positive and negative capitalism, and negative and positive globalization. Liberalism only becomes a nightmare when the haves bar the have-nots from getting anywhere. It is an open door that is open only to some and closed to others. Competition is positive only when the ground is level and there are no deliberate efforts to promote some while barring others.

Re-learning to be human, in this sense, means to repent of our sins. Exploitation needs to be stopped by exploiters. One lesson exploiters need to learn is that without greed, without speculation, without consumerism and related sins, there is enough to go around, thus minimizing the ugly gap between the haves and the have-nots. Without exploitation, Africa would be the richest continent. Given the African spirit of sharing and generosity, the rest of the world would genuinely benefit from Africa. There is a lot to develop in Africa. Due to too much interference, there is only a one-sided flow of resources out of the continent. Meaningless noises and agitations, such as the banning or even burning of useful and expensive ivory, instead of developing and promoting genuine trade of ivory, prevail. If Africa has land, animals, reptiles, plants, etc., and if there are people who need these things, what is wrong with developing genuine trade between the two parties? How do you protect an elephant by making it useless to the people who would otherwise know how to safeguard it?

There is a continuous mistake of polarizing Africa vis-à-vis the West. This was planned, planted and watered by racists whose strategy was to loot African property under the guise of superiority, inferiority, eugenics, and other justification theories. Many tend to think that evils such as negative capitalism are things of the West. However, globalization is real. There are capitalists in Africa who need to repent of their own sins, even more than their mentors'. The clichés that modernism is to the West as traditionalism is to Africa are quickly dying a natural death. Consumerism, negative competition and other sins dubbed the ills of the world are alive and kicking all over the world.

While the dehumanizing forces urgently need to re-learn to be human, the dehumanized, too, must participate in this re-learning exercise. There is a need to evaluate Euro-centrism and Afro-centrism and come up with a mutual and more balanced view of things. There is a sense in which mental colonialism has been a big success. Re-learning to be human, in this sense, means to address this attitude to others and the self on the basis of color. Why should a pauper run to your home today, for dear life, and tomorrow turn you into a beggar, right under the roof of your house? Color has strategically blinded so many that the sight of any conveys riches and everything positive, even when underneath dresses there no under wears, shoes hiding torn socks, the color on the sur-face covering a criminal inside, among other contradictions. Re-learning to be human is looking through masks and ridiculing falsehoods. Re-learning to be human is self-discovery, pride and enthronement. It is looking at things from the right angle. It is understanding life.

However, there is another angle to this "re-learning to be human." With globalization things move so fast that many people end up being "cogs in the wheel," or left out of world events. Many Africans who "participate" in globalization either merely consume products, or are forced to adopt policies and implement them even to their own detriment and peril, or vaguely and inconsistently follow what happens, or those who are victims, e.g., of proxy wars, orchestrated conflicts, etc. may be said to be "cogs of the wheel" in the globalizing machine. They are simply being tossed around sometimes without knowing by whom and why. The majority of Africa sways under this ambit. Countries which are deliberately impoverished that they cannot develop the common good and deliver services are maliciously ridiculed, accused of human rights violation, and of being "failures," while, actually, they are being directly failed. Whoever wishes to know more about this need not strain as the practices cover all aspects of life, including elections, governance, policies such as social, economic, political, health, educational and military, among others. Often Africa does not know where it is coming from, where it is, and where it is going. Some leaders who try to put a semblance of direction in place are dubbed long ruling dictators that must go home, as if the West did not need Bonaparte, Churchill, the kings and queens and other long serving leaders who made and still make the West what it is. The detractors of Africa do not want stability. Hence, they target leaders with developmental ideas and policies. They erase institutional memory. The world listens in the name of democracy, good governance, human rights, among other sweet coated falsehoods. This, to some extent, captures the history of the so-called post-independent Africa. Africa urgently needs to become independent.

In Africa, the orchestrated instability and confusion is so fast that mainly the planners who carefully check its successes and failures can

catch up with it. As shown above, the "Arab spring" is nowhere near what has befallen Africa. Yet, it is common to hear some ignoramuses wonder when this "spring" will come to Africa, as if Libya were somewhere near Iran, Algeria near Syria, and Egypt in the Persian Gulf. There are even some who view this disaster in a positive light; they look forward to it. This proves right the dire need for "re-learning to be human."

Yet, another aspect of this "re-learning" pertains to some groups that appear to be securely out of the globalizing world. Given what befalls those countries in the thick of globalization, one finds it difficult to decide whether these groups are fortunate or unfortunate. Globalization is so aggressive that such groups are difficult to come by or determine. For example, the "backward" and allegedly isolated pygmies of Congo and other forests – so "civilized" as to rank among the best nature preservers and protectors of "mother earth" – are equipped with sophisticated technological products they use to guide lumberjacks, mineral prospecting exploiters, among other Western "investors." The idea of a "secure group" may be brought out by a warning cum hope expressed by a lady to her missionary brother – imaginary or true – that a new group of people had been discovered, and that the lady hoped missionaries would desist interfering and spoiling them. Sometimes one wonders where the world would be without the highly praised "intervention" regarded by many as sheer "interference." This "interference" has been recognized, almost too late, thus initiating ideas such as "inculturation." Acceptance of "other cultures" has twisted the meaning of such concepts as "conversion" which originally meant a paradigm shift from one's religious beliefs and practices to a change of heart. This change needs to take place inside the invaders who tell lies about "civilizing" others as a guise under which exploitation takes place.

What would be the status of the world without selfishness, consumerism, global warming, proxy wars, orchestrated conflicts, planting corruption and incompetence through regime change just to strategically place your own products, etc.? The world is teeming with social, political, economic and other types of turmoil – thanks to colonialism, neo-colonialism, negative globalization, and associated theories and practices like "civilization" which in many African societies is still equated to "lack of Western culture." Many still brand themselves as "blind," "ignorant," etc. forgetting that those who want systems of their own spread elsewhere are also "blind," "ignorant," etc. of the "converted" own world views, belief systems, values, cultures, languages, ideas, concepts etc. that compare favorably with those being imposed or are even better.

A quick glance at independence, egalitarianism, social justice, peace, and other ideas and practices in ethnic groups, as contrasted with the confusion ushered in by modernism tells the tale. For example, there are traditional clear and impeccable democratic systems that are far superior to

the predominantly rigged elections where foreign interference, vote buying, threats, etc. determine the outcome, and where parties exist as "foreign" concepts without any principles but only being good at dividing people along foreign originating and enforced divisions such as religions and even "tribes" as we know them within African modern nation states. In traditional Africa, people never referred to themselves by the names created, legislated, gazette, registered, enforced through colonialism and imperialism. The strategy of these divisions is quite visible in orchestrated violence, but oblivious to many myopic people who cannot see beyond what happens under their noses. The world, Africa included, is not in short supply of these.

One wonders what would have happened in Western thought and practice, if the infamous Inquisition had not scared stiff thinkers such as Galileo, Descartes and others who had grand ideas and plans that remained, forever, locked up inside them. This wonder is double-edged. First, the delayed scientific technological revolution is lamentable. Second, the undermining of human values through modernism/scientism is equally regrettable. Hence in examining intercultural encounters there is a dire need for balance.

Conclusion

If unity is power, then a united world is the most powerful thing – only second to God. The role of globalization in achieving this goal is unquestionable. However, two major issues remain thorny: the nature of globalization and participation in it. Globalization is categorized into positive and negative. Positive globalization means peaceful and useful intercultural encounters, both at home and abroad. This globalization dates from times immemorial. Traditional Africa has widely participated, tremendously contributed and left an indissoluble mark on this globalization. Positive globalization also refers to similar modern intercultural encounters, both at home and abroad. Modernism is characterized by science and technology, which have changed the world by making movement and communication easy. Movement and communication have made sharing products easy as well as enhanced cultural encounters. Africa has a big problem of participation in this globalization. As the world has been divided into traditional and modern, Africa is relegated to the former which is dubbed backward, underdeveloped, exploited, among other negative attributes. Thus, the positive globalization mentioned above basically belongs to the West and to similarly scientifically and technologically developed countries.

Chances of African participation in modern positive globalization are thwarted by modern negative globalization. This is the globalization car-

ried out by multi-national forces which have an invisible hand in exploitative activities all over the world, particularly in countries endowed with natural resources. This forms Africa's biggest problem, as the continent is rich in such resources. Thus, the scramble for Africa, marked by the Berlin Conference in 1885, has remained not only intact but has also been by multi-nationals that find themselves in the privileged position of not being accountable for their exploitative ventures.

The hope for Africa is unity – which is an uphill task due to forces that will interfere against the independence. It took the rest of the world incredibly long to support African freedom fighters against a handful of the colonizing countries whose greed led to the wars that assisted decolonization. Today's situation is more complex as multi-nationals are part and parcel of the colonizers and their selfish interests. However, it is not the whole world that share in the loot. There are many counter-globalization organizations that are of great benefit to Africa in its struggle to attain its true independence.

The United Nations was created to stop bilateral attacks, conflicts and wars. It is not perfect but can be improved to attend to world issues without interference. Similar international bodies need the same treatment in order to deliver what is expected. Aristotle's principle that "man is a political animal" still stands. The principle simply means that human beings need one another to survive. No one – as an individual, a country, or a continent – is self-sufficient. None is free of exploitation. Capitalism knows no boundaries. Africa, like other continents, therefore, has to fight for survival. Just as God helps those who help themselves, the rest of the world will come to Africa's aid when Africa fights for its rights and needs. As the African adage counsels, it is not enough to feel bitter or complain. "The frown on the face of a goat does not stop it from being taken to the market."

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7.

Beauty Torn by a Prick of Thorn: Rumi's Philosophy of Human Love

OSMAN BILEN

Human self-conception or idea about him/herself is often reflected in arts, sciences, human institutions, etc., concerning human existence, nature, potencies or limits. The place of humans in the universe and the like have occupied philosophical debates more frequently than the questions related to "human sentiments." Love as the most innate human sentiment was expressed frequently in traditional folklore, poetry and other literal and visual arts. Rumi's literary expressions of human love deserve analysis in terms of a "philosophy of love." More often human love is explained as self-love, egoism, and sometimes reduced to self-preservation or sexual drives. Or it is simply praised as civic virtue contributing to a social unity. For Rumi, love seems to imply more than that, for it constitutes primarily an ontological feature of human beings, as well as an aesthetic and ethical virtue. Against philosophical theories based on the primacy of the epistemological faculties of her human beings, Rumi offers "love" as a way of knowing which brings the epistemological and ethical integrity of human beings to another dimension. In this paper we will analyze how the unity of knowing and doing appears as a result of human love in Rumi's messages. It will become clear that only the infinity of human love can overcome the difficult task of bridging the infinite distance between human beings, nature and the divine.

Introduction

Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (1207-1273) is no doubt one of the most famous poets in Muslim Sufi tradition. Love, a concept familiar to people of different cultures and interest, is a central theme of his *Masnavi*.[1] Yet, it still remains a challenging task to study Rumi's understanding of love in its various implications. He remarks that had all the forests been pencils and the oceans ink, words of couplets or Masnavi

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[1] *The Mathnawí of Jalālu'ddín Rūmī*, ed. and trans. with commentary by Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co., 1925-1940), vol. VIII; first complete English translation of the *Mathnawī or Masnavī*. An abridged translation was made by E.H. Whinfield, *Masnavī-i Ma'navī, the Spiritual Couplets of Maulānā Jalālu'd-din Muhammad Rūmî* (London, 1887). A new translation published recently: *The Masnavi: Book One*, trans. Jawid Mojaddedi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Book Two, 2007. Henceforth references to Masnavi are to book and line numbers as I/18 or V/1250.

would never have come to an end – alluding to the fact that human life is finite and words are insufficient to explain love itself. However, we will try to follow the traces of his "words of wisdom" about love in their philosophical and moral implications.

Philosophies of Love

Although the word "philosophy" literally means "love of wisdom," philosophers have occupied themselves more with questions about the nature of knowledge or wisdom than the concept of love. It is also true that Plato's *Symposium* is the first philosophical treatise discussing various aspects and forms of love. He presents love as the human desire for what one does not already possess, which is beauty itself. Plato's first assumption is that at the beginning humankind was in a state of union with itself and appeared as a double-faced creature. This creature split in to two parts but subsequently desired to unite with the other half. Despite Plato's fame as the first philosopher discussing "love," Rumi considers him as the physician of self-conceit and pride:

> *Hail to thee, then, O Love, sweet madness!*
> *Thou who healest all our infirmities!*
> *Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit!*
> *Who art our Plato and our Galen!*
> *Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,*
> *And makes the very hills to dance with joy.*[2]

Whereas Plato's philosophy teaches us that the path to true wisdom is open to those who leave the world of senses and opinions behind and follow the path of rational wisdom, Rumi advises us to go beyond reason through love. While Plato wants to us to believe that love of wisdom is a sure ladder for the human mind to raise itself up to the world of eternal forms or ideas, Rumi, on the contrary, invites us to taste the sweet madness called love and to burn our reason in the blinding power of love in order to exalt our self to the world of the sublime over and beyond the world of desire, lust and pettiness and self-conceit. Therefore, it is possible to argue that one might find in Rumi not only a strong criticism of philosophical treatments of love, but also of philosophers' claim to a privileged position to know the real nature of love. The real question has nothing to do with that all human beings have some form of experience about the phenomenon called love, but rather with the so-called prerogative of philosophers to explain love and with the philosophical methods in their approach to love.

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[2] Rumi, *Masnavi*, I, 20-25.

Socrates – if he represents Plato's views – describes love as want, i.e., a desire for something that human beings do not have. The Greeks, just like many other peoples, admitted several forms of love, such as sexual, parental, filial and conjugal affection, friendship, love for country and love of wisdom. Some forms of love can be expressed by desire or attraction, *eros*; others by liking or fondness, *filia*. In all forms, be it filial or erotic, love has a definite effect on morality and on knowledge. The lover, not the beloved, acquires or fails virtue through his or her love. Two kinds of love are distinguished by Plato, that of the heavenly or of the earthly; love of soul or body. Attraction of a man to a virtuous soul is the former. Love is the love of beauty, which has nothing material; it is ideal. There is a scale of beauty, from bodies to forms, thought to minds and institutions to laws and sciences.[3]

Nevertheless, Plato's concept of love is primarily determined by the object of desire. In other words, love is desire for something human being lack. In his own words:

> Love is of something, and that which love desires is not that which love is or has; for no man desires that which he is or has. And love is of the beautiful, and therefore has not the beautiful.[4]

Therefore, the existence of a feeling or desire for something we call love for Plato is a clear proof for the lack of perfection in the human subject. Commenting on Plato's *Symposium,* Pico della Mirandola said that

> Hence it follows that the nature of the desired is in some manner in the desirer; otherwise, there would be no similitude between them yet imperfectly; else it were vain for it to seek what it entirely possesses.[5]

Perfect love, says the scholar, is for those who are

> remembering a more perfect Beauty that their souls saw of old, before they were fettered to the body, are kindled with an incredible desire of rebeholding that Beauty.[6]

This philosophical concept of love continued to strongly affect the later explanations of love in arts and literature. A case in point is Goethe,

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[3] George Boas, "Love," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 5, 90.

[4] Plato, *Symposium*, 204d-205.

[5] Pico della Mirandola, *A Platonick Discourse upon Love*, ed. Edmund G. Gardner (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1914), bk. II, sec. III, 24.

[6] E.G. Gardner, "Introduction," in *A Platonick Discourse upon Love*, 23.

who always seeks love as an unrealizable ideal. In his works, Goethe gives a quasi-religious tone to the sexual experience by idealizing love as perfection that seeks a goal which one can never reach.[7] Idealist philosophy of love raises it to the level of a mysterious cosmic power which can cause the spiritual evolution of her human beings. According to Teilhard de Chardin, "love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces."[8] He defines love as "a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution."[9] However, the more love is idealized, the more it becomes meaningless. For this reason, Le Rochefoucauld compares love to a ghost that everyone speaks of but few people have ever seen.[10] It is precisely for this reason that most people take their fancies to love. Hence human failure in finding true love cannot be taken as an antagonistic statement about existence of real love, as Schopenhauer claims.[11]

On the other extreme of philosophical accounts of love is the empirical approach. Believing only in concrete and observable facts, empiricists find no essence of love except in our fancies. Thus, from an empirical point of view, love has only an "essence beyond our sight, or hearing, or touch, which uplifts us." As such, for instance, E. Glyn defines love as conscious or "unconscious desire to create love's likeness." In other words, it is simply a natural animal instinct for preservation. In art and cultural life, this natural instinct is adorned with the "beauties of imagination."[12] Like many of his contemporaries, E. Singleton, too, adopts this empiricist approach by selecting the following instances of love found in art and literature:

> Love at first sight, ferocious and tenacious pursuit of the unloving, quarrels, reconciliations, misunderstandings, pardons, concealed love that fears to speak, timid appeals, stratagems to trick hated guardians, woman's wiles and man's contrivances,…old love that reawakens, love that lingers even behind cloister bars, love that faces death unflinchingly, and the despair of love forsaken.[13]

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[7] Boas, "Love," 93.

[8] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *On Happiness* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1966), 3.

[9] Ibid., 6.

[10] François La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Maxims and Reflections*, ed. George H. Well (London: Methuen, 1912), 45, Maxim 76: "There is real love just as there are real ghosts; every person speaks of it, few persons have seen it."

[11] Arthur Schopenhauer, "Metaphysics of Love of the Sexes," in *The Will To Live: Selected Writings of Arthur Schopenhauer*, ed. Richard Taylor (New York: Continuum, 1990), 69.

[12] Elinor Glyn, *The Philosophy of Love* (Auburn, NY: The Authors Press, 1923), 13.

[13] Esther Singleton, "Preface," in *Love in Literature and Art* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1901), v-vi.

There is also an ordinary common usage of love in all cultures and societies. The simple question, "what is love" might seem nonsensical for an ordinary man. The common sense meaning of love seems so obvious that it defies any answer. Some even go further to define it as self-love in disguise. Love can manifest itself as a desire for something beautiful, appealing, satisfactory, fulfilling, etc. Yet self-gratification lies at the bottom of all of these. However, in ordinary usage the word "love" means liking or physical or sensual attraction to something or somebody. One can describe his or her feelings of fondness or liking of a food, a piece of music, a friend, a landscape, etc.: "I love this pie or that person."

This common usage of the term complicates the issue rather than giving a clue to comprehend the nature of the feeling we call love. Instead of taking our lead from the feeling, one might better consider the object of love to explicate the matter. We may come close to a better understanding of love starting from the term at use in such contexts as fondness for a person or a family member. Feeling a desire for something with the expectation of pleasure to the body is called lust. Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, describes family life as the first form of communal life where an individual acquires moral virtues. He believes that feelings between spouses and same sex siblings are either directed towards mutual benefit or mutual denial to the other self in rivalry or jealousy. However, recognition of the other self in itself is possible in mutual love between brothers and sisters, since there is no expectation of benefit or conflict of interest. Therefore, love as a moral virtue can be described as recognition of the other person in his or her own self unmixed with any desire for benefit. Hegel exclaims that, "the brother, however, is for sister a passive, similar being in general; recognition of herself in him is pure and unmixed with any natural desire."[14]

This division of love into categories of natural and supernatural, human and celestial, sensual and intellectual, spiritual and carnal, etc., could be found in contemporary literature on love. However, instead of giving priority to intellectual or celestial love, modern approaches to love are determined by naturalistic and positive scientific tendencies. The holistic approach is another perspective on love. For instance, Glyn claims that all three forms of love may be united in the same person:

> The spiritual and the mental alone would be friendship; the physical and the mental would be merely of earth; and the spiritual and the physical would be without balance; there must be the trinity in perfect love.[15]

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[14] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 275.
[15] Glyn, *The Philosophy of Love*, 14.

In his *Essay on Love*, Hull divides love according to the faculties of human soul: senses, reason and spirit. Hull claims that "sense of love is agitated, passionate, unreasoned, a pure instinct." While rational love is always "calm, passionless, reasoned and a pure volition"; spiritual love goes "with sympathetic vibration of sense, resulting in emotion, feeling or affection."[16]

All this analysis presents nothing that is already not familiar to us; however, it enables one to draw certain philosophical conclusions. Love is defined here in terms of imperfection to be fulfilled either through epistemological faculties or ontological human desires for a higher order or perfection. Therefore, love as a desire for perfection is in essence a form of human yearning for something that the subject does not already possess. Love is also defined as a desire for something of unequal nature, i.e., something that the subject is attracted to, because it is from another order of being. However, these definitions are all based on the Platonic assumption that love is feeling from a being which lacks something that the object of desire possesses more perfectly. In other words, love is considered to be feeling for something to be received or acquired. Thus, love is thought to be a passive or receptive feeling or virtue. Furthermore, love is regarded to be an inclination towards an object that may be totally unaware the fact that it is the object of a certain desire. That means the loved object or person may be totally unconscious and indifferent to the plight of the lover.

Love as a Human Capacity for Intuitive Knowledge of Reality

As we implied at the outset, Rumi is critical of the rational account of love. He takes into consideration all the aspects of love as natural desire. However, since Rumi does not present his own understanding of love in a systematic philosophical style, we can only make a summary of his critique of the philosophical accounts of love we have mentioned so far. He is not the first among the Sufi sages to question the ordinary and philosophical definitions of love. Many other poets, artists and literati in the East or West seem to have inquired, speculated and reflected about this particular state of mind we call love. But Rumi seems to believe that love cannot be subjected to rational or cognitive analysis. For any attempt to understand or explain something in terms of "what it is," we must face the real difficulty of finding the right way to approach it. Love is no exception to this, if one tries to conceive what the true nature of human love is. Rumi warns us that to this end we need a non-speculative science: "real science is seeing fire directly; not mere talk, inferring the fire from the smoke."[17]

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[16] Ernest R. Hull, *Essay on Love* (Bombay: Examiner Press, 1912), 55.
[17] Rumi, *Masnavi*, VI, 2505-6.

One can see that the concept of love described here is completely opposite of what we have already outlined above. For Rumi, love is first of all a feeling of giving, not of taking; it is relinquishing something that a human subject already possesses, not acquiring something that he or she already lacks. Love, for Rumi, is an essential virtue or power we already and always have from the very beginning. It is not a longing for the "paradise lost," or remembrance of a lost perfection. Rather, love is the perfection granted to the human being at creation. For this reason, Rumi could say: "I deny humanity to those who are incapable of love, to those who have not experienced love."[18]

As Rumi points out, the feelings we call love is no secret to anyone. But life distractions may cause us to forget all about it. Two kinds of love are described here: the first kind of love is a human state of pure need; the other is of pure annihilation. Those who feel love as a means of satisfying a desire or providing for certain needs may find the real love burdensome and cannot stand the annihilating fire of love. True and real love is recognized by everyone, except those who are occupied only with the errands of life. Those who are not fish cannot sustain themselves in water long and they would soon be bored, unaware of the reality of love to bear its ups and downs.

According to Rumi, certainty is acquired in three stages: the knowledge of certainty, the vision of certainty and the intuitive actuality of certainty.

> In the ear's hearing there is the transformation of equalities; in the eye's seeing there is the transformation of essences. If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself) and do not abide in the certainty of (knowledge derived from) others. There is no intuitive (actual) certainty until you burn; (if you desire this certainly sit down in the fire.[19]

This is not certainty of reason, but of the heart. One seeks no proof in the presence of something that stands proven in front of one's eyes. Every proof that is not spiritual results in vain, for he is considering the final end of human beings.[20] Intelligence is also of two kinds: acquisitive and intuitive. Acquisitive is acquired from "books, teachers, reflection,

[18] Rumi, *Divan-ı Kebir* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1960), vol. 5, 420.
[19] Rumi, *Masnav*i, II. 859-61.
[20] Rumi, *Masnavi*, V. 568-72.

memory and from concepts, from the study of sciences." The other intelligence is a "fountain in the midst of the soul."[21] "That which is the object of love is not the form."[22] Thus, for Rumi, love signifies that

(a) The divine trust or the perfection reflects on human beings who are supposed to manifest this gift in all their relations with existence including the Divine Being itself whose attraction draws all creatures back to reunion with their Creator.

(b) Love is not a desire for taking in, receiving or acquiring something; rather it is giving away the gift already received, reaching out to others as a mirror to the divine perfection, a conscious self-annihilation that leads to eternal life in God the universal Noumenon, by whom all phenomena subsist.

Does this self-annihilation mean that one must live the life of an ascetic? On the contrary, it is not required of human beings to withdraw from society, but from a life of self-deceit. Rumi declares that

we have no asceticism, all is by providence and mercy, this is exactly our way: complete love, journey through love, experience of pleasantness, joy, and gaiety of peace. Love is and is the only provision for us.[23]

All phenomenal existences except human being are but "veils" obscuring the manifestations of the real existence, the Divine Noumenon. However, had the sustaining presence of the Divine withdrawn from the phenomenal world even for a moment, they would at once relapse into their original nothingness. In other words, "Nature conceals God, but the supernatural in man reveals Him."[24] The human being is the only existence with the capacity to realize and respond by transforming its ego as a mirror reflecting the infinite manifestations of Divine Love that originates and sustains creation. Sense knowledge and reason are not suitable for grasping the realities of the unseen world. These faculties may lead man to knowledge of the phenomenal and the sensible world, but cannot go beyond. Love is a virtue or capacity of the human being to penetrate into the moral, spiritual world of inner life. If we compare the three capacities for knowing, i.e., opinion, knowledge and certainty, rational knowledge is above opinion but inferior to certainty.

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[21] Rumi, *Masnavi*, IV. 1960-67.
[22] Rumi, *Masnavi*, II. 703.
[23] Rumi, *Divan-ı Kebir*, vol. 5, 420, line 5709.
[24] Rumi, *Masnavi*, IV. 1309.

Knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision. Knowledge leads to vision which is immediately born of certainty just as fancy is born of opinion.[25]

Rumi compares certainty as an intellectual virtue born out of love with four other incapacities of human self: animal self, desires, ego and reason. Life is sustained by the vital spirit in all living beings. At this level, vitality is the spiritual essence in plant life that continues in apparent conflict and harmony. Desire is the other power of the spirit that sustains life in the animal world. Ego is the spiritual essence in the human form of life that partly shares all characteristics of lower levels of life. Reason is the faculty of the soul distinguishing the human being in its own form of existence. However, reason is still suitable only for knowledge necessary to administer the needs of body. By virtue of being in charge of the body, reason can fall prey to egoistic instincts and may yield to a degraded situation where it has no share in love, but only strife, conflict, rivalry, struggle for dominance.

In modern political philosophy, these levels of life forms correspond to Hobbes' state of nature and even to the state where right is regarded as might. Rousseau's image of an individual, happy and in harmony with nature prior to the social contract, corresponds to this level of ego as human essence. Rumi believes that the highest form of human essence is the divinely inspired spirit which is called universal Reason. The human being is able to become the mirror of this universal reason that will be attained through love as a moral and aesthetic virtue. In other words, if the human being acquires the wings of love, it will be able to reach heights that the ego and reason cannot be imagined to attain.

Since the essence of all beings is love, the divine love has the greatest value which is the finality of all yearning. For this reason, Rumi always recites the Divine love guiding man to his journey in life. He compares reason and love, the futility of love for finite things and the misery of those who are unaware of the reality of love. According to Rumi, reason and the senses are unable to grasp realities of the invisible world, although these faculties can lead human beings to a certain point beyond which they are not able to pass. However, if man dons the wings of love, he can ascend beyond the point where reason and sense cannot go. Just as in the night of ascension, when the angel Gabriel warned the Prophet Muhammad that, if he goes a fingertip further, he is going to be burned; but the prophet reached beyond the threshold of infinitude (sidratu'l-muntaha). This is the point beyond which neither angels nor human beings can go. In other words, it is the last point of all existence and the threshold of the Divine

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[25] Rumi, *Masnavi*, III. 3061-81.

realm. For this reason, the angel Gabriel is the symbol of human perception, reason, knowledge; the Prophet is the symbol of soul and love.

A Sufi is the "son of the time present," because he is in love with all existence as mirror or instrument moved by the divine impulse of the moment. "The time present is a sharp sword," because the divine impulse of the moment dominates the lover and executes its decrees sharply. The essence of love cannot be expressed with words, but those who experience it know it. Someone asked Rumi, "what is being a lover?" He said "if you become like me you will learn."[26]

Seeking to know, to discover and to become are the three stages of spiritual development towards the recognition of the divine light of love that guides us. Reason or cognitive knowledge is only the beginning of this discernment:

Love; however, I will explain or describe; we humans will be speechless in defining love;
Although pen writes everything, it turns paralyzed when it comes to love.
Reason in explaining love is like a donkey meddled into mud.
Love and being a lover could only be explained only by love.
The evidence for *sun is* sun itself; if you search for evidence do not turn away from the sun.[27]

There are two forms of discernment: moral and an esthetic. Through moral judgments human beings are able to discern the significance or the universal value of entities. Through an esthetic judgment we discover the place in the total harmony we call universal beauty. Love as moral virtue is a cure for arrogance and vanity; the earthly body becomes sublime through love; those who tear their clothes in the search of love will be relieved of the burden of passion and sin.[28] Rumi emphasizes that passion, greed, arrogance, envy and vengeance can only be purged by the divine love. If people who recognize the spiritual worth of every existence are in majority in society, tranquility and peace will prevail. Just like all people need to learn a profession in order to earn a living, everyone needs to learn the art of religion which is rewarded by love.[29] For this reason, Rumi tells us that "my mother is love, father is love, my prophet is love, and my God is Love. I am a love child and I have come to tell about love to the world."

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[26] Rumi, *Mecalis-i Sab'a*, 82.
[27] Rumi, *Masnavi*, I. 117-121.
[28] Ibid., 22-25.
[29] Rumi, *Masnavi*, II. 2618-27.

Love as a Moral Virtue

For Rumi, love is first and foremost an essential human virtue. The absence of love as a moral virtue is responsible for the degradation of the human situation. One reason for this degradation is the confusion between desire and love. There are two kinds of desires: one is directed to the opposite nature, the purpose of satisfying the need for food; the other is directed towards beings of the same nature with opposite accidentals, for instance human beings of opposite sex for preserving the species or procreation and satisfaction of desires. Desire for objects of opposite nature can be called, in the ordinary parlance, "love" for the finite things. But desire for beings of the same nature should not be directed solely to the satisfaction of lust or desire. Rumi once warns that "if love is attached color, odor, it is not love, it is shame on the person."[30]

Therefore, true love between human beings and between human and God cannot be sustained on the level of satisfaction of needs. Love is and should be considered as a moral virtue in our dealings with our fellow beings. Rumi speaks of three basic moral virtues of humility, openness and care. Care is a virtue of man who makes his bodily desires submitted to the will's or heart's desire, i.e., the desire to actualize human true selfhood. If a man cares about his "being-in-the-world" – borrowing one of Heidegger's terms – or basic necessities of his existence, it means he is turning a blind eye to "being-towards-beyond."

> When the body bows in worship, the heart is a temple,
> And where there is a temple, there bad friends are weeds,
> When a liking for bad friends grows up in you,
> Flee from them, and avoid converse with them.
> Root up those weeds, for, if they attain full growth,
> They will subvert you and your temple together.
> O beloved, this weed is deviation from the "right way,"
> You crawl crookedly, like infants unable to walk.
> Fear not to acknowledge your ignorance and guilt,
> That the Heavenly Master may not withhold instruction.
> When you say, "I am ignorant; O teach me,"
> Such open confession is better than false pride.[31]

As Rumi points out, the moral virtues of humility, openness and care for character development let the human actions to reflect the primordial perfection of the human soul in the mirror of fellow human beings. We all are mirrors for each other. Human life is part of a dynamic process in

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[30] Rumi, *Masnevi*, I. 224.
[31] Rumi, *Masnevi*, IV. 1380-90.

which not only moral virtues are realized, but also possibilities of infinite happiness are achieved. Moral life, which requires human beings to make free choices, is the mark of humanity. Choosing to love others is also a decision that can be made by free agents who achieve freedom from petty desires. For Rumi, human burden is to become free and freely share the perfection bestowed on humankind at the moment of its primordial creation by God.

> God created the angels with reason and the brutes with lust, but man He created with both reason and lust; the man who follows reason is higher than the angels, and the man who follows lust is lower than the brutes.[32]

Rumi, like many other Sufis, considered that the human soul has a divine origin, that is to say it is "breathed into him by the Creator." This may either mean that the human soul has a pre-natal existence or that the human soul as a substance is received from the Divine. Moreover, the perception of beauty of the objective world is not always a form of remembrance of that supreme beauty in the spiritual world. It comes as a result of recognition of love as the reason and wisdom behind the Divine creation that is reflected by all beings in the world. The body is the veil; but in the ecstasy born out of the experience of love, the human soul could behold the Divine Majesty manifested in all creatures.

Although Rumi has no favorable view of neo-Platonist philosophers, we can quote one of Avicenna's poems on the soul where it expresses a similar view:

> Lo, it was hurled Midst the sign-posts and ruined abodes of this desolate world.

> It weeps when it thinks of its home and the peace it possessed,
> With tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or rest,
> And with plaintive mourning it broods like one bereft
> Over such trace of its home as the fourfold wind have left.
> Creation was regarded as the output of the All-Beautiful.
> The visible world and all therein were a reflection of the Divine,
> An ever-changing scene full of the *Spirit of God*.[33]

On this higher form of love that results in the experience of unity of all beings, Iqbal comments that "in the higher Sufism of Islam unitive

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[32] Rumi, *Masnavi*, IV. 1500-15.
[33] Quoted by Hadland Davis, *Wisdom of the East: The Persian Mystics: Jalalu'd-din Rumi* (London: John Murray, 1912), 21.

experience," it is not something in which ego effaces "its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite."[34]

The intellect is helpless in expounding love; it is love alone that can offer the explanation of love. Although love is the motive behind all creations, it defies all definitions, all descriptions. Love is an end in itself, and the price of love is life itself. The lover values love above everything else, since he/she has not come by it easy and cheap, he/she cannot give up his/her consent and throw it away. Through the power of love, one frees oneself from the bondage of life and attains a treasure and a value which cannot be measured in terms of gold, power or possessions.[35]

> Since in each heart there is a window to other hearts,
> They are not, separated and shut off like two bodies.[36]

Unlike the bodies which are closed to each other, or each is enclosed within itself, hearts can join together without losing the individuality of the self. Rumi makes a parallel between heart-body and the chandelier glass and light. "Thus, even though two lamp-dishes remain to be not joined, yet their light is united in a single ray."[37]

Rumi's word of love is a moral call for humanity to find unity in diversity, inviting all to a peaceful life on earth.[38]

> Come; come over, moreover, how long this brigandage?
> As you are me and I am you.
> How long this discrimination of you and I?
> We are light of God! Why this separation among us?
> Why light escapes from light?
> We are all from the same yeast, our brains and heads too.
> But under this bowed sky we see double…
> From these five senses, six directions
> Carry all what you possess to the country of Unity.
> Till when you will continue only to speak of Unity.
> Come on, deny your Ego. Get united with everybody.
> So long as you remain in yourself, you are a particle.
> But if you get united with everybody, you are a mine, an ocean.
> Believe that all spirits are one! And all bodies are one!
> Just like almonds in quantity hundreds of thousands;

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[34] M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh.M. Ashraf Publishers, 1986), 110.
[35] Rumi, *Masnavi*, I. 1468.
[36] Rumi, *Masnavi*, III. 4395-96.
[37] Ibid., 4397-98.
[38] Rumi, *Divan-ı Kebir* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1959), vol. 4, 423.

But there is the same oil in all of them.
There are many languages in the world, in meaning all are the same.
If you break the cups, water will be unified and will flow together…

In conclusion, what Rumi believes in, then, is the religion of love. In his inimitable way, he tells us that love is a Divine gift entrusted to us over and over again. The highest end to which human love must lead is not only an individual morality of self-realization but also social moral order that reflects peace within and without. For him, life is so short it should not be wasted away by meaningless hatreds or blood feuds. We should all live the good life here, because nobody will live indefinitely. Thus, Rumi echoes the call of his contemporary, the 13th century Sufi poet Yunus Emre: "I am not here on earth for strife. Love is the mission of my life."[39]

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[39] Talat Halman, ed., "Editor's Foreword," in *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

8.

The Good Stranger: Representations of the Other in the Romanian Folk Culture

IOANA BASKERVILLE

According to Romanian folklore texts, the stranger is generally perceived as an unwanted presence, giving rise to suspicion and fear, received reluctantly inside the household, kept at a distance by magical rituals and overstated hospitality. This attitude, which could be actually considered as characteristic of many traditional societies, was also encouraged by the essentialist tendency of characterizing other ethnic groups and declining the possibility of an authentic reciprocal knowledge. At odds with this general situation, I will try to delineate in this chapter the exceptions to the rule. Though rarely found in folklore texts, positive opinions on strangers became more abundant when more Romanians started to travel abroad and had the chance to meet other ethnic groups in their own surroundings. Modern and recent experiences of this encounter prove that the old tendency is being discarded.

Coming into contact with foreigners was always an intricate moment for the members of a traditional society; this great encounter created mixed feelings of curiosity and distress. When exploring the vocabulary of Indo-European institutions, the linguist Émile Benveniste noticed that the Latin terms *hostis* ("enemy") and *hospes* ("guest") are etymologically akin.[1] This linguistic reality is confirmed by the social history of ancient to modern peoples, given the powerful ambivalence of both sympathy towards guests and fears raised by the presence of the unknown within someone's private space. Discussing the violent rite of initiation to which strangers were submitted by Central Eskimos tribes, Julian Pitt-Rivers finds explicable and logical this disturbing behavior:

> Such hostility towards him hardly requires an explanation since the threat which he represents to established norms and to the sanctioned order of society is patent, apart from any imagined dangers, natural or supernatural, which, in the absence of any knowledge of him, he may incarnate.[2]

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[1] Émile Benveniste, *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1969), 87-101.

[2] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The law of hospitality," *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 1 (2012): 506.

Not having information about the stranger's values, norms and lifestyle, a community's reaction to unknown presences places them automatically under the presumption of guilt.

Besides obvious psychological distress, these negative feelings were also the result of prejudices associated to individuals of another culture, religion, or language – the main identity markers of a stereotyped "other." As Lucian Boia noticed in a chapter of his book, entitled "The Other: Reality or Fiction?," about cultural imaginary, it is a universal tendency of human beings to give the concrete Other an imaginary form; we get distracted by this fictional Other while missing the real one. This is an operation of both simplification and amplification which, taken to the last consequences, would transform the Other into a symbol or even into a caricature, a strange mix of vices and virtues.[3]

While investigating exotic societies, anthropologists noticed these people's reactions to otherness:

> Primitive societies have…been said to treat the limits of their tribal group as the frontiers of humanity and to regard everyone outside them as foreigners, that is, as dirty, coarse sub-men or even non-men: dangerous beasts or ghosts.[4]

It is also well known that ancient Greeks situated the other ethnic groups at the edges of their *oicumena*. Anthropologists tried to attach culture-bound explanations to the tendency of individuals to understand the Other through artificial representations which in many cases surpass and counterfeit reality, but can help them make sense of something unknown and apparently incomprehensible.[5]

Apart from the actual foreign presence, the Romanian popular imagery treated outside involvements of any kind as supernatural danger. For example, the source of illnesses and afflictions comes from foreign malevolent spirits. In magic folklore, the diseases are also perceived as foreign guests coming uninvited to disturb the world of humans. The poetic structure of incantations shows that the affliction would be eliminated when this strange source is identified – a magic principle that transforms the charm in a long list of foreign guests arriving to destroy the integrity of the body.

The dead, who belongs to the otherworld, is also described in folk texts as "the strange one" treated as unwelcome in the world of the living. The presence in the household of somebody unknown could very well

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[3] Lucian Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 117.

[4] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd., 1966), 166.

[5] N. Rapport and J. Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology. The Key Concept* (London: Routledge, 1991), 10.

become a source of supernatural attacks, therefore determining a great array of magical means to counteract this eventual danger, such as magic objects or substances. According to Romanian peasants quoted by early ethnographic documents, the image of the stranger is not the result of stereotype production, but rather a rejection of any foreign element whatsoever. In order to understand this fear appropriately, we should understand it in the broader context of the folk imaginary.

During the late Middle Ages, historical documents described the European population as an organic and collectivistic society, in which the individual was totally subordinated to the well-being and interests of his/her community (i.e., families, clans, tribes). In modern times, a still prevalent rural and somewhat isolated universe, the Romanian society was still refractive to foreigners. The anxieties stirred up by strangers were also a result of the harsh impact of foreign rulers and foreign cultural influences imposed from outside over the long medieval centuries. In a reality populated by strangers from outside which were sometimes considered the source of war, famine, etc., medieval Romanians started to have to deal with strangers from the inside, which were the ethnic and religious minorities living side by side with the Romanian-speaking population. Besides the foreign neighbors, due to imposition of a foreign rule or to traditional military conflicts, they started to express negative feelings towards Turks/Ottomans, Greeks, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, all these conflicts being clearly illustrated by folk literature.

The inside foreigner was often over-accused, many times just for potential or imaginary deeds. Not framed, but additionally charged, his culpability was simply amplified. In a type of attitude that goes back to the tendency of the exotic to envisage the Other as outside of the human sphere, the foreigner was depicted with horrifying though allegorical or symbolical terms that went from "uncivilized" to "pagan" and even "demonic."[6] Lack of direct contact with another ethnic group is normally the source of stereotypical images not verifiable from direct individual experiences. Romanian folklore texts identify the unknown and the foreign territory not as places populated by people, but as spaces where they do not know anybody.

Prior to the emergence of the Romanian nation-state and the capacity to define themselves in ethnic terms, Romanian-speaking people in the three historical regions were explaining these differences first and foremost through linguistic criteria. Following the historical development of the Romanian society from the simple rural life with its face-to-face relations exchanged in the primary group, the modern Romanians faced a

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[6] Ion-Aureliu Candrea, *Iarba fiarelor. Studii de folclor. Din datinile și credințele poporului roman*, foreword Dan Horia Mazilu and ed. Al. Dobre (Bucharest: Fundația Națională pentru Științe și Arte, 2001), 195-208.

great number of challenges due to the intense and gradual fragmentation of urban and modern civilization.

For diplomatic reasons, enemies or neighbors were put under long-lasting and overcritical charges, but this attitude was motivated rather by a defensive motivation than by pure xenophobia. When Romanians traveled abroad as part of the military experience during the great world wars, the description of foreign lands did not put a negative emphasis on the encounter with the inhabitants, speaking another language and exhibiting strange habits, but on the sorrow of the traveler being far away from things left at home: "…Dear mother, I am going to war,/In a foreign country,/Where I do not know anybody…" or "…– Why are you crying, soldiers?/Are you maybe afraid of the Hungarians?/– No, we are not afraid of the Hungarians,/But we are missing our girlfriends we left home."[7] Or "I am going to foreign countries/Where I do not know anybody."[8]

Foreigners and foreign spaces as historical realities are richly reflected in folk poetry and music. Aside from strong literary folk representations of the battle of Romanians with Ottomans and other oriental peoples, information about western ethnic groups could also be encountered in these poetic reflections. For example, Romanians in Transylvania living under the Hapsburg rule in the 19th century preserved their experiences within the Emperor's army in the so-called "war songs." Recollections of French soldiers came within the descriptions of the great battle at Solferino fought on the 24 of June 1859 that resulted in the victory of the Franco-Sardinian Alliance:

> …But what were the French soldiers doing?/They were coming as a threatening storm cloud,/Dressed in red uniforms/Just ready for the fight./They were sprinkling us with their guns/And with their cannons were shooting on us…[9]

In the same lines, the folk expression "the German Emperor" comes to depict Emperor Franz Joseph I, who personally commended his armies at Solferino.

Personal narratives of the harsh experience of being recruited by the Hapsburg army became one of the important topics of folk songs created by Romanian-speaking Transylvanian peasants. The obvious feelings of

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[7] Collected in 1940 from Alexandru I. Amzulescu and Marian Munteanu, *Cântecul poporan din Muscel* (Bucharest: Valahia Publishing House, 2010), 727.

[8] Collected in 1917 from G. Ivănescu and V. Șerban, eds., *Folclor din Moldova. Cântece populare românești* (Bucharest: Editura pentru literature, 1969), vol. I, 526.

[9] Collected in Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii. Orizont și stil. Spațiul mioritic. Geneza metafore și sensul culturii* (Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură universal, 1969); Ion Micu Moldovan, *Folclor din Transilvania (1863-1878)*, eds. Ion Cuceu and Maria Cuceu (Cluj Napoca: Mega, 2015), 71.

hatred towards "the bad German" are at the roots of this poetry composed in time of war:

> Come, mother, to say good bye,/Accompany me from home to the crossroads,/To see the German taking me away,/Though my shirt is unwashed,/And my heart is in sorrow;/With no bread and no salt,/Only with my gun on my shoulder…[10]

Historians noticed that the emergence of the nation-states in the 19th century emphasized the boundaries between ethnic groups, a process of exclusion and inclusion that accentuated intercultural distances; idealizing one's own nation automatically meant downgrading the others.[11] In the case of Poland, for example, during the nationalization process, the category of the Other came to embrace all ethnic and religious minorities.[12] Demarcating between "us" and "them,"

> the concept of the nation itself seems to push particular individuals or groups – either political dissidents or ethnic minorities – into the status of 'outsider'.[13]

The foreign living in the same community has the status of what Georg Simmel described as "the potential wonderer": "a person who comes today and stays tomorrow," and does not ever belong to the group. This person will always be a stranger and forever separated from the majority. In order to explain this concept, Simmel gives the example of the trader's status in pre-modern European societies, an example that appropriately describes the importance of Jewish, Armenian and Greek traders within the Romanian Principalities' commercial life during the medieval and modern eras. Within the Romanian countries, the Greeks and the Jews were identified with their job as traders, and their economic activities were also considered dishonest, which made their behavior reprehensible. However, one should admit that, in the traditional opinion of Romanians, foreigners more often appeared in an unfavorable light than in a positive

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[10] Collected in 1872 from Moldovan, *Folclor din Transilvania*, 113.

[11] Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului*, 126.

[12] Brian Porter-Sczucs, *Faith and Fatherland. Catholicism, Modernity and Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14.

[13] Brian Porter, *Nationalism Began to Hate Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

one.[14] At the end of the 19th century, Moses Schwarzfeld, a Jewish-Romanian writer, noted that "There is no people that has ever been in contact with the Romanians and was found fair, good and honest."[15]

In sum, in Romanian folklore and traditional culture the foreigner is in general either ridiculous or pernicious, but definitely proves indispensable in the development of self-images. Balancing their own self-opinions between self-esteem and self-deprecation, Romanians could not be very generous with the portrait of other peoples. An old Romanian text from the beginning of eighteenth century lists an inventory of gifts distributed by God to several nations:

> Trading to the Turks,/Drunkenness and swine-like living to the Russians, Stoutness and stupidity to the Serbs,/Preaching and lying to the people of Rome, Filthiness to Germans,/Scab and lassitude to the Saxons,/Luck with money to the Greeks,/Pride to the Poles,/Beauty to the Circassians,/Envy to the Romanians, Heresy to the Armenians,/Richness to the Jews,/Poverty and bareness to the Gypsies.[16]

The Hospitality Culture

The Romanians have always considered themselves to be great hosts, offering until nowadays the traditional "Bread and Salt" as a sign of warm welcome to their most distinguished guests. Hospitality was considered an important item in "the national mythology" of Romanians,[17] if is regarded as a distinctive Romanian trait, though anthropologists documented it in many other ethnic cultures, near and far. For example, the Greeks as well praise their "traditional hospitality."[18] Expressions of conviviality and commensality were able to counteract and to go hand in hand with ethnic polarization and conflicts.

Explained in the Romanian language, being hospitable signifies being human in the full sense of the word (according to the Romanian verb *a omeni* = "to be a good host, to be welcoming"). Therefore it means to acknowledge your guest's human status and to be willing to integrate him/her into your world. This is why Vintilă Mihăilescu, when discussing the

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[14] Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului*, 154.

[15] Andrei Oişteanu, *Inventing the Jew. Antisemitic Stereoypes in Romanian and other Central-East European Cultures*, foreword Moshe Idel and trans. Mirela Adăscăliţei (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2009), 268.

[16] Ibid., 270.

[17] Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului*, 153.

[18] Michael Herzfeld, "As in Your Own House: Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. David Gilmore (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 75.

Romanian hospitality rituals, considers that this behavior of the Romanians towards strangers could be seen as a great source of intercultural communication configured much before multiculturality came to be recommended as a strategy of the peaceful globalized contemporary lifestyle.[19]

Studied on a deeper level, the positive intention to show hospitability proves not just a gratuitous action, motivated by the altruism or self-pride of the host who wants to be considered a person of goodwill. It is rather a complex social strategy. This is explained clearly by Michael Herzfeld within the context of the Mediterranean traditional society:

> The ritual incorporation of the guest through toasting and feasting reproduces the assimilation of the stranger who might tell otherwise disreputable stories about the village, or who might take home negative images of the entire country.[20]

Balancing between the tendency of displaying hospitality and keeping themselves reluctance, the Romanians were still able to draw positive images of the Other and borrow valuable cultural influences from foreign neighbors. One of the best examples offered by Romanian folk culture in this respect is how profoundly foreign choreography inspired Romanian folk dances. As an artistic manifestation with a strong emotional element, as well as providing positive energy and acting as a bond between the people involved, folk dance is a good example of the Romanians' willingness to open themselves towards foreign influences. Dances from Serbs (with over 500 versions in the Romanian choreography), Jews, Armenians, Russians, Greeks, Poles, etc.,[21] are well represented in the Romanian folk choreography. The fact that folk dance is, as any other folklore element, an ethnic identity item strengthens the importance of this cultural borrowing. Students of the relationship of national music and ethnic identity have pointed out the role of folk music in representing the spirit of the nation:

> The quintessence of the nation exists prior to its imagination; hence, the task of music is to represent that preexisting entity through music….National music therefore, frequently turns to folk music, laying claim to its authenticity.[22]

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[19] Vintilă Mihăilescu, *Fascinația diferenței* (Bucharest: Paideia, 1999), 115.

[20] Herzfeld, "As in Your Own House: Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society", 78.

[21] G.T. Niculescu-Varone, *Dicționarul jocurilor românești. Coregrafie populară* (Bucharest: 1931), 18, 41, 58, 109, 111, 130.

[22] Philip V. Bohlman, *Music, Nationalism and the Making of the New Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011), 60.

The Good French

At the end of the 17th century, a favorable image of Rome and subsequently of Romance peoples was becoming fashionable among Romanian intellectual circles. During the Enlightenment, what was described rather pejoratively as "Catholic," un-Orthodox or confessionally different Europe started to be called by these early Romanian elites "civilized" Europe.[23] This long-lasting general sympathy for the West had developed gradually as a dual appreciation for the German and French cultures. As an important 20th century Romanian philosopher noticed, these two western influences received different roles in the shaping of Romanian cultural imaginary:

> The French culture is like a professor who asks to be imitated;
> the German culture is rather a teacher who directs you back to
> wards yourself.[24]

The construction of a national identity was for Romanians a strategy of following the West, but this strategy designed by elites was definitely separated from the rural people's perception of westerners.

During the second half of the 18th century, the isolated Romanian society started to open itself to European culture, especially through the French, which was being brought into the Romanian principalities first by the Phanariote Greeks,[25] and gradually by French diplomats, travelers, tutors, books, newspapers, etc. This influence became official with the opening of the French Consulate in Bucharest at the end of the century.[26] The French otherness had henceforth an important impact over Romanian modern culture, propagated from the elites to the middle class especially through the French language taught by the many French tutors populating the Romanian principalities' homeschooling system.[27]

For Romanian elites in the second half of the 19th century the salvation from Oriental world and Ottoman rule through the much-wanted Westernization. The French model owes its importance to the Latin ori-

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[23] Alexandru Duțu, *L'État des lieux en sciences* sociales (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 9.

[24] Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii. Orizont și stil. Spațiul mioritic. Geneza metafore și sensul culturii* (Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură universală, 1969), 243.

[25] Nicolae Liu, "Orizont european în iluminismul românesc. Francofonie și cultură franceză," *Revista istorică* XIX (2008): 143.

[26] Doina Calistru, "Influența franceză în spațiul românesc. Modalități de receptare, forme de expresie," in *Franța. Model cultural și politic*, eds. Al. Zub and Dumitru Ivănescu (Iași: Junimea Publishing House, 2003).

[27] Olivier Dumas and Felicia Dumas, "Enseignement du français et pensions français à Iași au XIXème siècle," in *Franța. Model cultural și politic*, eds. Al. Zub and Dumitru Ivănescu (Iași: Junimea Publishing House, 2003), 117.

gins of the two languages, French became therefore the compulsory language in middle school and a mandatory skill of every well-educated person. Local intellectuals were directly praising the great French culture and civilization, and recommended their compatriots to imitate "the luminous clarity, the smoothness and brilliance of the French mentality."[28] The Romanian Francophilia was gradually spread to the middle class of the Romanian modern society, and massive borrowings from French vocabulary had populated Romanian language until nowadays.

The Romanian folklorist Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu noticed the paradox of the Romanians who admired for no apparent reason the everlasting emperor "Bună-parte" (Romanian form for "Bonaparte") and the French nation. As examples for that he quotes two epic poems: one is what he collected himself from Moldavia, and the other was originated in the opposite corner of the country among the peasants in Northwestern Transylvania. The Moldovan poetry is an open salutation to France: "I wish you to live a long and happy life,/You, good and gentle country/Yet the Russians are not letting you rest!" The Transylvanian poem displays the same congratulatory character: "I wish you to live, beautiful country,/Chosen from all the others;/You should live and become the queen/To run everybody else!"[29] The Romanians also became sensitive to the ill fate of Napoleon: "Do not take far away,/The emperor Bună-parte!"[30]

The Good German

A steady impression of the generic German was also consolidated during early modernity of the Romanian countries. This time, the German's portrait took shape more due to a direct contact with the ethnic group than through indirect cultural representations as it happened with the French. As a result of several waves of migrations-colonizations under the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Romanians in Transylvania and Northern Bucovina lived for centuries very close to their German neighbors in close-knit communities. The Romanian Germanophilia was therefore drawn less from mythical and imaginative sources, and resulted more from direct observation. The Germans were admired for their rigor, hardwork and effectiveness, which differ from the romantic and frivolous French mentality.[31]

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[28] Dumitru Drăghicescu, *Din psihologia poporului român* (Bucharest: Albatros, 1995), 256.

[29] Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, *Folcloristica*, ed. I. Oprişan (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2008), vol. I, 187.

[30] Ibid., 188.

[31] Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 163.

Using folk sources, Stelian Dumistrăcel concludes that the Romanian peasant envisage the German as "the Westerner" or "the European" *par excellence*.[32] In Romanian folk narratives, the Saxon neighbor receives the status of a distinct character, whose generic name is "Honț" – a Romanian version of the name "Hans" which is considered by the Romanians to be a frequently used German first name. According to these satirical stories, the Saxon is always tricked by the Romanian, beaten, and has his money taken.[33] As the victim of the Romanian, the poor German does not actually gather negative traits of the Romanians, but rather puts his/her opponent in an unethical posture.

As enemies in the Second World War, the Germans are depicted on the battlefield as a dreadful force: "…Crazy Germans are coming/With swords and bayonets,/To eagerly kill us…"[34] Romanian peasants introduced in their poetry curses against what they saw as the originator of the great war: "Hitler, I hope you will not have/Candle when you die,/Funerary ritual bread and candle,/Because you raised countries to war."[35]

Coming from opposite direction is the positive cultural feedback left by the Germans in Romania. Beyond the likely positive stereotypes, German colonists living in the Romanian-speaking regions since the colonization waves in the 12th and 13th centuries left a lasting positive contribution to the cultural values of their majority neighbors. Anthropological research in bi-national villages in Transylvania has found more than just a peaceful cohabitation. Through expanding a German medieval form of sociality called *Nachbarschaft* (neighborhood) towards their Romanian covillagers, the Germans managed to transmit their principles of providing to neighbors human and material reciprocal assistance in case of need. Strictly based on territorial contiguity, the German social institution presented an inclusive type of human relationships that tolerated ethnic or religious differences. The importance of this association proved its efficiency and influence paradoxically after most German ethnics left their Transylvanian villages after the 1990s for Germany.

Contemporary social research in these areas found that even after the actual propagators were gone, the remaining Romanians were propelled to continue the German example. These resulted "Germano-centric communities"[36] were reminding themselves nostalgically of the "work ethos,"

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[32] Stelian Dumistrăcel, "Germanul în mentalul rural românesc," in *Identitate/alteritate în spaţiul cultural românesc*, ed. Al. Zub (Iaşi: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press, 1996), 221-222.

[33] Candrea, *Iarba fiarelor. Studii de folclor. Din datinile şi credinţele poporului roman*, 207.

[34] Collected in 1958 in Amzulescu and Munteanu, *Cântecul poporan din Muscel*, 732.

[35] Collected in 1940 in Amzulescu and Munteanu, *Cântecul poporan din Muscel*, 741.

[36] Gabriela Coman, "Vecinătăţile fără vecini," in *Vecini şi vecinătăţi în Transilvania*, coord. Vintilă Mihăilescu (Bucharest: Paideia, 2002), 94.

"personal determination," punctuality and discipline of the Germans.[37] A similar portrait is suggested also by Romanian proverbs about the German. According to these folk sayings, the German is honest and shows a respectful demeanor: "to say it straightforwardly, like the German" and "to walk straight, like the German."[38]

This idealizing framework was obviously strengthened by the regretted absence of their past neighbors, whose presence was now evaluated as a golden age of community spirit. Acknowledging the superiority of the Other by the Romanians is therefore a possible reaction to ethnic diversity contexts, and the generic German enjoys a lasting positive portrait.

Contemporary Times

According to recent sociological surveys that evaluated the Romanians' heterostereo-types, Americans are considered "pragmatic," the French "bohemian," and the Germans "well organized." It is also noticeable that all westerners are portrayed as "civilized,"[39] confirming once again, that many centuries after the great reorientation of the Oriental Romanian Principalities towards the West, the steady tendency for Romanians to acknowledge the merits of Western Europe.

As a collectivistic culture, the contemporary Romanian still tends to see the family as the primary in-group, thus individuals are led to act for the welfare and benefit of their group over all others.[40] According to sociological investigations of the contemporary psychological and cultural profile of Romanians, the attitude towards foreigners is still dominated by fear and mistrust. According to the scholars analyzing of these data believe that negative feelings toward the people from other ethnic groups are not exactly a sign of their intolerance or xenophobia, but comes from their strong need for security and their anxiety in front of the unknown.

Hospitality is still today a main cultural value of the Romanians. Dorin Bodea interprets the pleasure of offering food and drink in the context of a harsh history of the Romanians when confronting with the scarcity of resources in the previous century. He connects hospitality with the strong family values that Romanians cherish, provide emotional security and disinterested affection, for the family environment but satisfies primary needs and ideal hospitality.[41]

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[37] Ibid., 97.

[38] Iuliu Zanne, *Proverbele românilor* (Bucharest: Socec & Co., 1901), vol. VI, 229, 231.

[39] Daniel David, *Psihologia poporului român. Profilul psihologic al românilor întro monografie cognitiv-experimentală* (Iași: Polirom, 2015), 294.

[40] Ibid., 167. See also Dorin Bodea, *Românii, un viitor previzibil?* (Bucharest: Result Development, 2011), 31.

[41] Bodea, *Românii, un viitor previzibil?*, 61.

In dealing the relation between the majority and ethnic minorities living under the same nation-state was proposed by anthropologist Jennifer Cash, following her extensive research in Moldova, as a solution for overcoming ethnic and linguistic divides:

> The particularities of hospitality indicate that it is possible to build a civic and ethnically tolerant national identity in Moldova. First, hospitality is part of a common culture that is shared by the country's several ethnic groups. Second, the value placed on hospitality reveals the population's general openness to people who speak different languages, and a generally positive evaluation of cultural diversity.[42]

It was the case for the Romanians in Transylvania willing to learn the social solidarity lesson from their German neighbors. It was also a lesson learned by people living peacefully in multi-ethnic communities. For example, autobiographical stories of Romanians in Banat revealed an awareness of the benefit of living in a multi-ethnic environment, among Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, etc., which determined them to display a flattering self-image as "the good Banat person."[43]

Beyond the past prejudices and tendencies of excluding, avoiding, and labeling other ethnic groups, a fruitful relationship with the Other should include, as a Polish anthropologist recommends, treating the foreign guest or neighbor as a distinct experience (not accessed by us), as what is unknown (beyond the limits of our cognitive horizon), and as an inspiration (a new way to follow).[44] Remembering and learning from the positive aspects of the stranger as gradually discovered by the Self through rich intercultural experiences is a necessity in every contemporary society.

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[42] Jennifer R. Cash, *Whose House is Moldova? Hospitality as a Model for Ethnic Relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Occasional Paper # 290, 2004), 7.

[43] Smaranda Vultur, "The Image of a Good European," in *Interculturalism and Discrimination in Romania: Policies, Practices, Identities and Representations*, eds. Francois Rüegg, Rudolf Poledna, and Colin Rus (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), 309.

[44] Dagnosław Demski, "Playing with Otherness: Within and Beyond Stereotypes in Visual Representations," in *Competing Eyes: Visual Encounters with Alterity in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Dagnosław Demski, Ildikó S. Kristóf, and Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2013), 71.

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Self-Encounters: Re-learning to be Human through Travel (and) Writing

OANA COGEANU

An Introduction

Travel and writing are two essential practices that trace our human evolution and render meaning to it. Human travel, defined by its intentionality, has become a formalized pursuit, for work and pleasure alike, regardless of its discomforts and dangers. Writing, an exclusively human and increasingly institutionalized occupation, provides a necessary record of our surroundings and, more selfishly, ourselves. In both travel and writing, we leave our mark on the world, inscribing our literal and figurative itineraries with footsteps and letters. That is what travel and writing have in common: they both use signs to make sense of the world – and making sense is, as this chapter will show, the core of being human.

What is characteristic of us as humans is not our erect posture, nor our complex languages, not even our organized societies; it is our ability to look at ourselves. Self-reflection pushes us to establish our dwelling, our place in the world. With self-awareness we embark on the traveler's conquest of space and the writer's conquest of time. Hence travel and writing are substantially linked to the assertion of our human nature and, as we have always already questioned our nature, they provide the means to learning and relearning to be human.

When the two practices are combined into the popular enterprise of travel writing, their consubstantiality becomes evident: with travel writing, we write landscapes and travel the pages; as writers and readers, we embark on a circular journey by reading the signs of the land and writing them into the signs of the book, then reading them into the signs of the landscape. It is a duplicated world of signs that becomes apparent in a travelogue. Thus travel writing implies a double reading/writing of signs, an intentional process of making sense, whose purpose is to signpost our own place through refraction of the other and reflection of/on the self.

The study of such signs and sign systems is the task of semiotics or semiology, an interdiscipline that is able to take as its material anything from words to objects to culture itself and moreover manages to set off the signifying relations thereof. Anything may be seen as a sign as long as there is a cultural convention which allows for a thing be used instead of something else. This means that any cultural phenomenon such as a word or an object can be studied in its signifying function or, in other

words, that both writing and travel, as well as their joint product can be looked at from a semiotic perspective.

Excursus 1

Semiology, proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure as the study of the life of signs in society, and semiotics, introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce as the philosophical study of signs and consecrated as a discipline "concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign,"[1] provide the tools for analyzing the nature and varieties of the semiosis of cultural phenomena. The semiotic study of signs and signification aims at examining the possibilities of knowledge and existence thus mediated – with reference to the human capacity both to know and to model the world through signs, in particular the signs of travel and the signs of language. In this sense, a semiotic approach provides a common ground for the investigation of travel and literature and is particularly suited for the study of their joint product, travel writing.

A semiotic view of travel writing therefore pledges a method dominated by the awareness and perspective of the sign. A sign is anything that can be considered a signifying substitute of something else.[2] Interestingly, this latter something need not necessarily exist, nor does it need to subsist when the sign replaces it. One should acknowledge from the beginning that a sign is not a physical unit, such as the visual image of a word or of a landscape, which is only the concrete occurrence of the element of expression. A sign cannot contain an immobile signified element of content, but rather represents the meeting site of mutually independent elements coming from two different systems associated by an encoding correlation,[3] hence the infinite (mis)readings of linguistic and geographical texts. Rightfully speaking, there are no signs, but only sign-functions, as L. Hjelmslev and then U. Eco observed, which means that signs are not fixed, but relational. A sign-function appears when an expression is correlated by convention with a content, and both elements become functives of the correlation,[4] gaining a meaning only through their relation within a given sign system such as language or travel. One should be aware that to signify signification interferes with and influences signification; but this is exactly the *meta-semiotic* effect of travel writing.

If both travel and writing are semiotic systems, how can one describe the double semiosis of travel writing? At this point it is Roland Barthes who can help define travel writing as a second-order semiological system.

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[1] Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1976), 7.
[2] Umberto Eco, *Tratat de semiotică generală*, trans. Anca Giurescu and Cezar Radu (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1982), 18.
[3] Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 1866.
[4] Ibid., 1855.

The term "semiological" is preferred here, in keeping with Saussure's definition, to emphasize the societal function of this double semiosis. Had Barthes taken travel as the subject of an essay like *The Fashion System*,[5] he would have successfully produced a semiological investigation of travel writing. Since such an approach to the system of travel would be consistent with the series of Barthes' *Mythologies*, the text below will tentatively uncover the unwritten manuscript of *The Last Envisioned Mythology of R. Barthes, in Imaginary Translation.* The following is a rewriting of Barthes' *The Fashion System*.

Although in the case of the semiological system of fashion, just as in the system of travel, real clothing/sights function within a sign system, Barthes focuses on the verbal structures that render them in fashion magazines in a desire to examine the supercode which words impose on the real; and so shall his unwritten semiology of travel focus on travel writing. Thus, the first step in authoring Barthes' *The Travel System* consists in delineating its object of study. Barthes notes that, within fashion magazines, there is always image accompanied by text: there is always image-clothing accompanied by the written-garment.[6] To paraphrase it, one can say that in travel guides there is an image-sight/site, as apparent in pictures of buildings and landscapes, accompanied by the written-sight. One can expand on this by claiming that in travel writing in general there is image-sight as imprinted by the journey experience in the mind of the traveler, as well as written-sight as the verbal rendering of that image by the writer.

Each of these exists in relation to what Barthes calls "real clothing,"[7] and what could be called here real-sights as the empirical constituents of an itinerary. In the case of real clothing, it must be known through the mechanical process of its production. Likewise, real-sights must be known through the process of their semiotic construction, a process in which some features are more marked, that is more significant than others (for instance, a church is usually more of a sight than the foot-way to its entrance). Image-clothing and image-sights are manifest through iconic structures, which the picture selects and presents and which the eye and/or camera of the traveler retains; while the written-garment/sight is manifest in verbal structures that translate the primary system of empirical signs into a second, linguistic one.[8]

Having described the object of study, one can then proceed to define the possible levels of its analysis: *the real sight code* (analyzing the relationship between the empirical sight and travel), *the written sight code* (in which propositions express the relationship between the written sight and

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[5] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (New York: Hill, 1983).

[6] Ibid., 4.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 5-6.

capitalized Travel), and *the rhetorical code* (revealing a metalanguage and connotative system describing the relationship between the written sight and Travel). By working not on empirical travel, but on written (or described) travel, one respects a certain complexity and order of the semiological project. Although the object of study consists of verbal utterances, the analysis is by no means concerned with one segment of a certain language; for what is governed here by words is not just a travel collection of real objects, but spatial features already constituted into a system of signification. Hence, one cannot disjunctively address travel and writing but the translation, so to say, of one into the other, insofar as both the former and the latter already form a system of signs, with a view to investigating the way in which these sign systems, in reinforcing each other, produce not only tourist sights, tourists and travel books, but also the abstract notion of Travel.

Travel writing thus constitutes, according to Barthes' unwritten mythology, a *second-order semiological system*. That is, if the messages of articulate language are normally saturated in the first-order semiosis of travel or writing by two systems – denotation/connotation, travel writing introduces a third system, which is made of an extralinguistic code and the subject of which is the object or the sight. Thus, travel writing as a second-order semiological system presents two different articulations: the first is manifest in the passage from the "real" ("object") code to the denotative system of language; the second appears in the passage from the denotative to the connotative system of language. That is to say that language functions as a metalanguage, as a symbolical system in relation to the object. This double system is resumed as a signifier in yet a third system, which Barthes calls "rhetorical": the literal message serves as the vehicle of a meaning of an affective or ideological order.

As a second-order semiological system, that is a system of signs constructed from a semiological chain that pre-existed it, travel writing can further be considered a Barthian myth. Barthes describes the myth, in the sense of the practice by which "every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society"[9] as a grand example of second-order semiosis in which the myth serves both as a system of communication, that is a message, and as a mode of signification, that is a form; this double function is fully covered by travel writing. In this Barthian mythology of travel writing, a sign, the relational product of a signifier and a signified, in the hyposystem of travel becomes a mere signifier in the hypersystem of writing. Hence there are two semiological systems at work:

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[9] Ibid., 235-36.

one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which I shall call the language-object, because it is the language which myth gets hold of in order to build its own system; and myth itself, which I shall call metalanguage, because it is a second language, in which one speaks about the first.[10]

Thus, the discourse of travel, which possesses a meaning of its own on the plane of language, becomes a mere form on the mythical level of travel writing.

One must note that, in the Barthian myth of travel writing, the first two terms of travel and writing, respectively, are perfectly manifest: neither of them is "hidden" behind the other, they are both given. However paradoxical it may seem, the myth of travel writing hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear, and the relation that unites the concept of the myth to its meaning is essentially a relation of deformation.[11] The meaning is always there to present the form; the form is always there to outdistance the meaning.[12] The essential point is that the form does not suppress the meaning, but impoverishes it; it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal.[13] This supports the idea that the second-order semiological system of travel writing confronts the first-order signifying practices of travel and writing with a reflection of their own and of each other and thus places into abyss the différance of signification.

To (un)complicate things more, literature in general, according to the Barthian approach, is a myth, that is, a second-order semiological system. There is a meaning, that of the discourse; there is a signifier, which is the same discourse as form or writing; there is a signified, which is the concept of literature; there is a signification, which is the literary discourse. In fact, a voluntary acceptance of myth(ologization) can define all literary texts. The issue has already been discussed by Barthes in *Writing Degree Zero*,[14] which is a mythology of literature that defines writing as the signifier of the literary myth, namely a form that is already filled with meaning and which receives the concept of literature from a new signification. Hence, the responsibility of literature to reality can only be measured in semiological terms; a literary text can be judged (to the extent that literary

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[10] Roland Barthes, *Mitologii*, trans. Maria Carpov (Iași: Institutul European, 1997), 242-43.

[11] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 250.

[12] Ibid., 252.

[13] Ibid., 246.

[14] Ronald Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l'écriture* (*Writing Degree Zero*) (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1953).

texts are on trial) only as signification, not as expression. Clearly, the writer's language cannot be expected to render reality, but to signify it.

It appears unlikely to vanquish Barthian myths from the discussion of travel writing: the very effort one makes in order to escape the mythical hold becomes in its turn the material of myth. Consequently, the best strategy in what concerns myth is perhaps to mythicize it in its own turn and to produce yet another myth. This reconstituted myth will in fact be a mythology, an analytical dismantling of myth.[15] All that is needed is to use the system of travel writing as the departure point for a further semiological system, to take it as the signifier of another myth: in the present case, to mythicize travel literature into the rhetoric of its academic study.

Excursus 2

The issues of signs and signification which map the territory of semiotics or semiology seem to have been of fundamental concern to travel writers themselves. From the beginning of the age of exploration, as David Scott demonstrates in his *Semiologies of Travel*, travel writers' "fresh encounters with the real in newly discovered lands" tended to initiate reflections on semiotic phenomena in terms of their status as signs and of the problems they posed for interpretation.[16] One should observe, however, that the encounters in newly discovered lands are not fresh, nor are they with the real. Encounters are not fresh because neither to known nor to unknown lands does the traveler arrive without prior representations derived from a network of cultural intertextuality which inform a range of subconscious, conscious and superconscious projections. Encounters are not real because in any such situation the traveler perceives, interprets and accounts, which constitute as many processes that obliterate the real in an attempt of comprehending and communicating it. In fact, the real is too morganatic a concept to employ in any definition. Especially from the perspective of a semiological paradigm, the real can be considered, at best, the idle god of semiosis; should one still presume its obtuse existence, it cannot be derived from contemplating the world of signs and signification. Hence, what remains of the traveler's encounter is exactly that: signification. The encounter is a *site of semiosis* not in the sense that it permits access to anything fresh or real, but because it makes visible the usually taken for granted processes of signification, prompting reflection on their Derridean différance, that is, the simultaneous promise and deferral of the real.

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[15] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 267.
[16] David Scott, *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

Consequently, the writing and reading of travelogues brings home, more or less explicitly, the issue of the relation between the sign and the real. A particular feature of this relation is that the travel writer's desire to (re)establish contact with the real by enjoying the authenticity of experience that travel allegedly offers is accompanied by a desire to commit such an experience to the symbolic, through literature, in a mediation that inevitably distances both the writer and the reader from the desired real. This simultaneous desire for the real and the symbolic is, however, not self-contradictory: travel reads the real into itinerary, sight and landscape; that is, it apprehends it by means of a sign system. Thus, in travel, like in language, the real remains the nostalgic source differed from and deferred by the symbolic, and it is this nostalgia that travel literature expresses. In this context, the reflex of translating travel into literature appears as a compensatory one, a creative attempt to catch a glimpse of reality in the refraction of art's second-hand copy.

It is now beginning to become apparent why "semiotics is far too important an enterprise to be left to semioticians,"[17] the concern with the processes of signification is not ascribed exclusively to those whose profession is language. As Jonathan Culler highlights, tourists too are "accomplices of semiotics…reading cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems."[18] In David Scott's synthetic phrasing, "travel writers are sign readers in many senses of the word."[19] Consequently, the writing and reading of travel literature can be considered the work of semioticians and lend themselves to a semiological approach. For when travel writers (do not) encounter whatever they are looking for, they are faced with the realization not only of the arbitrary nature of the sign's relations to the object but also of the strangeness of the sign itself, and their quest remains suspended in the interpretative *différance* of the other/of the text.

Yet travel writers persist in their search for a world where the distance between self and other, sign and object can be bridged, where the real is readily attainable through the experience of travel and the language of travel literature. In fact, this nostalgic *drive for the real* seems to me to be forever sublimated into the correlated signifying practices of travel and literature. It is the real, also known as meaning, truth, essence, being, etc., that constitutes the Holy Grail of the traveler's and the writer's quest. The legend demonstrates that the Grail is not always a beaker but a container; likewise, the object of the travel writers' quest can be a home, a destination, an idea, an identity – as containers of the real. And, as the legend certifies, the Grail remains absent, while each quest nostalgically reasserts

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[17] David Sless, *In Search of Semiotics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 1.

[18] Jonathan Culler, "The Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics* I (1981): 128.

[19] Scott, *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard*, 23.

its presence. Eventually, this must be of significance: the fact that the Grail never ceases to give rise to a quest.

Bearing this in mind, travel and writing can be looked at, on the background of the archetypal quest for the Holy Grail, as two mutually reflective signifying processes that, placing semiosis into the abyss, prove to conceal what they set out to reveal, namely the real, and to unveil what they set out to hide: the real-in-the-making. Consequently we embark on demonstrating, at a textual and metatextual level, in the spirit of the Grail legend, that the meaning resides in the journey, that is, in semiosis itself.

The Call

Back in 1983, Percy Adams cleverly noted that, "if critics of the recited voyage were as numerous as those who write about the novel, perhaps there would be a school forecasting the death of travel writing."[20] Yet travel writing, like the novel, is very much alive and proliferating. This epic tradition of ancient origins includes anything from reports of exploration, tales of adventure and travelogues to ship logs, memoirs, journals and diaries, editorials, guidebooks, etc., all documenting and preparing for encounters with foreign lands and peoples. Because there is travel of all sorts, there is also all sorts of travel writing, which may account for the modest complaint that "the genre of travel is itself an almost impossible thing."[21] The elements likely to constitute a voyage are difficult to count; save the departure and the arrival, the grammar of travel is only tributary to space and time, the humor of the traveler and the haphazard of encounters. It matters little that the voyage can be true or imaginary, can develop in the present, in the past or in the future, can be made on foot, on horse, by car or by plane; around the world or around a room, to the center of the earth or to the end of it, to Moscow, Paris or to the moon. Travel is always an odyssey.

What drives the odyssey of any Ulysses is human curiosity; but curiosity alone does not make travel writing. This itinerant curiosity is proportionate to the frustration of the drive for the real and seems to have reached a peak in the contemporary age of global access, a fact illustrated by the present-day wealth of writers and readers of travelogues. The contemporary high appeal of the species is demonstrated by its prominence on international lists of nonfictional best-sellers. The travelogues of William Least Heat-Moon, Paul Theroux, Bruce Chatwin, Frances Mayes, Bill Bryson, etc. have had an immense success, and travel writers such as

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[20] Percy Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 282.

[21] Quoted in Gyorgy Tverdota, ed., *Ecrire le voyage* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1994), 3.

Jan Morris, John McPhee, Peter Jenkins, and Calvin Trillin rank among the most popular authors. Moreover, travel writing has been increasingly approached, in earlier and recent years, by writers known primarily for their fictional work. In addition to B. Chatwin and P. Theroux, who have written both novels and travelogues, one can find travel books by William Golding, Michael Crichton, Peter Matthiessen, Richard Wright and Maya Angelou. As the above enumerations suggest, travel writing has a broad appeal to different authors, as well as to diverse readers, and as such has been and continues to be a growing industry. From the *Histories* of Herodotus to *Lonely Planet* best-sellers, travel writing has always attracted readership and, as long as human curiosity remains unsatisfied, a traveler's tale will find an audience.

As for the reasons for the general appeal and contemporary resurgence of what is otherwise considered a marginal literary category, scholars such as Alison Russell in *Crossing Boundaries*[22] have maintained that the general attraction of travel writing reflects the writers'/readers' interest in an alternative to fiction and that its current re-emergence indicates the writers'/readers' desire for a type of writing that responds more immediately to the ways in which the world changes. Indeed, the formal and substantial mobility of travel literature offers a reflection of such changes and captures the shifting perspective of borders and boundaries. In this sense, one cannot help noting the homonymy between the language of travel and the language of contemporary semiological scholarship. Contemporary literary and cultural critics tend to increasingly employ the jargon of cartographers and geographers: their discourse revolves around concepts of space and territory, the notions of center and margin, inside and outside, and this propensity of theory towards spatial metaphors reflects an increased awareness that all boundaries are social and cultural constructs. Such theoretical concerns with the cultural metaphors of travel and (dis)placement, as illustrated, for instance, in Caren Kaplan's *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*,[23] resonate with the spatial negotiations of travel literature. This may further explain the contemporary appeal of travel writing.

Generally speaking, however, nothing is more banal than the theme of the voyage, as Georges van den Abbeele declared in *Travel as Metaphor*;[24] yet nothing is more alluring. Only travelers know the satisfactions of appropriating landscape into itinerary. And the lure of making sense of the landscape through its discursivization as travel oftentimes attracts the

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[22] Alison Russell, *Crossing Boundaries: Postmodern Travel Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

[23] Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

[24] Georges van den Abbeele, *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

subsequent discourse of literature. Hence, the attraction of travel writing resides in the travel writer's tentative inscription of meaning on the world through experience and on experience through language. This double-phased translation is based on the extrinsic and intrinsic links between travel and literature that will be fathomed in the next section. Such links engender a series of reflecting metaphors that send ceaselessly, like in a game of mirrors, from travel to reading/writing and from the road to the book:

> The world is a book; each step opens a page for us. To travel is to go through the great book of the world; to travel is to put into writing that itinerary in order to unfold it before a sedentary reader.[25]

Thus, traveling, writing and reading bear a homological relation; author and reader identify in the identification of book and travel. Departure and arrival, beginning and end are the border references of both the text of life and the text of literature. The voyage, as such, is an image of life, and vice versa.

Beyond this double urge for signification, the appeal of travel literature may further be explained by its mythical narrative power. Travel literature is a form of story-telling, like any species of the epic genre; but its reader is drawn along into a quest by the forward motion of the double literal journey, of story and of discourse, while being initiated into the foreign territories of both land and letters. The traveler's/narrator's/reader's well-being and safe homecoming become the primary tensions of the narrative; the traveler's/reader's encounter with the other is its chief attraction. Indeed, as Casey Blanton observes, the journey pattern is one of the most persistent forms of all narratives – both fictional and nonfictional. Works as various as the *Odyssey* or *Moby-Dick* all follow this ancient pattern of travel: departure, journey and return. Nevertheless, these works resonate with a signification that goes beyond the narrated travel, based on a transformation of the (doubly) literal journey into a symbolic one. In terms of travel literature, this transformation is a work suspended; since the empirical journey is permanently referred to in the text, it resists direct transformation into a symbol, being rather drawn into an exemplary, mythical dimension by means of its narrativization. This transformation, or transcendence, serves to re-enact for both writer and reader what Joseph John Campbell identified as the *travel monomyth*. It is based on the archetypal experience of the journey, where the hero is seen as one who travels into a foreign region of wonder, encounters fabulous forces and wins victories against his opponents (or the unresolved parts of

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[25] Quoted in Tverdota, *Ecrire le* voyage, 3.

him/herself) and returns home with the power to bestow boons on his fellows.[26] In works which employ the form of the travel monomyth as a (leit)motif, the story always already situates itself on a symbolic level. With travel literature, one comes closer to the substance of the monomyth in the literary translation of empirical travel, as the traveler/writer/reader reiterate the production of meaning through language out of experience.

Encounters

A quick look at the historical relations of the two semiotic practices of travel and writing provides a primary illustration of their intricate connections. In this respect, an important turning point in the history of travel (and) writing is marked by the Renaissance. It is usually considered, in Foucauldian footsteps, that during the Renaissance Western thought negotiated the transition between an analogical episteme and a rational, Enlightenment episteme. As Foucault argues in *Les mots et les choses*,[27] the analogical episteme, which operated in so-called primitive societies and was capable of equally integrating myths and scientific facts, was replaced in the Enlightenment by an episteme that established scientific principles as accounting for all experience. This distinction between the analogical and the rational episteme is of special relevance for travel writing, which oftentimes expresses the clash between the two models of thinking, a clash that becomes gradually relativized beginning with the 19th century's shift into what Foucault describes as the modern episteme.

In his referential *Semiologies of Travel*,[28] David Scott refines the Foucauldian opposition between the analogical, pre-Renaissance and the rational, Enlightenment episteme by adding that, at the very time of the victory of reason, Western thought was exploring through travel the possibility of superimposing an iconic or visually motivated system of representation on a symbolic or conventionally logical one. Since the belief in a motivated system of signification is coterminous with the analogical, integrative episteme, while the acknowledgment of the conventionality of signification adheres to the rational, segregational episteme, this empirically-based observation contradicts the Foucauldian pattern. Thus, it seems that the transition from an integrative to a segregational episteme and further could rather be seen as a process of ebb-and-flow, in which the two mindsets are not contradictory but complementary. The foregrounding of the rational episteme represses the analogical episteme to

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[26] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), 23.

[27] Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses. Une archeologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

[28] Scott, *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard*.

the background, from where it manifests in sublimation. When the rational episteme prevails, the analogical episteme does not simply disappear; it emerges as the *nostalgia of integration* ever more apparent in travel (and) literature.

As David Scott observes, the link between the emergence of the Enlightenment episteme and the intensified travel to (un)explored countries is symptomatic of a deeper urge, which he defines as "that of a desire to relate the new – whether scientific or utopian – to the past – whether historical or mythological."[29] Thus, posits the scholar, the scientific quest for the new and the different is paradoxically accompanied by the nostalgia of an integrated semiotic system. The paradox, one should note, is only apparent, as the quest for the new is, in fact, driven by the nostalgia of the old. It is the nostalgia of the motivated and therefore knowable nature of the world and, the more the world reveals itself as arbitrary and beyond comprehension, the more acutely that drive is sublimated into travel and literature. The traveler carries with him/her the nostalgia of a state of wholeness s/he never knew, but the possibility of which is deduced from the very separation of being from the world by means of knowledge.

This separation of subject from object or of sign from referent is seen by Foucault as part of the birthright of the Enlightenment, whose project would have been to loosen the mythical, analogical bond. Yet this segregation can be considered to have originated as early as knowledge itself and is archetypally designated in the Western tradition as the Fall. As the Biblical tale suggests, access to knowledge breaks the divine unity of the individual and the world into a subject-object relation and calls for language as a tool offered for the subject to take possession of the object. The nostalgia of the time before the Fall is a dream of divine reunion between subject and object, man and world, God and the human being, a drive for an integrative real that is persistent throughout the history of thought. On this background, the Enlightenment episteme marks not the moment of separation but one attempt to capitalize on it by positing, with Descartes, that if the meaning of signs could be clearly and distinctly defined and the relation between them plotted logically, then truth could be accessed.

After the 18th century's rational enlightening, the nostalgia of integration and its resulting drive for the real provide the impetus of travel (and) writing. Part of its underlying project is

> to recover the possibility of the total 'experience', this concrete apprehension of others that is…typical of traditional communities but has been…eliminated from our own.[30]

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[29] Ibid., 2.

[30] Chris Bongie, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism and the Fin de Siècle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 9.

It is no coincidence that at this time anthropologists were rediscovering the equivalent of the analogical episteme in so-called primitive societies. In native cultures there were being uncovered epistemological structures in which the sign still seemed to have a motivated or sacred connection with its object, a link that social organization and ritual activity were structured to strengthen and maintain. The signifying practices of primitive societies as analyzed by Claude Levi-Strauss in *La Pensee sauvage*[31] and theorized by Jean Baudrillard especially in *La sociéte de consommation, ses mythes, ses structures*[32] repeatedly re-assign the sign to its object in a sacred bond and thus maintain a fixed and stable semiotic environment, in reflection of an integrated paradigm. The discovery of such semiotic paradises is subverted, however, by the same paradox of the Fall: knowledge is distance. Thus, as Scott highlights, to seek and to find an alternative integrative model is almost certainly to destroy it through the contamination of contact[33] and its subsequent emergence of self-awareness.

From the 19th century, the more or less explicit motivation governing travel writing was the "quest for a holistic model of human existence within the world."[34] The growth of travel is contemporary with, and compensatory for, the development of the rationalist episteme. Subsequently it evolved against a background in which the scientific/rationalist model of thinking characteristic of the epistemological paradigm originating in the Enlightenment lost ground to the relativization of knowledge and of cultural prestige that the semiological paradigm brought to Western thought. On this paradigmatic background, the frustrated drive for the real remains the permanent, sublimated source of travel (and) writing and the nostalgia of integration accounts for the content of travel literature as known today.

This could explain why, although the voyage theme goes back in time farther than Homer's *Odyssey* (800 B.C.), travel writing grew increasingly important in Europe from the 16th century's voyages of discovery and has become a major literary category in the modern period (the 19th and 20th centuries). In this respect, there is a travel literature for each age, that is, episteme. In the ontological paradigm of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Homer and Marco Polo write of real travel itineraries leading to mythical beasts, while in the 18th century, with the establishment of the epistemological paradigm, travelers begin to embark on a scientific mapping of the globe. In fact, in the 18th century, travel writing flourished at the same time that the picaresque novel became an established literary

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[31] Claude Levi-Strauss, *La Pensee sauvage* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962), 1st Edition.
[32] Jean Baudrillard, *La societe de consommation, ses mythes, ses structures* (Éditions Denoël, 1970).
[33] Scott, *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard*, 9.
[34] Ibid., 3.

form. As Paul Fussell notes in *The Norton Book of Travel*,[35] "almost every author of consequence produced one travel book, from Defoe to Addison to Fielding and Smollett, Johnson, Boswell, and Sterne."[36] During this period, the preferred form of Atlantic travel was the Grand Tour, which, like the novels and travel writing of the time, aimed at providing entertaining education. As Fussell further notes,

> Most Grand Tourists were young men, just extruded from one of the universities, and most were accompanied by a tutor or governor, probably a Minister of the Church of England.[37]

Travel, therefore, became "something like an obligation for the person conscientious about developing the mind and accumulating knowledge."[38]

In the 19th century, the establishment of railways democratized travel and thus enabled a heyday of travel and travel writing. In this bourgeois age, the middle class rejected the instructional Grand Tour in favor of more travel for pleasure.[39] The simultaneous rise of tourism and of the novel in the 19th century provides another example of the causal relationship between the evolutions in the modes of travel and writing. As Fussell insightfully argued, the novelist, the tourist and the writer (sometimes the same person) shared in the same global perspective, in a time when realism was the norm; the prevailing perception of the earth as chartable territory was reflected in all the writing of the period. Travel writers, like realist fiction writers, were inscribing both geographical and textual boundaries, writing of journeys to predetermined locations, linear, ocular voyages across the physical world, as well as through the fictional landscape of the novel. The value given to sight in this literature is echoed in the tourist guide books of the time. In *The Image*, Daniel Boorstin highlights how the publication of Karl Baedeker's guide books contributed to the relentless sightseeing of 19th century tourists.[40] In one theoretical step further, Mary Louise Pratt discusses in *Imperial Eyes* an emphasis on visual mastery which reveals itself in the repeated monarch-of-all-I-survey scene recurrent in 19th century more or less fictional travel narratives.[41] Similarly, travel, travel writing and generally literature about travel in the early 20th century exhibit congruence in methods and worldview. It is

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[35] Paul Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 1st Edition.
[36] Ibid., 129.
[37] Ibid., 130.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1992), 1st Edition, 104.
[41] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 201.

again Paul Fussell in *Abroad* who offers an insightful look at (British) literary travel between the world wars and concludes that the modernist "travel book is like a poem in giving universal significance to a local texture."[42] Quoting Samuel Hynes, the scholar emphasizes that the travel writers of the period "turned their travels into interior journey and parables of their times" so that "the travel books simply act out, in the real world, the basic trope of the generation."[43] As the fictional travelers in modernist literature, empirical travelers prefer solitary, individual journeys to the group tour of the previous century. Perhaps beyond its intentions, Fussell's book about travel writing highlights the parallel concerns and thematic interests of travel and writing as products and producers of societal paradigms.

With regard to contemporary travel, the changing conditions and methods of travel, as well as technological advances in communication have produced a new kind of traveler in the past few decades. Maxine Feifer employs the term post-tourist to cynically describe the self-conscious contemporary traveler:

> Above all, though, the post-tourist knows that he is a tourist: not a time traveler when he goes somewhere historic; not an instant noble savage when he stays on a tropical beach; not an invisible observer when he visits a native compound.[44]

In *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, John Urry elaborates on Feifer's observations on the tourist's condition of an outsider by positively focusing on the playfulness of the post-tourist, the delight in the "multitude of choices," the freedom from the "constraints of high culture" and the awareness that "tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience."[45] As both cited works suggest, post-tourism is a spatial practice of the semiological paradigm at its climax, and late 20th century travel writing shows a marked awareness of issues central to contemporary literary theory and criticism: the representation of culture and the representation of space or place. But if postmodernism involves the dissolving of the boundaries, as John Urry maintains, one may certainly ask what remains of travel, of which the setting and breaking of boundaries is an integral part? In his book on foreign American travel writing, Terry

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[42] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 214.

[43] Ibid., 214.

[44] Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 271.

[45] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), 100.

Caesar argues that tourism has undermined the cultural authority of travel and, by extension, the textual authority of travel writing. Fiction, he states, "comprises a far more powerful and authoritative representational system than travel writing."[46] Nevertheless, present-day travel narratives, through their appeal to professional and amateur readers alike, challenge in fact such dichotomic judgements since, by revealing the textually constructed authority of travel, they actually afford cultural authority to travel writing.

Throughout the common history of travel and writing paradigms as delineated above a common question constantly emerges: why travel? Why write? Travel and writing are not self-understood practices and their practitioners often phrase an answer to the question of motive. As a traveler, I can confirm that what drives the odyssey is, ultimately, the restlessness of curiosity; and the curiosity of the traveler finds its first and final expression in the archetypal figure of the wandering Ulysses. In his long and varied literary history, this archetypal traveler is offered two trajectories: Homer engages him in the *Odyssey* on an eventually circular journey away from and back to the home island of Ithaca. Dante in the *Divine Comedy*[47] assigns him to the Underworld for having embarked upon a linear trajectory of exploration beyond the limits of the ancient world. Ulysses' heroic display of human curiosity in the quest for knowledge as presented by Homer is exposed by Dante as a punishable embodiment of futility. The two representations are only apparently different, for the Dantesque critique picks up the ambiguity of Ulysses, the man of many ways, already suggested in the Homeric epic. Indeed, Ulysses may well be the ideal model for the powers of virtue and wisdom, but he is also the archetype of cunningness and knavish escapism. The generic traveler shall follow in the archetype of the Janus-like Ulysses, as illustrated in his apparently disjunctive Homeric and Dantesque trajectories, and subsequent representations of travelers oscillate between the qualities of the wise hero and a vision of the cunning knave, later associated with picaresque characters.

In the footsteps of Ulysses, the traveler's journey can be either centrifugal or centripetal. The former abandons a given home and chooses exile, transgressing the boundaries of the known and familiar for the remote and quasi-legendary, exchanging the single locus of a stable identity for the distant shores of a New World. The latter is directed towards what is perceived to be the ancient center, the Old World, involving a supposed return to a mythical place of cultural origin, which nonetheless is an exilar flight from self. The status of travel is an ambiguous one – like the status of its archetypal protagonist, the (over-)curious Ulysses, and the value of

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[46] Terry Caesar, *Forgiving the Boundaries: Home as Abroad in American Travel Writing* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 129.
[47] "Inferno," canto. XXVI.

a voyage, literal and literary, eventually comes to be doubted. The result-ing moral and intellectual ambivalence of travel also prompts a similar scepticism towards the transforming value of writing. The ultimate goal of writing, the end of the textual journey, is as problematized as the end of the empirical journey, being ceaselessly displaced by the writing itself and, as such, never achievable. The point of arrival and of self-realization proves elusive or illusory, like the projected destination of any literal or literary travel, which is at once disappointingly absent and tantalizingly present to the traveler's eye.

The Other?

One observation about the journey that constitutes the formal and substantial material of travel writing is that it may be an outer or inner journey or ideally both. As Fussell quotes Norman Douglas, "the ideal book of this kind offers us, indeed, a triple opportunity of exploration – abroad, into the author's brain, and into our own."[48] In fact, this *correla-tion of the outer and inner voyage* is the specific achievement of travel literature, containing a tentative balance of the objective and subjective, exterior and interior, impersonal and personal. Successful travel literature, maintains Paul Fussell in *Abroad*, "mediates between two poles: the indi-vidual physical things it describes, on the one hand, and the larger theme that it is about, on the other."[49] Then, what travel books are about is, in-deed, travel, that is, the interplay and negotiation between the observer and the observed, between the traveler and the travelee. Travel is not just employed as a symbol or a motif; travelogues build on travel and propel it into myth. As Janis Stout suggests in an explanation convergent with J. Campbell's description of the quest monomyth, the mythical power of travel tales resides in "the relation between subject and object, knower and known."[50] As the bifurcation of the traveling self into "considering subject and considered object"[51] allows for the experiences of the outer world to be transferred to the self that is being scrutinized, it converts the observation of the world into introspection, and therefore establishes a correspondence between the outer and the inner world. This suggests that travel literature is not only diachronically concerned with the shift from objectivity to subjectivity, but also synchronically motivated by a negoti-ation of exteriority and interiority on the itineraries of travel.

In negotiating between exteriority and interiority, subject and object, travel writing particularly foregrounds the description of foreign places

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[48] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, 15.
[49] Ibid., 126.
[50] Janis Stout, *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 14.
[51] Ibid.

and people. In *Haunted Journeys*, Dennis Porter insightfully correlates the representation of place and the representation of self:

> such representations are always concerned with the question of place and of placing, of situating oneself once and for all vis-a-vis an Other or others.[52]

It can be deduced in a second observation about the material of travel writing that the description of places and people functions as a mirror up to the traveler, establishing the terms of his/her encounter with the other and the self. Consequently, travel literature by its very nature dramatizes and highlights the processes of *othering*. The authority with which a traveler situates him/herself among others and commits to represent foreign places and people illustrates what Mary Louise Pratt, in the footsteps of Gayatri Spivak, famously describes as the process of othering in which "the people to be othered are homogenized into a collective 'they', which is distilled even further into an iconic 'he'"[53] that designates the standardized travelee – who is at least as often represented as a "she." In this context, the very frequent description of manners and customs serves as a standardizing narrative meant to codify difference, to fix the other in a timeless present where all actions and reactions are expressions of his assigned difference;

> it textually produces the Other without an explicit anchoring either in the observing self or in a particular encounter in which contact with the Other takes place.[54]

Pratt's description implies a due ideological critique of the process of othering. As *Imperial Eyes* demonstrates, to describe a foreign landscape or city using a panoramic view, as Richard Wright and, to some extent, James Baldwin do, betrays a tendency toward dominance and imperialism, which is persistent over the history of travel literature.

> In contemporary travel accounts, the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene gets repeated, only now from balconies of hotels in big third-world cities.[55]

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[52] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 20.

[53] Mary Louise Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 139.

[54] Ibid., 139-40.

[55] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and* Transculturation, 216.

However, the process of othering is not only the oppressive result of the imperial gaze, but the general instrument by which even the least imperialist of travelers inscribes the physical, linguistic and behavioral distinction of the travelees into a counterpointing narrative of différance. Othering is thus a cultural instrument of identification at the hands of the traveling self, and in this sense the purpose of travel emerges as a solid identification of the self by means of differentiation from the other. Yet one should consider that, from the myth of the androgyny to the reflection of the double and from Western animus and anima to Eastern yin and yang, the Self, both individual and collective, has often been suspected to be dual in nature. The Self which is born in the intercourse of dialogue, dwells in the dialectic of thesis and antithesis and tentatively rests in synthesis.

This view of the self as dual or dialogic, which is consistent with the psychology of the self in the tradition of William James and the dialogical school in the tradition of Mikhail Bakhtin, implies that *the other* is as much an exterior as an interior category. The other as the epitome of difference, together with what I call *the same* as the epitome of similarity, is an integral part of the colloquium of the self. For the self to achieve self-awareness, it need recognize the other as well as the same in exterior surroundings, internalize them as its constitutive boundaries, and then project such boundaries on outer circumstances for identification/difference. Hence for the self, identification is both exterior and interior, it is a permeable borderline that is and is not. Self and, by extension, culture can thus be conceived as a multiplicity of positions which represent the future perfective outcome of an ongoing colloquium. For the assertion of this dialogic self that dwells at the shifting intersection of the (in)finite coordinates projected by identification/difference the itinerary of travel (and) literature provides empirical and imaginal coordinates.

Consequently, one might expect the discourse of travel to be dialogic, that is, to prompt a literal and figurative dialogue between the traveler and the travelee and to further convey that exchange into the text of travel literature. Yet in their strategy of othering travel and travel accounts tend to be rather monovocal; hardly ever does the discourse of travel, in act and/or text, offer a site of dialogue between the traveling self and the travelee other. More often than not, the travelee is objectified into a singular or plural third person that constitutes the deferred referent of travel discourse and is hence excluded from the conversation between the author and the reader. Here arises a question about the nature of travel literature: "Is it possible to absolutely decenter oneself as narrator?," as Casey Blanton inquires. Better said, is it possible to decenter oneself as author? Is the

poetics of displacement[56] – the radical unpacking of cultural baggage by travel writers – entirely possible? Finally, is there any way we can ever know the other? In fact, we "always already" know the other at the same time we know ourselves, for the other is the self's necessary correlative. We know the other for it is the object of our own creation, and it is its existence that affords us the role of subject. The question is, then, can the other speak?

It is a fact of psychology that the identification of the self implies an identification of alterity; one recognizes the other before recognizing one's own reflection in the mirror and also recognizes the other within that reflection. Travel may be an enterprise of more maturity and wider scope than the infant's identification of family and face, but it is not essentially different. As such, its purpose might be to confirm sameness through an experience of otherness. Having formed an identity through the experience of the different, the imperially-capitalized 'I' never ceases to test and reassert it. Parenthetically, the *other*, too, is a dichotomous entity; for aside from the 'I', there are two other discursive hypostases of being: the *immediate alterity* of 'you' and the *distant alterity* of 's/he', both further introducing their enveloping plurals. The 'I' invokes the alterity of 'you' to co-inhabit the same space and time of dialogue as the two present instances of communication, at the same time it projects the 's/he' as the distant and deferred instance, the paradoxical discursive absence. The 'I' subjectifies the 'you' as its interlocutor and objectifies the 's/he' as the locution.

Hence travel writing, like all discourse for that matter, can only allow one voice, be that of the imperialist or of the postcolonial traveler: *the voice of Identity*. The other cannot speak in the text of the 'I' not (just) because of some imperialist conspiration, but because it has no discursive presence. The other cannot be given a voice because it is not a speaking subject, but a projected object. There is no way out of the 'I'/'we'-centrism of a given text for there is no speech outside of the 'I'/'you'/'s/he' discursive trinity. That is not to say that speech is forever denied to the travelee: the projected 's/he' of one's travels may be the projecting Identity of his or her own journey. The eventual *dialogism* of travel writing is not to be found in the relation between the traveler and the travelee but in the traveler's resulting awareness of his or her inner alterity. In order to speak, the self does require an interlocutor, and it is in this sense that travel literature does provide a site of dialogism – in the dynamic interchange of the writer's 'I' and the reader's 'you'. It is not the subversive other that

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[56] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 10.

can intervene and take over one's text, but it is the auctorial and the readerly 'I's that become more sensitive to issues of discursive ideology and more in touch with their own otherness.

(In)conclusion

When one looks at the long history of travel writing with a focus on the self-reflection of the 'I' and the distance between the traveler and the traveler, it becomes evident that the shift from objectivity to subjectivity and the negotiation of interiority and exteriority are paralleled by an ever growing concern with the ethical problems of representing the other fairly. As a result, the "how" instead of the "what" of representation increasingly becomes the subject of travel literature. As Edward Said remarks in his article "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors,"[57] the entire issue of representation is seen as problematic late in the 20th century. Having lost the belief in stable essences such as truth or ideals that can be described or symbolized through language, the representation of places and people in travel writing has come to be seen as a dubious effort at best and as a tentative hegemonic inscription at worst.

However, the more attentive the travel writer grows to the issue of representing the other fairly and to the competing identities of his or her inner others, the more fragmented and disjointed the representations of travel (and) writing becomes. Still, the increased attention of contemporary travelogues to the ethics of representation, with its aesthetic implications of fragmentation, does not affect the centrality of the author, given that I-centrism, as discussed above, is a necessity of (travel) discourse. Even if aware and weary of I-centrism, the travel writer cannot fully forsake Identity, for this would mean forsaking speech. Thus, it appears that even the most self-effaced travel writer must remain wholly centered within his/her narrative and is liable to the centrist tropes which are part of the heritage of travel writing. This position may constitute an ethical fault but it caters to an ontic necessity. The author must remain centered within the narrative in order for a narrative to exist in the first place. As a consequence, the narrative may say more about the speaking 'I' than of the spoken others. This, in the end, is at stake in travel and writing and the combination thereof: to map one's dwelling, to inscribe one's place in the world as a continuous process of re-learning what has already been learnt: to be human, i.e., to make sense.

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[57] Edward Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (Winter 1989): 205-225.

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10.
Nostalgic Impromptus: Online Immigrant Stories and Cultural Differences

CAMELIA GRĂDINARU

The use of new media shapes the perception of displacement and destabilizes the meaning of nostalgia. For immigrants, online and mobile communication keeps alive two different realities, languages and cultural frameworks. As captives in between, they can be in a permanent connection with a home that is never completely left behind. This situation creates not only a complex and disturbing feeling of absence and presence but also a longing which may be annihilated while exacerbated through real-time exposure at two types of life. In this respect, I have chosen as a case study a virtual community of Romanians that live and work abroad in United Kingdom, in order to examine the conscious use of the word "nostalgia." Their online conversations contain nostalgic markers and sensitive topics with distinctive interaction patterns. The nostalgic stories are impressive depictions of what some common concepts such as home, family or country mean today. These narratives represent epitomes of the contemporary ways in which people re-learn the basics of being human.

Introduction: Immigration, Ambiguous Loss and New Media

The contemporary changes in the mobility of work determines several redefinitions of basic concepts such as home, family or identity. The traditional frames of these notions are seriously altered, and people are constantly put to face out with these transformations. Immigrants represent a category that lives everyday this metamorphosis and tries to find optimal solutions in order to adapt to this new world. In this quest, new media technologies become a cornerstone of the immigrants' experiences. The wide availability of the Internet connectivity and of mobile phones shape the relationships between immigrants and their families or friends left behind in their native countries. Immigrants found in technology a bridge between two realities that matter for them: the lost home and the actual home. The transnational families are quite dependent on digital communication that represents a source of compelling opportunities in terms of maintaining meaningful social ties. As Aguila emphasized,

new media have made migration more acceptable than ever be-
fore. The Internet and mobile phone have given distant individ-
uals the means to not only manage and maintain their connec-
tion but also to negotiate their roles through time.[1]

The "dialogic communication technologies" continue the history of
"absent presence"[2] in a more profound way. Of course, all technologies
that enable communication at a certain distance have contributed to this
new form of sociability that dialectically connects the absence with the
presence. Nevertheless, the Internet and mobile communication accentu-
ated these features by annihilating the distances and playing creatively
with temporalities. However, this permanent connection to home may be-
come disturbing and very fatiguing; quite literally, immigrants live in two
places at the same time, having responsibilities in two countries and par-
ticipating in different sets of decisions. This "two-in-one" life may be a
heavy one, because they have to both manage daily situations on the spot
and solve issues in their native country at a distance using new media
(Skype, mobile communication, Facebook, Instagram). To be physically
absent, but psychologically and decisionally present can be more stressful
than staying completely out of sight. In this vein of thought, a clinical
approach to immigration[3] has become a large area of research. Among
stress, depression, guilt or anxiety, *mourning* represents another frequent
symptom of this social category. This is a paradoxical depiction of their
affective condition in the context of an extensive use of communication
means. How can one mourn for someone or something only on a daily-
basis contact? Are new media technologies insufficient when we talk
about significant existential changes and distances?

Immigrants are dealing with a complex mixture of absence and pres-
ence, privation and control, continuity and discontinuity. Being physically
cut off from family, relatives and country induces a plethora of unresolved
tensions and problems, even if communication remains open. The situa-
tion of immigrants can be introduced under the "ambiguous loss" frame
of interpretation[4] and I think that the contemporary tools of communica-
tion deepen that ambivalence. Even if communication technologies facil-

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[1] A.P.N. Aguila, "Living Long-distance Relationships through Computer-mediated Communication," *Social Science Diliman* 5, no. 1-2 (2009): 100.

[2] Kenneth J. Gergen, "The Challenge of Absent Presence," in *Perpetual Contact. Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance*, eds. J. Katz and M. Aakhus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[3] G. Bacigalupe and M. Camera, "Transnational Families and Social Technologies: Reassessing Immigration Psychology," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 9 (2012).

[4] P. Boss, *Ambiguous Loss. Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

itate the sense that family is present despite geographic distances, the mediation processes cannot be equated with the real presence. In a paradoxical manner, new media help people stay connected but at the same time they indicate the real distance that separates them.

Boss remarks that while literature, opera or theatre express the phenomenon of ambiguous loss in many ways (*Odysseus* or *Madame Butterfly* being tokens of this phenomenon), clinical literature has been silent about it. Nevertheless, "of all the losses experienced in personal relationships, ambiguous loss is the most devastating because it remains unclear, indeterminate."[5] In the first instance, we think of missing persons after natural disasters or terrorist attacks, or of family members who are suffering from a chronic mental illness or drug addiction. The uncertainty that surrounds these types of loss, the ambiguity of their social reception and the lack of any grieving ritual are distinctive markers. The absence of psychological and social closure puts the rest of the family in a painful condition, because

> such loss is not usually addressed by medical, religious, or legal experts, and friends and relatives are usually not aware that such a phenomenon exists. The devastation wrought by unresolved grief is only intensified when no one validates it.[6]

Thus, in the second instance, the ambiguous loss can describe the experiences of immigrants because they are always confronted with different faces of absence. At this point, I want to emphasize the extension of the concept: if Boss talk about the ambiguous loss as limited to personal relationships, I think that in the case of immigrants the "object" of loss is a complex association of people, places and feelings. Many times, home is the center of this term, and other times the native country and its traditions are missing quite a nostalgic and distressing way. The ambiguous loss of home[7] can occur in different generations and

> unless people resolve the ambiguous loss – the incomplete or uncertain loss – that is inherent in uprooting, and bring into some congruence their psychological and physical families, the legacy of frozen grief may affect their offspring for generations to come, compounding itself as more ordinary losses inevitably

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[5] Ibid., 5-6.
[6] Ibid., 59.
[7] G.M. Samuels, "Ambiguous Loss of Home: The Experience of Familial (Im) Permanence among Young Adults with Foster Care Backgrounds," *Children and Youth Services Review* 31, no. 12 (2009).

occur. This is the legacy of immigration and migration that lies at the root of many personal and family problems.[8]

Thus, mourning silently becomes a psychological reaction of many immigrants and this way of living is not anymore about the trouble of acculturation, but about the constant redefinition of identity by finding connection between the past and the present and between the two spaces united by technology – the country of origin and the country of living. To feel a permanent nostalgia supposes to live in special glasses that reconfigure the interpretation of everyday experiences. Even if immigration was, in many cases, a rational decision of moving to a foreign country where the person can be better protected or remunerated, the nostalgia for one's roots is still present.

The spirit of globalization implies that people could feel at home no matter where they find themselves. Tomlinson discusses deterritorialization – "the integration of distant events, processes and relationships into our everyday lives"[9] and its distinctive mode, the telemediatization (including practices such as watching television, using computers or mobile phones) as a key element of cultural globalization. At the same time, new media values include the "global village" and also the destabilization of place, and as a corollary "electronic mediation traverse national borders, creating different kinds of virtual immigrations."[10] There is "no sense of place"[11] in electronic media, as well as no fixed place in a cosmopolitan outlook. But are individuals really prepared for this kind of life? Are people truly happy in a fluid world, going beyond the need to be tied to a particular space? Or, on the contrary, is the pressure of societal and technologic changes hard to manage?

Susan J. Matt studied the Americans' mobility and pointed out that "the ability to be mobile is not innate."[12] That means that humans have learnt to deal with their migration, struggling with many issues while the idea of unproblematic movement has flourished. Moreover, individualism or the nationalist narratives seem to eliminate the problems of mobility and also the emotions that it brings along, among which homesickness is the most important one. Thus, "historical actors are largely portrayed as

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[8] Boss, *Ambiguous Loss. Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*, 3.

[9] John Tomlinson, "Cultural Globalization," in *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*, ed. George Ritzer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 361.

[10] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 349.

[11] Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place. The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[12] Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An America History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

happy movers."[13] While movement is considered essential for the socio-political order, people have to live with its psychological costs. In this context, homesickness became a "taboo emotion" and

> today, explicit discussions of homesickness are rare, for the emotion is typically regarded as an embarrassing impediment to individual progress and prosperity. This silence makes mobility appear deceptively easy.[14]

This positive depiction of migration in the large context of globalization and individualism self-perpetuates and cover the real problems encountered by people and also their mixed feelings (freedom, opportunities, nostalgia, homesickness, etc.). Thus,

> because homesickness is absent from modern accounts of the past, it is seen as an illegitimate emotion in the present. For instance, the mythology of individualistic pioneers has been used to motivate successive generations to move on bravely and without hesitation, despite the fact that the pioneers themselves were homesick and hesitant, and that many hoped to – and sometimes did – return home.[15]

The mythologization of migration effaces its difficult parts and also the formulation of affective descriptions of this experience. Perhaps not fortuitously English words such as nostalgia or homesickness did not exist before the seventeenth and eighteenth century, respectively.

Paradoxes of Nostalgia

The ambivalence of the absence-presence relationship assures the background for nostalgia, a protean concept coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer in his medical dissertation where he discussed several cases of severe homesickness of Swiss mercenaries who yearned for their homeland. The conceptual path of nostalgia tells its own story: it represented a medical disease, initially curable, and in the twentieth century it was regarded as a psychiatric illness, mostly incurable. Being considered as a kind of

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[13] Ibid., 8.

[14] Susan J. Matt, "The New Globalist is Homesick," *The New York Times*, March 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/22/opinion/many-still-live-with-homesickness.html.

[15] Matt, *Homesickness: An America History*, 8.

repressive compulsive disorder or a variant of depression, nostalgia "became less a *physical* than a *psychological* condition."[16] The spatial content of nostalgia was replaced with a temporal one and by the late twentieth century nostalgia and homesickness became separate and distinctive terms.[17] The longing is for a specific time and not only for the past: there is nostalgia for future and also for the present.[18] Nostalgia is seen today also as a positive feeling with an important existential function that connects the past with the present, integrating memories, emotions and social relationships in a unitary system. Its complexity is prodigious since its meanings can pass through negative and positive interpretations (physical and psychological ailment but also a human strength), through spatial and temporal content, and through individual and collective forms. At the same time, "the aesthetics of nostalgia might, therefore, be less a matter of simple memory than of complex projection."[19]

For Halbwachs, the past represents an illusion recreated by the imagination that always remains under the influence of the present condition.[20] Nostalgia for the past is derived from the fact that people "instinctively adopt in regard to times past the attitude of the Greek philosophers who put the golden age not at the end of the world but at its beginning."[21] This "kind of retrospective mirage" puts the past in a better light than the present. Anyhow, even if the time or the place nostalgically revisited are embellished or completely recreated, the nostalgic trip is still authentic in terms of the quest. Nostalgia has a special relationship with media and technology, because

> both technology and nostalgia are about mediation. As a disease of displacement, nostalgia was connected to passages transits, and means of communication. Nostalgia – like memory – depends of mnemonic devices.[22]

We are binding our memories to different kind of supports or media and the materiality of our past is the best trigger for remembering. As Davis[23] points out, we remember mostly the mediated experiences; we

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[16] L. Hutcheon and M.J. Valdés, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern: A Dialogue," *Poligrafías. Revista de Teoría Literaria y Literatura comparada* 3 (1998): 19.

[17] Constantine Sedikides et al., "Nostalgia: Past, Present, and Future," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, no. 5 (2008): 304-307.

[18] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[19] Hutcheon and Valdés, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern: A Dialogue," 20.

[20] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 49.

[21] Ibid., 48.

[22] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 346.

[23] F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

need in the majority of cases something material to start the weaving of flashbacks. In this sense,

> although the individual remains (or appears as) the real, authentic or original holder of memory, there can be no doubt that remembering is a process that today is increasingly media-afflicted.[24]

The media can trigger nostalgia, and they can also archive and produce nostalgic cultural contents. Nostalgia is not necessarily linked to personal events that have been lived by an individual, but it can contain stories adopted from media or popular culture. "Nostalgia," as a term coined in the context of the studies of socialism in post-communist countries, uses narratives taken over from the media or relatives as an expression of discontent with the present. Thus, we can talk about "first hand" nostalgia and "second hand," mediated nostalgia; anyhow, both of them can be equally authentic.[25]

The characteristics of new media changed a key element of nostalgia, namely the perception of time. Nostalgia needs a gap, a form of distance and temporal linearity. On the contrary, new media suppose presentism and access to various types of spaces, cultures, epochs. Using the Internet gives a sense of a continuous present, of a time being easily unfolded with the ease of digital objects. Digitization mediates differently our own past, because we can carry with us many archives consisting of photographs, recordings or texts. As Boym notices,

> While nostalgia mourns distances and disjunctures between times and spaces, never bridging them, technology offers solutions and builds bridges, saving the time that nostalgia loves to waste.[26]

In this respect, we can talk about the destabilization of nostalgia in the new media context;[27] the simultaneity offered by digital tools can be used both for a stimulation of nostalgia and for living here-and-now. If in

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[24] Andrew Hoskins, "Television and the Collapse of Memory," *Time and Society* 13, no. 1 (2004): 110.

[25] M. Velikonja, "Lost in Transition: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-Socialist Countries," *East European Politics and Societies* 23, no. 4 (2009): 535-551.

[26] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 347.

[27] Camelia Grădinaru, "'Destabilizarea' nostalgiei prin noile mijloace de comunicare" ("New Media and the 'Destabilization' of Nostalgia"), in *Revolutions: The Archeology of Change*, eds. E. Grosu, A.-D. Bibiri, C. Grădinaru, A. Mironescu, and R. Patraș (Iași: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press, 2017), 661-667.

many areas new media are seen as a killer of nostalgia, then the question is: what is the status of nostalgia in the immigrants' wired life?

Immigrants' nostalgia may represent a restoration in a contemporary context of the etymological meanings of nostalgia, seen as *nostos* – to return home and *algos* – pain. The use of new media shapes the perception of displacement and destabilizes the meaning of nostalgia. Otherwise, the question is whether the category of digital nostalgia can be used as a critical tool for investigating the experience of contemporary displacement. For immigrants, online or mobile communication keeps alive two different realities, languages and cultural frameworks. As Ritivoi notes,

> the experiences of immigrants prove, as a sort of limited-case, that the *idem* and the *ipse* are contiguous, not mutually exclusive. To value sameness or stability is not tantamount to rejecting difference or resisting adjustment.[28]

Thus, nostalgia becomes a part of a constant search for identity by connecting not only the past with the present and the future, but also by introducing cultural differences into its reflective process.

In the global perspective, the sense of "home" is profoundly questioned as well. Kreuzer et al.[29] observes several minuses in the literature concerning home and proposed a phenomenological approach in order to understand immigrants' subjective transcultural ways of experiencing home at three levels: longing for the past, transcultural intermix of social relationships and consumption, and finding home within oneself. The first layer implies a nostalgic return home through feelings, memories, and cultural traditions of the home country. Immigrants treasure their pictures, books or other material mementos of their native places. At the same time, maintaining national symbols, consuming brands from home or preparing specific dishes are well-known activities that offer "situation-specific sensory experiences of home, leading to feelings of emotional stability in times of nostalgia."[30] The second layer refers to minglers that "strive for a feeling of belongingness" and search for social networks in families, friends and acquaintances from both countries. They build and maintain social ties in both sides and also share and practice traditions and rituals derived from these spaces. The third layer concerns immigrants who "find home primarily in their own body and mind by striving for an emotional

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[28] Deciu Andreea Ritivoi, *Yesterday's Self. Nostalgia and the Immigrant Identity* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 10.
[29] M. Kreuzer, H. Mühlbacher, and S. von Wallpach, "Home in the Remaking: Immigrants' Transcultural Experiencing of Home," *Journal of Business Research* 91 (2018): 334-341, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.10.047/.
[30] Ibid.

balance."[31] They are actually independent of any culture and do not relate their meaning of home to a specific place.

In this sense, they could find social kinship and a sense of belonging anywhere. Duyvendak notes the differences between Americans and Western Europeans in terms of the politics of home: for the former, nostalgia focuses on the lost family life, while for the latter nostalgia is for the lost nation.[32] The nation seen as home seems a revitalized idea by the contemporary characteristics of globalization and mobility but also a way for politicians from Western Europe found in order to balance the native majorities that feel many times overwhelmed by the pressure of migration.[33] Thus, between the relativization of the meanings of place and the augmentation of the importance of locality, nostalgia is "rife for safe, secure, and stable places – places of refuge in a rough and tumble world."[34] New media opportunities for communication and staying in touch with family are seductive in terms of picturing a positive situation for immigration nowadays. But as Matt showed,

> the comforting illusion of connection offered by technology makes moving seem less consequential, since one is always just a mouse click or a phone call away. If they could truly vanquish homesickness and make us citizens of the world, Skype, Facebook, cell phones and email would have cured a pain that has been around since 'The Odyssey'.[35]

However, we can observe the opposite situations when new technologies actually deepen the feelings of displacement and magnifying the distance that they initially erased. Immigrants may know a lot of details about everyday life of their relatives from the native country. They can be in touch with the political situation or with the cultural news, but their homesickness can remain unaltered. Adela Ros studied the ways in which new patterns of communication change the experience of migration and noticed positive and negative aspects as

> recent immigrants are presented with all kinds of tools and opportunities to be able to transport themselves within a few seconds, into a different reality of which they don't have complete

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[31] Ibid.

[32] J. Duyvendak, *The Politics of Home: Belonging and Nostalgia in Europe and the United* States (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), x.

[33] Ibid., 2.

[34] Ibid., 22.

[35] Matt, "The New Globalist is Homesick."

control. In addition, demands and questions coming from countries of origin could be so continuous that they would need to learn how to respond and manage such inputs.[36]

Silvia Estévez studies about Ecuadorian immigrants and finds that the frequent connection with people left home does not seem to help them in the attempt to heal nostalgia. Staying connected with family may put pressure on immigrants, this being a difficult way of living.

> The virtual erasure of the distance, the impression of continuity created by digital technologies may be turning nostalgia in a sentiment 'less acute but much more present', says Alberto Acosta, one of the experts in Ecuadorian migration. 'In some senses, it can be quite painful', he adds. 'In the past, when there was a family breakup, for instance, this rupture may not have seemed that serious for the person living abroad, because of the distance: "out of sight, out of mind," the saying goes'. Conversely, today 'one might be more connected with the family and it can be more difficult to heal that wound and move on'.[37]

The different stories that compose Estévez's documentary *Just a Click Away from Home* presents a complexity of immigrants' nostalgia when new media are used to stay in touch with family. Digital means did not kill or alleviate nostalgia but, in some cases, too much communication at a distance provoked more sufferance and sadness. Having in mind the immigrants' experiences, we can question the viability of the cosmopolitan philosophy. For Matt,[38] this perspective "doesn't square with our emotions, for our ties to home, although often underestimated, are strong and enduring." Tomlinson also introduces the constructivist perspective when he affirmed that

> the appeal to the universal can perhaps be made to work in a cosmopolitan world order as a construct: as one way, amongst others, of understanding our human condition and of relating in dialogue with others.[39]

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[36] Adela Ros, "Interconnected Immigrants in the Information Society," in *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics and Community*, eds. Andoni Alonso and Pedro J. Oiarzabal (Reno and Las Vegas, NV: The University of Nevada Press, 2010), 36.

[37] Silvia Mejía Estévez, "Is Nostalgia Becoming Digital? Ecuadorian Diaspora in the Age of Global Capitalism," *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 15, no. 3 (2009): 406.

[38] Matt, "The New Globalist is Homesick."

[39] Tomlinson, "Cultural Globalization," 382.

Securing a sense of community, belonging and continuity becomes a great challenge, offering a lot of opportunities in contemporary times.

Some Online Stories about Nostalgia and Immigration

Digital diaspora[40] needs communication for maintaining social networks of solidarity. Among the diverse opportunities offered by new media, the construction of virtual communities represents a form of sociality that can help people to disclose deep feelings and experiences to individuals who have similar problems. Online groups or forums are also used in order to transfer knowledge to newcomers, to create shortcuts in diverse administrative issues and to disseminate information about the homeland or the adoptive country. Nevertheless, the virtual communities serve "to combat feelings of marginalization among diasporas, providing them identity and other forms of support as they cope with the diaspora experience."[41]

To illustrate this, I have chosen as example a virtual community of Romanians that live and work abroad in the United Kingdom (total users: 47326, total messages: 160598, total subjects: 10816). The conversations are about cultural stereotypes, social prejudices and everyday troubles of integration and living. These are specific topics that try to offer guidance in issues such as the yellow card, the blue card, the different forms and applications, family and school, particular information, etc. The members of the community are interested in both stating and clarifying the social rules and expected behaviors in UK. In general, users are very supportive and try to help newcomers to shortcut the administrative difficulties and to overpass the usual problems of an immigrant. Also, many messages have been written in humorous, familiar ways, with personal examples and advice. The stories try to balance the over-optimistic expectations with the main scope of portraying accurately pluses and minuses of migration. As a linguistic observation, people use a hybrid of Romanian and English words (predominantly Romanian) and sometimes abbreviations.

Inside this corpus of conversations, I searched for when the members of this online group decided to use exactly the word "nostalgia" to describe their feelings. Even without any clue about their personal, cultural or social background, the conscious use of this word tells its own tale. The label that a person chooses to put on her or his personal state of feelings

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[40] Michel S. Laguerre, "Digital Diaspora: Definitions and Models," in *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics and Community*, eds. Andoni Alonso and Pedro J. Oiarzabal (Reno and Las Vegas, NV: The University of Nevada Press, 2010), 49-64.

[41] Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, "Migration, Information Technology, and International Policy," in *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics and Community*, eds. Andon Alonso and Pedro J. Oyarzabal (Reno and Las Vegas, NV: The University of Nevada Press, 2010), 40.

represents a major step in the process of self-understanding and interpreting the overall perspective. Thus, I analyzed 241 occurrences that can be arranged in several important clusters. The main nostalgic markers are childhood, school, political issues, music and Romanian artists. One interesting area of discussion is represented by the gastronomic national preferences which are often mentioned by the members, with nostalgic effects. The restaurants where Romanian meals can be served frequently appear in the talks. Also, I noticed that people need to meet offline and to share meals in order to speak Romanian and to feel at home. The past and the homeland are delineated by a range of sensorial (smells, shapes, tastes, auditory memories), cognitive and also affective information. Nostalgia is triggered by music, films, food or perfumes which evoke immigrants' lives. Also, I noticed that nostalgia is not directed only toward the past, but also toward the present and the future imagined in positive tones.

The users confess their longing for parents and for native places, but some people redefine the concept of home: "Home is where your family is and where you spend most of the time"; "In Romania I feel more and more like a tourist and besides nostalgia and memories, few things appeal to me." To live with a daily nostalgia becomes part of routine and many immigrants embed it in their quotidian feelings: "I have learnt to live with the longing for the country and to accept the consequences of the decisions I have willingly taken." One user thinks that immigrants, especially Romanians, are commuters and the nostalgia expresses this continuous movement among places and countries. The immigrant is seen as an eternal commuter, a nomad who has to deal with homesickness in creative ways, including the effort to redefine the meaning of home, routs, and bonds.

Matt[42] affirms that explicit discussions of longing for home are rare, but in some online contexts these conversations happen. Even if new media do not resolve nostalgia, they still offer a good context for self-disclosure. The virtual communities may represent a "safe" environment where others also experience similar situations, so that the direct exposure of one's feelings can occur.

At the same time, the observations made by Davalos et al.[43] in Facebook contexts are also confirmed for the online comments written by this group: the nostalgic posts are longer than others, they comprise an emotional narration of feelings (commonly mixed feelings, both positive and negative), a multitude of figures of speech (epithets, metaphors, comparisons) and a more reflexive attitude in comparison with other comments

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[42] Matt, "The New Globalist is Homesick."

[43] S. Davalos, A. Merchant, G.M. Rose, B.J. Lesley, and A.M. Meredosia, "'The Good Old Says': An Examination of Nostalgia in Facebook Posts," *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 83 (2015): 83-93.

(informative or supportive). Nostalgia appears as a bittersweet and profound feeling, as we can see in the following comment:

> Have I hopelessly lost the way to our home? We, the diasporas, where is our home?
>
> Five years ago, the minuscule creature in the rush of life pulsed in the city, I was constantly thinking about my country. I was drawing my strength from the messages to/from my dear friends left behind. The back road was always open. It was just an exploration of the world, an intuition of personal experience, a test of mine as a human being, with skills and limitations unknown to the end. I visited the country after a year and a half, nostalgic as a lover, full of longing for parents who are aging alone, for friends who have changed their destiny, married or nursing children, for the garden and the mulberry tree, for Bucharest, the city of my university years. And after I breathed, listened, saw and embraced everything, I lost myself in the confusion. I missed what I have just left, the man I have as life companion, the unresolved problems, the chaos that reigned in the newly rented apartment, the shared uncertainties in the evening, deadbeat. I missed the immense, chic and clean parks, the place of things in the queue, which is absence, you notice, on the native land, the loneliness, the slowness, and the indifference of the people on the streets. I was longing for the anonymity that can be a joy, contrary to the constraints of natal 'celebrity'. And I understand that HOME is just a place in my heart, without a map location or geographic coordinates. HOME is the child in me, the time of candor. That the longing is not for a certain place where you can come back and be happy, but for the certainty and the peace felt in your parents' arms, for a time that was lost forever, depositing as sediment heavy memories of smells and sensations hidden deeply in unconsciousness. The longing for the simplicity of a life without responsibility, for the nights slept smoothly, without the worry of tomorrow. And that's good.[44]

Living in two places in the same time and dealing with two different sets of problems represent a deep issue that appears in the conversations, confirmed in Estévez's findings. New technologies contributed to this "absent presence" of immigrants in the life of family left in the country of origin. As a user commented in the group,

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[44] Ibid.

> I understand you perfectly, I stayed 18 months away from home, at 8000 kilometers, and all I could understand from the notion of family and childhood friends was virtual. Emigration is a hard work and breaks something out of your heart but we have to be able to face it, otherwise you cannot resist and you go home. Romania is often confused with that "home" of the soul, but let us not forget that everything passes through the stomach. We fight between two worlds and we often hang ourselves in the balance and we do not know what's best and what really makes us happy. We tend to think that the most important thing is the family together with the memories, the nostalgia, old good friends from the past. I have come to the conclusion that it is not so, the future is important, what we will do for our future children, what we are preparing for when they come to the world. We represent what is most important and what we begin to build for those who come to our family.[45]

Even if some comments can be interpreted in the frame of affective and cognitive dissonance, our perspective does not intend to imply the comparison in dissonant theory between beliefs and behaviors. In our view, the way in which people define their own situation, feelings and attitudes frames adequately their perspective about nostalgia.

Conclusion

As Ros states, "a full integration of the Information Society paradigm in migration remains to be studied."[46] Communication with family from the homeland and communication with unknown fellow countrymen who immigrated in the same place contribute to the fulfilment of different needs: emotional support, maintaining meaningful bonds, information, etc. Virtual communities gather immigrants together in a form of sociability used to share similar problems, solutions and perspectives. The affective part is consistent because members are very supportive and careful, and their advice proves authentic, derived from lived experiences. Not being alone in this journey represents a helpful thought for many immigrants who have access to digital means of communication.

Immigrants use computer-mediated communication in a dual form to keep alive nostalgia, but also to surpass it. In this era, "home is no longer what it used to be" and the relationship between nostalgia and the media remains contradictory. The digital tools have transformed the meaning of "being home" which implies also a creative treatment of spaces, values,

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ros, "Interconnected Immigrants in the Information Society," 22.

and temporalities. The longing for home or family left behind may be different in this contemporary age. Home is just a click away, but at the same time it remains distant, and it is difficult to replace its presence through mediation.

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Afterword

Faces and Sur-faces:
A Phenomenology of Intercultural Encounters

Dan Chițoiu

Introduction

What is special and different when encountering the other, if the encounter is with *the cultural other*, with somebody culturally different from you? I will try to answer this question by following two aspects, in which and through which the cultural encounter takes place with the other: *the face* and *the sur-face*. What appears in the experience of the cultural encounter is the visibility, that is, in sight. *Making visible* is what happens through the ecstatic movement toward the other. The visibility refers not only ones own cultural signs, but also the other`s. It is well imprinted on *sur-faces*, the passive support of the encounter, medium and indicator of cultural marks. It is a scenario mediated by artifacts which, as a product of a cultural tradition, codify and sum up the marks that form the ethos of that tradition. As the guide the artifact direct and channels the ways of meeting with the other, but also equally and constantly direct us into our own cultural identity. It is a cultural mediation with multiple facets and roles and forms in an intercultural environment.

Encountering the Cultural Other: An Ecstatic Experience

The encounter with *the cultural other* is a complex phenomenon and a particular experience, which makes it distinct from other instances of encounter. To support that, it would be appropriate to start by examining the significance and value of encountering the cultural other and its importance for the experience, evolution and perfection of person.

Alfonso Lopez Quintas in *Human Love, Its Meaning and Scope: A Phenomenology of Gift and Encounter* provides an analysis of the encounter with the other from the perspective of a phenomenology of what constitutes it and goes as far as to describe the human person as "a being of encounter."[1]

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[1] Alfonso Lopez Quintas, *Human Love, Its Meaning and Scope. A Phenomenology of Gift and Encounter* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy Press, 2004), 12.

If it is neither by mere impact nor by juxtaposition, but an inter-mingling of ambits giving place in turn to another ambit, it must be difficult to achieve. Offering one's own possibilities to an-other person implies opening one's spirit and generosity, a wish to share and to create something together. Taking the possibili-ties which the other offers me implies, for my part, a capacity for listening and the humility to admit that I am in need of help.…If I do not show myself to you as I am, when you notice this you realize that I do not wish to make you a gift of my real person, but only of a false copy. I hide something of myself and keep something back. This lack of honesty on my part makes you mistrust…[2]

The experience of meeting with the other involves a way of opening that is fundamental to the human person and instantaneous. It is related to the *ecstatic* dimension, a dimension that some authors consider to be the ultimate nature of person. The notion of *person* find its first wording in the context of a redefinition of the human way of being, in the fourth century AD, when authors such as Gregory of Nyssa or Basil the Great in-volved the Greek term *hypostasis* in the new description of human. *Hy-postasis* is the unique and unrepeatable way through which human nature manifests. *Hypostasis* is, ultimately, *ecstasis*, that is, the essential move-ment of the person is to go beyond itself, to overcome toward the other, and not to be an autonomous and self-sufficient monad.

If this can be an ontological description of the ultimate aspects of what characterizes our way of being in the person's "data" these aspects are visible, manifested on the existential level. Quintas has interesting re-marks about this ecstatic nature:

Ecstasy links one to what is precious and makes one truly free. it does not produce a gloomy freedom that separates one from others, but joins one in a genuine community of life, but does not take one out of oneself, but elevates one to what is the best within oneself[3] [and]

in the plane of affections as nothing is more important in the human structure than a maximum stimulation of enthusiasm for values and giving due importance to the inner joy aroused by taking something or joining with someone who invites us to adopt the great values they encompass.[4]

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[2] Ibid., 11.
[3] Ibid., 17.
[4] Ibid., 31.

The deepest of the person's mode of being is a "movement" toward the other and toward others. Meeting with the other is a need that comes from the inner movement of the person, but it takes place in the context of the world, and especially in the context of a specific cultural data. This context is the one that crystallizes additional frames of difference with the other. And if the other is embodied in a different cultural horizon than yours, then the encounter with the cultural other brings a special kind of challenges and stakes.

The Face of the Cultural Other

The special character of the encounter with the other who is culturally different can be investigated from several facts. The radical aspect I am discussing is related to the very moment of intercultural encounter, and the question of what distinguishes it from other ways of experiencing the encounter with the other. It is about the experience of difference, of something complex and different. It is a radical experience, of putting you with all that is yours in this kind of meeting. It can be said that you are being exposed in a totally different way, and even if you try to anticipate, the effectiveness of meeting with the cultural other brings something surprising and novel.

This *always different* of what happens when experiencing the other`s cultural difference may be better appropriated starting from a language aiming to describe what appears in the concreteness of meeting. What is experienced during the time of the encounter is *what appears*, *what is shown*: the appearance of the other, with all aspects involved when exposed to you. In face-to-face meeting, what is happening by being exposed to the cultural alterity of the other is that the other is not supposed or imagined, but is *here*, present, in the concreteness of his or her ways of being here and now, in my presence. Anticipating and theorizing the cultural encounter is a "poor" experience, for it generalizes reductionism which tries to depict an essence basically describes intercultural encounters. Repeatability, predictability, classifiable, methods in the natural sciences, when applied to the concreteness of meeting with the cultural other as a fact of life, can provide only a standardized morphology of the "living organism" of the encounter. The challenge of meeting with the other is that no anticipation can prepare enough for it, instead anticipation, as pre-conceiving the meeting, affects the effectiveness of encounter.

The Cultural Other as *Person*

The face of the cultural other is the paradoxical situation of what is both familiar and alien: familiar since the humanity of the other is like your own; he/she is a both neighbor and an alien, mysterious and unknown

by what the different cultural horizon produces in him/her. (The impossibility of predicting or anticipating the effectiveness of the encounter with the cultural other comes from the fact that, although the other is your neighbor in everything you share as human, the other is not only different due to the cultural horizon that has formed him/her, but also has uniqueness, as the other is a *person*.) The personal dimension entails the unrepeatable, which is unique in him/her, as well as the unique way in which the cultural horizon he/she embodies. Although the other shares the cultural data of the horizon in which he/she was formed, he/she embodies and expresses it in his/her own way, in the unique fashion of a personal way of living and being. The other therefore gives a face to that cultural horizon which has formed him/her and, in those frames, embodied him or her. That face is what you meet and encounter in the experience of proximity to and contact with the one that is the cultural other. This is why the cultural encounter cannot receive a pertinent and genuine preparatory anticipation; you cannot predict and you cannot prepare for the concreteness of the other's cultural face as the uniqueness and instantaneousness. It is the cultural incarnation of what is noticeably visible, something that leads to wonder or perplexity. The cultural incarnation of the other has not only the specificity of his or her person but also of a dynamism that is the face he/she *expresses*.

We can better understand this if we look at how the notion of person was formed in an attempt to find and indicate what is truly proper to human, what makes wo/man different from the rest of beings. Christos Yannaras says that the original term that indicates the central aspect of person is the Greek *prosopon*, etymologically drawn from the *pros* and *ops*, which means *glance, eyes, appearance, looks, face*. As Yannaras has pointed out, by composition, the emerging signification is *I have my eyes, my face focused on something or someone, I stand face to face with something or someone.*[5] The face, the fundamental element of the personal way of being, is to be directed to show and to indicate, and is the opening to the other, to the one who can *receive* what is shown in and through the expression of *the face*.

In expressions of the face is what is considered the most important aspect of person, namely *freedom*, which is the ability to express in a way what is beyond the conditions and contexts, beyond the determination that comes from the sum of factors that are present in what is the human way of being (from the genetic inheritance to the events of life). This fundamental aspect, freedom, is the way the person shows uniqueness and unrepeatability. To use the phenomenological language proposed by Jean

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[5] Christos Yannaras, *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 21.

Luc Marion, it is the way the person is being *donated*.[6] From this perspective, intercultural encounters are phenomena of special complexity, as they are multi-leveled and have multiple instances. These instances of person's opening with the other intertwine, but the distinct appearance that constantly appears is a certain kind of difference, which is always noticeable in the multiple levels of person's own manifestation/donation. A difference coming from the frames of a cultural horizon that has formed him/her and is present and manifested in many aspects, starts from the way he/she moves the body to the way he/she manifests emotions or articulates thoughts.

Cultural Clothes and New Places

The meeting with the other highlights and reveals a certain kind of appearance, a certain kind of garments, *the cultural clothes*. These clothes are not just those that cover the body or shape our reactions, but are intimately present in many of our inner articulations.[7] The question that arises is: how deep are these garments in us, are they really part of us? We may ask whether there is something of a neutral human essence that has a universal character, one beyond the cultural space in which we were born. Is the cultural embodiment rather an epiphenomenon, is it just the fruit of the instruction received or of the community environment? Or can a certain inculturation be loosened, rejected, or replaced at some point? The answers to these questions are by no means simple. New research in neuroscience indicates that emotions are incorporated up to the cell or DNA level, so they are the most intimate and concrete in our being. Cultural garments are those through which we are acting, we cannot deny them, and we cannot exist in a way that is a-cultural. And the awareness of the existence of these clothes is intensified by exposure to another culture, to the other who wears other clothes, a different garment. Thus, we become more aware that we are wearing these clothes when meeting with the other, discovering how deep our inculturation is, and especially that inculturation is intimate to the most subtle of our inner articulations.

In addition, it is inappropriate to state that a person has a body, for the body is not a mere object and cannot be an object of possession or disposal. A human being is body/corporeal as much as he or she is a person. The encounters take place between ambits, not objects. While objects

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[6] Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation. Recherches sur Husserl, Heidegger et la Phénoménologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 7.

[7] Panayotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person*, trans. Norman Russell (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 79.

are juxtaposed or collide but do not meet, only ambits can intermingle, offer each other possibilities and take up those that are offered.[8]

Since the moment of encounter with the cultural other does not allow the anticipation of the content of that experience, it can be considered as an "open" moment in which one transgresses one's own ways of representing the other as well as the self. This open instance is the space, the interval in which the play of the cultural encounter takes place, and in which something that belongs not only to me and not only to the other is initiated among us. The interplay of the cultural encounter with the other is initiated and takes its contours exclusively into the mutual opening which means tattering, advancement, connection, empathy, everything that is being moved by each of those who experience the encounter. It initiates and develops something unique in this scenario of the intercultural encounter, and outlines a meeting environment, *a place*. Everything that follows the initiation of the cultural encounter with the other is confined to this space, the interval of that encounter. It is something that is created, which would not have been if that meeting did not happen. What is happening in each of the actors of the meeting is the constitution of that space: a space that is not neutral, nor has autonomy, and cannot be sustained by only one of those who initiate it. It is an *in-between us*.

Artifacts as Meeting Guides

The space of meeting with the other is the place that is made and is transformed by the dynamics of cultural outreach, the exposition of your cultural face in the encounter with the cultural face of the other. But in that meeting, there are not only *faces* but also *sur-faces*. Those instances that are identifiable as objects, but which are of a special condition as they contribute to the contours that the dynamics of the cultural encounter initiate. It is the condition of the *artifact*, the exceptional and privileged product of a cultural and spiritual horizon as an object it carries a crystallization of encodings and symbols as fundamental landmarks of a horizon. The artifact that constitutes the symbol or the mark of a culture and sums up and gathers very much in very little. The essential artifacts of a culture are not very many, but they can express profoundly. Even when the symbols in them are reproduced or replicated in the products of that culture, they provide the landmarks for a cultural horizon.

The experience of the alien artifact, the one produced within the cultural horizon of the other, is the special instance that mediates and provokes at the same time: to sense the difference. That is, to learn what is a culturally different code insofar as it expresses something through a code of signs fixed in the object; what creates the consciousness of difference;

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[8] Quintas, *op.cit.*, 10.

what escapes you even though it is in front of you. The artifact plays a complex role of guidance by focusing on the way in which the experience of meeting with the cultural other must develop.

It is the artifact that, through its *sur-face*, through the various ways in which it appears, provides the medium and the guide for the cultural encounter with the other. It plays a critical role in this encounter as it provides the signs that shape the space of the encounter, and gives coordinates and frames. The artifact brings a place of mediation and meeting, where the actors of intercultural experience open to each other. Interaction with the artifact is an active one, because putting it as a meeting hallmark it means a continuous hermeneutical activity meant to always enlarge the horizon of meeting, *the place*. The artifact produces the visible signs and the markings of an emotional, cognitive and experiential horizon, and offers no less space for game, for creative advance in the unfolding of the meeting with the other. The experience of deciphering the complex traces that the fundamental traditions of a culture put into the artifact implies a creative dimension in which the recognition of those traces is carried forward to the intuition of what is not only the spirit of those codifications but also what that spirit produces during the articulations and developments of the intercultural encounter, concretely in that unique and unrepeatable time of the encounter.

Strangification Scenario

The scenarios of meeting with the other are scenarios of proximity, self-out initiative and empathic opening to something different, to the other's alterity. Vincent Shen proposes a concept designed to indicate the possibility and nature of openness that interculturality can produce. It is the concept of *strangification*, which can describe several dimensions of the stakes of cultural encounter with the other.[9] Writing of what the ontological dimension of strangification brings into the intercultural encounter experience, Shen sees that:

> our direct experience with Reality Itself can nourish our language and our dialogue with others. When it comes to cultural

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[9] "The concept of strangification was first proposed by Prof. Fritz Wallner, my colleague in Constructive Realism, as an epistemological strategy for interdisciplinary research. According to Constructive Realism, different scientific disciplines, because of their methods and languages, construct accordingly different micro-worlds, only to be bridged by the strategy of strangification." See Vincent Shen, "Appropriating the Other and Transforming Consciousness into Wisdom: Some Philosophical Reflections on Chinese Buddhism," in *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective*, eds. William Sweet, George F. McLean, Tomonobu Imamichi, Safak Ural, and O. Faruk Akyol (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 285.

and religious beliefs, I should say that, if a value/cultural expression/religious belief is universalizable by being able to be translated into a value/cultural expression/religious belief claimed by another culture or religious community, then it has a larger or universalizable validity. In other words, its validity is limited only to its own world, and reflection must be made on the limits of one's own value/expression/belief. Also, if one value/expression/belief is universalizable and applicable in other social and pragmatic contexts, this means that it has a higher validity than its own context of origin. Finally, a value/expression/belief, when universalizable by a detour of experiencing Reality Itself, (for example, direct experience with other people, with Nature or even with Ultimate Reality), would be very helpful for mutual understanding among different cultural and religious worlds.[10]

Vincent Shen's understanding of the nature and virtues of intercultural experience questions the universalizing dimension entailed by our openness to the cultural other. A cultural or spiritual expression is universal insofar as it can be translated into the frameworks of a cultural or spiritual expression belonging to another horizon.

Concluding: The Same and/as the Different

Continuing the thoughts of Vincent Shen, a bright scholar and a dear friend of mine, I would add that the universalization can be recognized in the cultural other as embodied by him or her, it is the interplay of *the same and the other*. The fact that the other, whose face/sur-face is revealed to you, leads you to your own, is the kind of universalization through which each one finds him/her better by ways of interacting. It is, at the same time, the experience of the other's cultural face, the evidence of the difference, of his/her identity mark. Just because the cultural other is and remains different from you, within the cultural frame that give his or her identity, he/she can offer you the extraordinary chance of an experience of the self that no other instance would allow in such a way. It is a genuine and unique discovery by which you can reach your very self as never before. It is an exceptional occasion of authenticity; it is the situation in which you make an authentic self-discovery and the discovery of the other. And this opportunity constitutes and is constituted by a *place*, a novel dimension of reality, which offers the possibility of an experience beyond self of what it delivers yourself to you. Perhaps this is the most

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[10] Shen, *op.cit.*, 286.

important dimension of the cultural difference and of meeting with the other by and with this difference.

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Ethical in the Phenomenology of Life (Roma: Edizioni Eucos, 2007); *Lucian Blaga: El filosofar "Bajo el signo del misterio." Con un estudio sobre la "fusión de los horizontes": Lucian Blaga y Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka* (Madrid-London-New York: Niram Art Editorial, 2015). She is the editor-in-chief of *Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences* (https://www.agathos-international-review.com). She is a member of the World Phenomenology Institute (Hanover, NH, United States); Asia Association for Global Studies (Tokyo, Japan); Athens Institute for Education and Research (Athens, Greece).

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on Culture (Times Press, 1984); *After Physics: The Development of Metaphysics* (Newton Publishing Co., Ltd., 1987); *On Modern Philosophy* (Liming Culture Publishing Co., Ltd., 1990); *Humanistic Values and Postmodernity* (Social University Press, 1990); *Interpersonal Fusion and Self-maturity and Interpersonal Relationships* (Hong Jianquan Education and Culture Foundation, 1991); *Rebirth of Tradition* (Taiwan Yeqiang Press, 1992); *Pursuing the Meaning of Life: Self, Society and Values* (Taiwan Book Press, 1996); *Paul Ricoeur* (Dongda Book Co., Ltd., 2000); *Taiwanese Spirit and Cultural Development* (Taiwan Commercial Press, 2001); Contrast, Strangification and Dialogue (Wunan Book Publishing Co., Ltd., 2002); *Generosity to the Other: Chinese Culture, Christianity and Strangification* (Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2004); *An Anthology of Vincent Shen* (Shandong Education Press, 2005); *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (Shanghai People's Press, 2008); *Technology, Humanities and Cultural Development* (Wuhan University Press, 2014); *From Matteo Ricci to Heidegger* (Taiwan Commercial Press, 2014); *From Matteo Ricci to Heidegger: Interaction of Chinese and Western Philosophy in the Cross-cultural Context* (Huadong Normal University Press, 2016); *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy* (People's Press, 2014); *Medieval Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy* (Commercial Press, 2018). He edited *Chinese Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development; Chinese Philosophical Studies, II* with Tran van Doan, and George F. McLean (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991); *Morality, Metaphysics and Chinese Culture; Chinese Philosophical Studies, IV*, with Tran Van Doan (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992); *Psychology, Phenomenology and Chinese Philosophy; Chinese Philosophical Studies, VI* with Richard Knowles and Tran Van Doan (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994); *Philosophy of Science and Education: Chinese Philosophical Studies, VIII* with Tran Van Doan (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1995); *Wisdom in China and the West* with Willard Oxtoby (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004); *Confucian Ethics: Retrospect and Prospect* with Kwong-loi Shun (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy* (Springer, 2014); *Chinese Spirituality and Christian Communities: A Kenotic Perspective: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXXI* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015). He served as President of the Chinese Philosophical Association (1995-1999,1999-2003); President (1997-1999) and executive director (2001-2011) of the International Society of Chinese Philosophy; Vice-President of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (2012-2018).

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Index

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Purpose

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

Projects

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington, DC.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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