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Communication across Cultures:

The Hermeneutics of Cultures and Religions in a Global Age

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Introduction

CHALLENGE

The process of communications across cultures has had a long history. From the days of Abraham, if not of “Lucy”, peoples have immigrated, traded, and fought. Special people like Alexander and Magellan, Genghis Khan and Columbus have broken through frontiers to engage others either in war or in peace.

Today, however, we meet not only those who live on the other side of a border, for in many ways there are no borders: we are engaged with, and by, everyone at all times. Thus, whereas a decade ago many worried about whether there was an African or Islamic philosophy distinct from that of Europe, now the concern is not whether such a philosophy exists, but how it engages the world reality which continually shapes and directs all. The answer is not obvious.

At the beginning of modern times, in order to clear the way for the abstractive and universalising efforts of science, consideration of local identities and cultural interchange were pushed to one side; in time they came even to be vilified as “the irrational”. In recent decades this attitude, in its turn, has come to be seen as blind and insensitive to the wellsprings of the human project.

Philosophical work has been done to reopen those wellsprings, adding subjectivity to objectivity – the soul, as it were, to the body. Thus enlivened, people have begun to listen with new sensitivity to their children and their neighbours, finding in human persons unique richness hitherto unsounded. The philosophical methodology for this project was hermeneutics, much advanced by the late H.G. Gadamer on a phenomenological basis. His notion of the fusion of horizons responded well to this new opportunity to come to know more deeply one’s own cultural heritage as well as those of other persons or peoples.

Now, however, the challenge – and the potential reward – is vastly multiplied. It is no longer merely that of meeting and interpreting what the person next door or a writer in ancient times is trying to say to me. Rather, it is becoming aware of how all of life has been plunged into a newly integrated world reality that includes all peoples all the time. This threatens all, yet holds promise of vast human enrichment limited only by, and to, what is truly humane. It means also that one’s creative actions and even one’s hopes can build either an ultimate conflict of all against all, or new harmonies in which bodies as well as minds can have life and have it more fully. For this even the relatively new hermeneutic methods of mutual interpretation and understanding themselves must be revised and expanded in order to respond to life in this age, already marked as global.

RESPONSE

The present response to this challenge consists of two parts. Part I, “The Hermeneutics of Culture for a Global Age,” treats the general character of cultures and their interaction in a global age. This consists of seven chapters.

Chapter I, by George F. McLean, “Communication between Cultures and Convergence of Peoples: The Role of Hermeneutics and Analogy in a Global Age,” argues that there is a possibility for a coming convergence of cultures; it is founded on a loving compassion that in turn comports peace. Drawing from a diversity of sources, McLean in particular appropriates Nicholas of Cusa’s rich theorizing about an organic *integration* which at once enhances the *individuality* of its constituent parts. Cusa’s principles of ‘diversity as contraction’ and ‘*explicatio-complicatio*’ (of the perfection of being) contribute much towards this end, offering a salutary model for the ‘pluralism and convergence of civilizations’.

Chapter II, by Zou Shipeng, “The Existential Turn and Communication across Cultures: Understanding the Modern Transformation of Chinese Culture,” analyses three dimensions of the existential turn in modern cultures, namely, the whole human being, the Western and the non-Western. It concludes with an analysis of the relation of this transformation in Chinese culture to the process of globalization.

Chapter III, by Jurate Morkuniene, “The Paradigm of Contemporary Science and Changes in Philosophical Theories,” describes how contemporary philosophy is influenced by, and in many ways integrates, pure sciences and the humanities. The ‘new anthropomorphism’ which is modern-day philosophy shares many concepts with genetics, theoretical biology, cybernetics, and systems-theory. Like them, it has moved ‘beyond determinism’ to ‘openness’ and the *responsibility* of ‘engaged thinking’. In this ongoing process, creative ideas often emerge from the ‘clefts’ in and between systems.

Chapter IV, by Bambang Sugiharto, “Radical Consequences of the Primacy of Experience in the Hermeneutics of Culture,” argues that contemporary philosophy and art are moving in a Deleuzian direction, so that a hermeneutics of culture involves a ‘deterritorialization’ of meaning and values. Sugiharto maintains we must face up to the gap between the “normative ideal vision of ourselves and our real more ambiguous and complicated selves.” And we must face up to external problems such as a “politics of representation constituting our identity in a hegemonic, foreclosing and unfair way.” Sugiharto’s hope is that art and postmodern philosophy shall become the “conscience of culture.”

Chapter V, by John P. Hogan, “Culture and Religion – The ‘Way’ to a New Paradigm for Development,” looks at the ongoing cultural transformation in China from the perspective of a development practitioner. Building on the work of the World’s Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), he seeks the cultural and religious matrix out of which real sustainable development unfolds. Using Gadamer and Lonergan as guides, he cites culturally and

religiously sensitive development with illustrations from Taoism and Catholic social thought which point the way to a new paradigm for development.

Chapter VI, by Chibueze C. Udeani, “Intercultural Hermeneutics for a Global Age,” emphasizes the adverbial aspect of *interkulturell* in the German term *Hermeneutik interkulturell*: hermeneutics done interculturally is not a universal hermeneutic, but a diverse “reflexive-mediative attitude” towards “sedimented cultural, historic” subjects. Udeani argues that such a *Hermeneutik* emancipates from all ‘centrisms’, including Euro-, Sino-, and Afro-centrisms.

Chapter VII, by Rosemary Winslow, “The Place of Poetry and the Poet’s Participation in the Fields of Knowledge,” argues that ‘creative writing’—by way of its creativity and transformative potency—can ‘invent’ and express new connections, not only with the unconscious self, but even between disciplines and cultures. Long marginalized as a mere sub-category of rhetoric, creative writing should be taught ‘across-the-curricula’ to everyone. Winslow maintains it can play an important role in the workings of interdisciplinarity and interculturality.

Chapter VIII, by Spencer Cosmos, “Media Technology,” shows how the study of linguistic practice can abet intercultural dialogue. Moving from the four-dimensional nature of language (as propositional, modal, contextual, and historical) to the linguistic function in the communication media, the author argues that a grasp of Freudian mechanisms can help show how such forms as ‘reenactment cinema’ can be good for intercultural dialogue while ‘disembodied cinema’ can be bad for it.

Part II, “Self-Identity of Peoples and Communication across Cultures,” is concerned with the related work of interpretation or hermeneutics especially as related to the religious foundations which found these cultures and civilizations: Islamic and Christian, African and Buddhism. This consists of six chapters.

Chapter IX, by Ye Qing, “The Influence of Islamic Culture on International Relations,” examines the close links between the religion of Islam and Islamic culture, and then assesses the role of Islamism in the ‘international politics’ of Muslim states. Taking care to avoid the extremes of both essentialism and material reduction, Ye Qing interprets the international influence of Islam in terms of its two pillars, the ideals of unity and social justice. The author treats the multiple forms of Islam in a diversity of countries, the challenge of secularism, and the root-causes of Fundamentalism.

Chapter X, by Mustafa Malik, “Muslim Youths in the West: Carving Out a ‘Third Space,’” describes the socio-political positioning of young Muslims in Western countries, where Muslims now total nearly 20 million. Supplying intriguing research and interpretation, Malik demonstrates that these new immigrants resist religious assimilation or syncretism. They adapt in life-style to their host countries, but in their core-values they remain Islamic: indeed, the Muslim ‘diaspora’ has built a solidarity even among Muslim factions in their home countries are adverse to each other.

Chapter XI, by Veerachart Nimanong, “Thai Theravada Buddhist Understanding of Non-Attachment: The Middle Way for Culture and Hermeneutics in a Global Age,” argues that insofar as Western civilization is based on ‘substantialist’ philosophy, it is prone to attachment and thus to confrontation and conflict. As a corrective, Nimanong proposes the Buddhist concepts of non-attachment, non-self, and the ‘middle way’ beyond ‘existence and non-existence’. Drawing from the Thai Buddhist tradition, Nimanong explains Buddhism hermeneutics, and the recent Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s distinction between ‘human language’ and ‘*dhamma* language’. Nimanong goes on to explain how Buddhist is situated ‘beyond pluralism’ and the role for Buddhists of ‘interreligious dialogue’. He closes with an account of the Most Venerable Payutto’s treatment of the ‘three Buddhist freedoms’ as an antidote to the three wrong views (namely, that humankind is separate from and must control nature, that human beings must be pitted against each other, and that happiness is dependent on material possessions).

Chapter XII, by Theodore Mudiji Malamba, “African Heritage in the Global Encounter of Cultures,” describes the concept of ‘Africanicity’ and its academic elaboration by such noted native African philosophers as Placide Tempels, Ngoma Binda, Celestin Dimandja, etc. The determining factors of Africanicity involve arts, religion, ethics, and ‘techniques or know-how’. Despite considerable obstacles, these shall enable Black Africa to (1) define itself in its own historicity, (2) engage in dialogue with the global community, and (3) contribute to global solidarity.

Chapter XIII, by Elena Anikeeva, “Orthodox Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Intercultural Communication,” shows the involvement of the ‘sacral’ and the secular in all cultures, so that intercultural communication requires inter-religious dialogue. The purpose of this dialogue is mutual understanding, not conversion. Religions remain ineluctably different from one another. The author maintains that the deepest contrasts are between monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions. A detailed and useful paradigmatic outline of these contrasts is supplied.

Chapter XIV, by Gergely Rosta, “Secularization and Desecularization in the Work of Peter Berger and the Changing Religiosity of Europe,” follows the remarkable turnabout of Peter Berger. This moved from earlier expectation of an unstoppable process of secularisation to his attempt to explain the perdurance of religiosity and, indeed, its intensification in fundamentalist terms. To this, Rosta adds an analysis of survey results from Europe which indicate decline; nevertheless even there the majority still believe in God.

George F. McLean

Part I

The Hermeneutics of Culture for a Global Age

Chapter I

Communication between Cultures and Convergence of Peoples: The Role of Hermeneutics and Analogy in a Global Age

George F. McLean

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of global unity and the emerging attention to the many cultures, we now face the classical philosophical issue of the one and the many in a new, deeper and potentially richer manner than ever before.

Here we shall begin with the many, for today phenomenology and existential awareness have made it possible to appreciate from within the unique and creative human freedom from which emerge the many distinct cultures of the various peoples.

Second and correspondingly, as we surpass the divisive ideologies of modernity, the resultant process of globalization engages us in an intensive intercultural unity. Hence we are challenged to find new ways of thinking in terms of the unity of the whole and of doing so in ways that enable us to appreciate the many cultures as essentially related.

Third, these new senses of unity and of cultural pluralism together point the way from an essential and more static structure to the existential interactive engagement between cultures. Here analogy will enable us to see how cultures, which are multiple works of existential freedom, are convergent in their very uniqueness. This presents us with the pregnant paradox of how unique cultures can be cooperative in and through the very distinctiveness of their free pursuit of perfection.

This paper will investigate these three issues and in this order.

I. THE PLURALITY OF PEOPLES, CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS: THE MANY

In this paper cultures and civilizations are taken as the combination of values and virtues which mark the life of a people. In order to show this the paper begins with the currently emerging questioning of the adequacy of objective knowledge alone and the new appreciation of subjectivity. This,

in turn, allows for an internal understanding of freedom, not as a matter of choice between external objects or of formal adherence to laws, but as the existential construction of one's life. In this light culture becomes a matter not of things but of life, and globalization becomes not merely an economic phenomenon but a new stage of the evolution of humankind and hence of creation as a whole. Consequently the pluralism of cultures becomes an issue of interpreting and living with peoples of different cultures, and is to be approached with the tools of hermeneutics.

Similarly globalization, while implemented by economics and politics, is a new way of thinking and being in terms of the whole – and hence relationally – in which the nation state is transcended, and the issue becomes that of living with all the peoples and cultures of the world.

THE EMERGENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY

In the context of the many crises with which we have been greeted in entering upon the new millennia it is dangerous to raise the question of the role of philosophy. For if, with Aristotle, philosophy is something to be taken up when the basic needs of the times are cared for, then philosophy is in danger of being shelved for many generations to come. On the other hand, philosophy may have to do with our nature and dignity -- with what we are, and with what we are after -- and hence with the terms in which we live as person and peoples. If so, then philosophy may be not the last, but the first consideration or at least the most determinative for life in our trying circumstances.

It is the contention here that the role of philosophy today has shifted from being a work of deduction by specialists working in abstraction from the process of human life, to deep engagement under the pressure of life's challenges at the center of human concerns. What is this difference philosophically, and what difference does it make for work in philosophy.

The Crisis of Objective Reason

One way of approaching this is to begin from the philosophical divide we are crossing as we move on to the new millennium. For this we need to review the history of reason in this epoch. The first millennium is justly seen as one in which human attention was focused upon God. It was the time of Christ and the Prophet -- Peace be upon them both! -- and much of humanity was fully absorbed in the assimilation of their messages.

The second millennium is generally seen as shifting to human beings. The first 500 years focused upon the reintegration of Aristotelian reason by such figures as Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd and Thomas Aquinas, as described above.

The second half of the millennium, from 1500, was marked by a radicalization of reason. Whereas from its beginning human reason always had attempted to draw upon the fullness of human experience, to reflect the highest

human and religious aspirations, and to build upon the accomplishments of the predecessors -- philosophers sensed themselves as standing on the shoulders of earlier philosophers -- a certain Promethean hope now emerged. As with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it was claimed that humankind would save itself, indeed that each person would do so by his or her power of reason.

For this, Francis Bacon¹ directed that the idols which bore the content of the cultural tradition be smashed; John Locke² would erase all prior content of the mind in order to reduce it to a blank tablet; René Descartes³ would put all under doubt. What was sought was a body of clear and distinct ideas, strictly united on a mathematical model.

It was true that Descartes intended to reintroduce the various levels of human knowledge on a more certain basis. But what he restored was not the rich content of the breadth of human experience, but only what could be had with the requisite clarity and distinctness. Thus, of the content of the senses which had been bracketed by doubt in the first Meditation, in the sixth Meditation only the quantitative or measurable was allowed back into his system. All the rest was considered simply provisory and employed only to the degree that it proved useful in so navigating as to avoid physical harm in the world.

In this light the goal of knowledge and of properly human life was radically curtailed. For Aristotle, and no less for Christianity and Islam in the first 1500 years of this millennium, this had been contemplation of the magnificence and munificence of the highest being, God. For the enlightenment this was reduced to control of nature in the utilitarian service of humankind. And where the goals of human life were reduced to the material order, the service of humankind really became the service of machines in the exploitation of physical nature. This was the real enslavement of human freedom.

First, with reason looking only to itself, religion was reduced to the service of the human rather than of the divine, and even then was given the status of a superstructure built parasitically upon the new reductively physical reality or even of a superstition.

The religiously contextualized philosophical traditions not built in terms of the modern enlightenment reductionism were not understandable within that more restricted horizon. Hence the great Hindu and Islamic traditions were dismissed as mystifications and, for reasons opposite to those of al-Ghazali, the medieval tradition of Scholastic philosophy was denigrated.

By the beginning of the 20th century humanity felt itself poised for the final push to create, by the power of science, a utopia not only by subduing and harnessing the physical powers of nature, but by genetic human engineering and social manipulation. Looking back from the present vantage point we find that history has proven to be quite different from these utopian goals.

Second, with reason looking only to itself, religion was reduced to the service of the human rather than the divine, and relegated to the status of a superstructure built parasitically upon the new reductively physical reality or even of superstition

Third, the power of science was diverted to two destructive World Wars and to the development of nuclear weapons capable of extinguishing the entire human race.

Fourth, Hegel's and Josiah Royce's ideals and idealism would give way to William James's and John Dewey's concrete, pragmatic goals which could be achieved by human effort.⁴ Or at least this would be so until it came to be recognized that in positive or empirical terms it was not possible to articulate such social goals, at which point positivism would succeed pragmatism. But after only two decades it would have to admit that its controlling "principle of verifiability" (and then of "falsifiability") was not intelligible in its own positivist terms.

Fifth, Marxism as a scientific history and organization of society, proved to be cruel and dehumanizing beyond belief, until it totally imploded from its own internal weakness. Suddenly, the ideology on which meaning was conceived and life was lived by half of humankind was extinguished. It was as if the sun went down never to rise again.

Sixth, on the other side of the Cold War the consumer society has shown itself incapable of generating meaning for life, but capable of exploiting everyone else, until at last it concludes that its ideology of a totally free market is destructive of the weak majority of the world.

Seventh, the religiously contextualized philosophical traditions not built in terms of the modern enlightenment reductionism were not understandable within that more restricted horizon. Hence the great Hindu and Islamic traditions were dismissed as mystifications and, for reasons opposite to those of al-Ghazali, the medieval tradition of Scholastic philosophy was denigrated not as not going far enough but as having no meaning whatsoever.

In sum, this century has been marked by poverty that cannot be erased and exploitation ever more widespread, two World Wars, pogroms and holocausts, genocide and "ethnic cleansing," emerging intolerance, family collapse and anomie.

The situation recalls the great meteorite which hit the Yucatan Peninsula eons ago, sending a cloud of dust around the world which obscured the sun for years, killed off the flora and thus broke the food chain. Life of all sorts was largely extinguished and had to begin to regenerate itself slowly once again.

In this light the present period is misnamed "postmodern," because it is really the final critical period of modernity as it progressively collapses. Having become conscious of its own deadly propensities, modern philosophy begins to attack these evils by the only tools it possesses: power and control. Its attack then is not creative, but destructive. Knowing that it must arrest its inherent destructive urges, reason destroys its own speculative foundations, all notions of structures and stages and, of course, all ethical norms. Everything must be trashed because the hubris of modern reason closes off any sense that it itself is the real root of its problem. In a paroxysm of despair, like a scorpion trapped in a circle of fire, it commits its own *auto de fe*.

Subjectivity: A New Agenda

To read this history negatively, as we have been doing, is, however, only part of the truth. It depicts a simple and total collapse of technical reason acting alone and as self-sufficient. But there may be more to human consciousness and hence to philosophy. If so, in analogy to the replacement of a tooth in childhood, the more important phenomenon is not the old tooth that is falling out, but the strength of the new tooth that is replacing it. A few philosophers did point to this other dimension of human awareness. Shortly after Descartes, Pascal's assertion "Que la raison a des raisons, que la raison ne comprend pas," would remain famous if unheeded, as would Vico's prediction that the new reason would give birth to a generation of brutes -- intellectual brutes, but brutes nonetheless. And later Kierkegaard would follow Hegel with a similar warning. None of these voices would have strong impact while the race was on to "conquer" the world by a supposed omni-sufficient scientific reason. But as human problems mounted, the adequacy of reason to handle the deepest problems of human dignity and transcendent purpose came under sustained questioning, and more attention was given to additional dimensions of human capabilities.

One might well ask which comes first, the public sense of human challenge or the corresponding philosophical reflection. My own sense is that they are in fact one, the philosophical insight, being the reflective dimension of the human concern. In any case, one finds a striking parallel between the social experience and philosophy in this century. From the extreme totalitarian and exploitative repression of the person by fascism and communism in the 1930s there followed the progressive liberation from fascism in World War II, from colonial exploitation in the 1950s and 60s, of minorities in the 1970s and from Marxism in the 1980s. Like a new tooth, the emergence of the person has been consistent and persistent.

There has been a strikingly parallel development in philosophy. At the beginning of this century, it had appeared that the rationalist project of stating all in clear and distinct objective terms was close to completion. This was to be achieved in either the empirical terms of the positivist tradition of sense knowledge or in the formal and essentialist terms of the Kantian intellectual tradition. Whitehead wrote that at the turn of the century, when with Bertrand Russell he went to the First World Congress of Philosophy in Paris, it seemed that, except for some details of application, the work of physics had been essentially completed. To the contrary, however, the very attempt to finalize scientific knowledge with its most evolved concepts made manifest the radical insufficiency of the objectivist approach and led to renewed appreciation of the importance of subjectivity.

Similarly, Wittgenstein began by writing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*⁵ on the Lockean supposition that significant knowledge consisted in constructing a mental map corresponding point to point to the external world as perceived by sense experience. In such a project the spiritual element of understanding, i.e., the grasp of the relations between the points

on this mental map and the external world was relegated to the margin as simply “unutterable”. Later experience in teaching children, however, led Wittgenstein to the conclusion that this empirical mental mapping was simply not what was going on in human knowledge. In his *Blue and Brown Books*⁶ and his subsequent *Philosophical Investigations*⁷ Wittgenstein shifted human consciousness or intentionality, which previously had been relegated to the periphery, to the very center of concern. The focus of his philosophy was no longer the positivist, supposedly objective, replication of the external world, but the human construction of language and of worlds of meaning.⁸

A similar process was underway in the Kantian camp. There Husserl’s attempt to bracket all elements, in order to isolate pure essences for scientific knowledge, forced attention to the limitations of a pure essentialism and opened the way for his understudy, Martin Heidegger, to rediscover the existential and historical dimensions of reality in his *Being and Time*.⁹ The religious implications of this new sensitivity would be articulated by Karl Rahner in his work, *Spirit in the World*, and by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution, “The Church in the World.”¹⁰

For Heidegger the meaning of being and of life was unveiled and emerged -- the two processes were identical -- in conscious human life (*Dasein*), lived through time and therefore through history. Thus human consciousness became the new focus of attention. The uncovering or bringing into light (the etymology of the term “phenomenology”) of the unfolding patterns and interrelations of subjectivity would open a new era of human awareness. Epistemology and metaphysics would develop -- and merge -- in the very work of tracking the nature and direction of this process.

Thus, for Heidegger’s successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer,¹¹ the task becomes the uncovering of how human persons, emerging as family, neighborhood and people, by exercising their creative freedom weave their cultural tradition. This is not history as a mere compilation of whatever humankind does or makes, but culture as the fabric of the human consciousness and symbols by which a human group unveils being in its time.

The result is a dramatic inversion: where before all began from above and flowed downward -- whether in structures of political power or of abstract reasoning -- at the turn of the millennia attention focuses rather upon developing the exercise of the creative freedom of people in and as civil society as a new and responsible partner with government and business in the continuing effort toward the realization of the common good. This is manifest in the shift in the agenda of the United Nations from the cold war debates between economic systems and their political powers to the great conferences of Rio on the environment, in Cairo on family, in Beijing on women. The agenda is no longer reality as objectively quantifiable and conflictual, but the perhaps more difficult or at least more meaningful one of human life as lived consciously with its issues of human dignity, values and cultural interchange.

What does this mean for philosophy? In the 1980s I was a member of the board of Directors of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), which organizes the quinquennial World Congresses of

Philosophy. In the 1970s their themes had been the philosophy of science, and the Philosopher's Index for 1970 had only 32 books or articles on culture. When it was proposed in 1980 that the next World Congress be on culture there was a veritable revolution in the ranks. It was said that culture was an issue for anthropology, not philosophy, but that year the Philosopher's Index carried 120 listing on the subject. By 1998, however, there were 300 listings on culture and an additional 100 on values, with almost the same number on hermeneutics. If Marx spoke famously of standing Hegel on his head, in our lifetime the same has happened quite literally for the entire field of philosophy.

The more integral human horizon situates the objective issues of power and profit in a context of human value and subjectivity. This calls upon philosophy most urgently to develop the new ways of thinking and interpreting which can enable people to engage more consciously freely and responsibly these new dimensions of life. Done well this can be an historic step ahead for humanity; done poorly it can produce a new round of human conflict and misery.

FREEDOM AND EXISTENCE

Freedom

If freedom is the responsible exercise of our life then it can be understood how the search for freedom is central to our life as persons and peoples. But the term is used so broadly and with so many meanings that it can both lead and mislead. It seems important then to sort out the various meanings of freedom.

After surveying carefully the history of ideas, Mortimer Adler and his team, in *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectic Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), outlined a number of levels of freedom: circumstantial freedom of self-realization as a choice of whatever one wants among objects; acquired freedom of self-perfection as the ability to choose as one ought; and natural freedom of self-determination by which one responsibly creates oneself and one's world.

1. *Empirical Freedom of Choice*: At the beginning of the modern stirrings for democracy John Locke perceived a crucial condition for a liberal democracy. If decisions were to be made not by the king but by the people, the basis for these decisions had to be equally available to all. To achieve this Locke proposed that we suppose the mind to be a blank paper void of characters and ideas, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished. To keep this public, he insisted that it be done exclusively via experience, that is, either by sensation or by reflection upon the mind's work on the materials derived from the senses.¹² Proceeding on these suppositions as if they were real limitations of knowledge, David Hume concluded that all objects of knowledge which are not formal tautologies must be matters of fact. Such "matters

of fact” are neither the existence or actuality of a thing nor its essence, but simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g., white rather than black, sweet rather than sour.¹³

The restrictions implicit in this appear starkly in Rudolf Carnap’s “Vienna Manifesto” which shrinks the scope of meaningful knowledge and significant discourse to describing “some state of affairs” in terms of empirical “sets of facts.” This excludes speech about wholes, God, the unconscious or entelechies; the grounds of meaning, indeed all that transcends the immediate content of sense experience are excluded.¹⁴

The socio-political structures which have emerged from this model of Locke have contributed much, but a number of indices suggest that he and others have tried too hard to work out their model on a solely empirical or forensic basis. For in such terms it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is the ability to choose among a set of contraries by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power, and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawls will even work out a formal set of such compromises.¹⁵

Through it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases: “being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will”.¹⁶ Its orientation is external. In practice as regards oneself, over time this comes to constitute a black-hole of [self-centered] consumption of physical goods in which both nature and the person are consumed. This is the essence of consumerism; it shrinks the very notion of freedom to competitiveness in the pursuit of material wealth.

Freedom in this sense remains basically Hobbes’ principle of conflict; it is the liberal ideology built upon the conception of human nature as corrupted, of man as wolf, and of life as conflict. Hopefully this will be exercised in an “enlightened” manner, but in this total inversion of human meaning and dignity laws and rights can be only external remedies. By doing violence to man’s naturally violent tendencies, they attempt to attenuate to the minimal degree necessary one’s free and self-centered choice’s and hence the supposed basic viciousness of human life. There must be better understandings of human freedom and indeed these emerge as soon as one looks beyond external objects to the interior nature and the existence of the human subject and of all reality.

2. *Formal Freedom to Choose as One Ought*: For Kant the heteronomous, external and empiricist orientation character of the above disqualifies it from being moral at all, much less from constituting human freedom. In his first *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had studied the role of the mind in the scientific constitution of the universe. He reasoned that because our sense experience was always limited and partial, the universality and necessity of the laws of science must come from the human mind. This was an essential turn-

ing point, for it directed attention to the role of the human spirit and especially to the reproductive imagination in constituting the universe in which we live and move.

But this is not the realm of freedom, for if the forms and categories with which we work are from our mind, how we construct with them is not left to our discretion. The imagination must bring together the multiple elements of sense intuition in a unity or order capable of being informed by the concepts or categories of the intellect with a view to constituting the necessary and universal judgments of science. The subject's imagination here is active but not free, for it is ruled by the categories integral to the necessary and universal judgements of the sciences. In these terms the human mind remains merely an instrument of physical progress and a function of matter.

However, in his second Critique, that of Practical Reason, beyond the set of universal, necessary and ultimately material relations, Kant points to the reality of human responsibility. This is the reality of freedom or spirit which characterizes and distinguishes the person. In its terms he recasts the whole notion of physical law as moral rule. If freedom is not to be chaotic and randomly destructive, it must be ruled or under law. To be free is to be able to will as I ought, i.e., in conformity with moral law.

Yet in order to be free the moral act must be autonomous. Hence, my maxim must be something which as a moral agent I -- and no other -- give to myself. Finally, though I am free because I am the lawmaker, my exercise of this power cannot be arbitrary if the moral order must be universal.

On this basis, a new level of freedom emerges. It is not merely self-centered whimsy in response to circumstantial stimuli; nor is it a despotic exercise of power or the work of the clever self-serving eye of Plato's rogue. Rather, it is the highest reality in all creation. To will as I ought is wise and caring power, open to all and bent upon the realization of "the glorious ideal of a universal realm of ends-in-themselves". In sum, it is free men living together in righteous harmony. This is what we are really about; it is our glory -- and our burden.

Unfortunately, for Kant this glorious ideal remained on the formal plane; it was a matter of essence rather than of existence. It was intended as a guiding principle, a critical norm to evaluate the success or failure of the human endeavor -- but it was not the human endeavor itself. For failure to appreciate this, much work for human rights remains at a level of abstraction which provides only minimal requirements. It might found processes of legal redress, but stops short of -- and may even distract from and thus impede -- positive engagement in the real process of constructing the world in which we live: witness the long paralysis of Europe and the world in the face of the Yugoslav dissolution of the moral and hence legal foundations for life in our times.

This second level of freedom makes an essential contribution to human life; we must not forget it, nor must we ever do less. But it does not give us the way in which we as unique people in this unique time and space face our concrete problems. We need common guides, but our challenge is to act

concretely. Can philosophy, without becoming politics or other processes of social action, consider and contribute to the actual process of human existence as we shape and implement our lives in freedom?

When the contemporary mind proceeds beyond objective and formal natures to become more deeply conscious of human subjectivity, and of existence precisely as emerging from and through human self-awareness, then the most profound changes must take place. The old order, built on objective structures and norms, would no longer be adequate; structures would crumble and a new era would dawn. This is indeed the juncture at which we now stand.

3. *Existential Freedom as Self-Constitution and Self-Determination:* Progress in being human corresponds to the deepening of one's sense of being, beyond Platonic forms and structures, essences and laws, to act as uncovered by Aristotle and especially to existence as it emerges in Christian philosophy through the Patristic and Middle Ages. More recently this sensibility to existence has emerged anew through the employment of a phenomenological method for focusing upon intentionality and the self-awareness of the human person in time (*dasein*). This opens to the third level of freedom stated above, namely, that of deciding for oneself in virtue of the power "inherent in human nature to change one's own character creatively and to determine what one shall be or shall become." This is the most radical freedom, namely, our natural freedom of self-determination.

This basically is self-affirmation in terms of our teleological orientation toward perfection or full realization, which we will see to be the very root of the development of values, of virtues and hence of cultural traditions. It implies seeking perfection when it is absent and enjoying or celebrating it when attained. In this sense, it is that stability in one's orientation to the good which classically has been termed holiness and anchors such great traditions of the world as the Hindu and Taoist, Islamic and the Judeo-Christian. One might say that this is life as practiced archetypically by the saints and holy men, but it would be more correct to say that it is because they lived in such a manner that they are called holy.

In his third Critique, Kant suggests an important insight regarding how this might form a creative force for confronting present problems and hence for passing on the tradition in a transforming manner. He sees that if the free person of the second Critique were to be surrounded by the necessitarian universe of the first Critique, then one's freedom would be entrapped and entombed within one's mind, while one's external actions would be necessary and necessitated. If there is to be room for human freedom in a cosmos in which one can make use of necessary laws, indeed if science is to contribute to the exercise of human freedom, then nature too must be understood as directed toward a goal and must manifest throughout a teleology within which free human purpose can be integrated. In these terms, even in its necessary and universal laws, nature is no longer alien to freedom; rather it expresses divine freedom and is conciliable with human freedom.

This makes possible the exercise of freedom, but our issue is how this freedom is exercised in a way that creates diverse cultures. How can a free person relate to an order of nature and to structures of society in a way that is neither necessitated nor necessitating, but free and creative? In the *Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment*, Kant points out that in working toward an integrating unity the imagination is not confined by the necessitating structures of categories and concepts as in the first Critique, or the regulating ideal of the second Critique. Returning to the order of essences would lose the uniqueness of the self and its freedom. Rather, the imagination ranges freely over the full sweep of reality in all its dimensions to see where relatedness and purposiveness can emerge. This ordering and reordering by the imagination can bring about numberless unities or patterns of actions and natures. Unrestricted by any *a priori* categories, it can integrate necessary dialectical patterns within its own free and creative productions and include scientific universals within its unique concrete harmonies. This is the proper and creative work of the human person in this world.

In order for human freedom to be sensitive to the entirety of this all-encompassing harmony, in the final analysis our conscious attention must be directed not merely to universal and necessary physical or social structures, nor even to beauty and ugliness either in their concrete empirical realizations or in their Platonic ideals. Rather, our focus must be upon the integrating images of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion, generated deep within our person by these images as we attempt to shape our world according to the relation of our will to the good and hence to realize the good for our times.

In fact, however, this is still a matter of forms and categories, rather than of existence. Further it is a matter of the human person in him or herself. It is possible, however, to read this in terms of existence rather than of essence as well, as a matter of relation to the creator and the living of His grace in time. In this light the aesthetic enables one to follow the free exercise of existence in a human life, and the third level of freedom becomes truly the work of God with us.

In this manner human freedom becomes at once the goal, the creative source, the manifestation, the evaluation and the arbiter of all that imaginatively we can propose. It is goal, namely to realize life as rational and free in this world; it is creative source for through the imagination freedom unfolds the endless possibilities for human expression; it is manifestation because it presents these to our consciousness in ways appropriate to our capabilities for knowledge of limited realities and relates these to the circumstances of our life; it is criterion because its response manifests a possible mode of action to be variously desirable or not in terms of a total personal response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion; and it is arbiter because it provides the basis upon which our freedom chooses to affirm or reject, realize or avoid this mode of self-realization.

Thus, freedom in this third, existential sense emerges as the dynamic center of our life. It is the spectroscopy and kaleidoscope through which is processed the basic thrust toward perfection upon which, as we shall see,

culture as the pattern of public life is based and by which its orders of preference are set. The philosophical and religious traditions it creates become the keys to the dynamics of human life. Hence the possibilities of peace within a nation and cooperation between peoples must depend fundamentally on the potentialities of creative freedom for overcoming the proclivities of the first level of freedom for confrontation and violent competition, for surmounting the general criteria of the second level of freedom, and for setting in motion positive processes of concrete peaceful and harmonious collaboration.

Existence

Just as we saw Aristotle evolving the formal structures of Plato in a more active sense, thought here takes an additional step ahead, moving from the relativity passive level of essence to existence as that by which essences are made to be. Moreover, if for living things “to be” is “to live”, then “to be” for conscious, free and social human beings is to live in a conscious, free and socially responsible manner. Existence then is the place to begin in order to be able to understand the renewal in our days of the existential sense of human freedom and the possibilities of social progress this opens.

This existential sense of freedom can be traced from the Greek Church Fathers; it took on systemic form in the Islamic and Christian medieval syntheses of Avicenna and Aquinas; and it has been an object of special attention in this century with the development of the phenomenological methods for bringing to light human intentionality. Here we shall look at the first and the third of these, that is, at the classical Greek component and at its contemporary implications.

Let us begin with the Greek Fathers. While the earlier Greek philosophers had supposed matter to be eternal, the issue was merely by which form matter was specified; the issue of existence in contrast to non-existence did not emerge. But by applying to the Greek notion of matter the Judeo-Christian heritage regarding the complete dominion of God over all things, the Church Fathers opened human consciousness to the fact that matter, too, even if eternal, stood also in need of a causal explanation. This shortly preceded Plotinus, who was the first philosopher to provide an explanation of the origin of matter.¹⁷

This enabled philosophical questioning to push beyond issues of form, nature or kind to existence and, hence, to deepen radically the sense of reality. If what must be explained is no longer merely the particular form or type of beings, but matter as well, then the question becomes not only how things are of this form or of what kind, but how they exist rather than not exist. In this way the awareness of being evolved beyond change or form;¹⁸ to be real would mean to exist and whatever is related thereto. Quite literally, “To be or not to be” had become the question.

By the same stroke, our self-awareness and will were deepened dramatically. They no longer were restricted to focusing upon choices between various external material objects and modalities of life -- the common but

superficial contemporary meaning of freedom -- nor even to Kant's choosing as one ought; all this remains within the context of being as nature or essence. The freedom opened by the conscious assumption and affirmation of one's own existence was rather a responsibility for one's very being.¹⁹

One might follow the progression of this deepening awareness of being by reflecting upon the experience of being totally absorbed in the particularities of one's job, business, farm or studies -- the prices, the colors, the chemicals -- and then encountering an imminent danger of death, the loss of a loved one or the birth of a child. At the moment of death, as at the moment of birth, the entire atmosphere and range of preoccupations in a hospital room shifts dramatically, being suddenly transformed from tactical adjustments for limited objectives to confronting existence, in sorrow or in joy, in terms that plunge to the center of the whole range of meaning. Such was the effect upon philosophy when the awareness of being developed from attention to merely this or that kind of reality, to focus upon the act of existence in contrast to non-existence, and hence to human life in all its dimensions and, indeed, to life divine.

Cornelio Fabro goes further. He suggests that this deepened metaphysical sense of being in the early Christian ages not only opened the possibility for an enriched sense of freedom, but itself was catalyzed by the new freedom proclaimed in the religious message. That message focused not upon Plato's imagery of the sun at the mouth of the cave from which external enlightenment might be derived, but upon the eternal Word, Son or Logos through and according to which all things received their existence and which enlightened their consciousness life.

Moreover the Christian *Kerygma* sees redemption as having been achieved in principle by the cross, but as needing to be accepted and affirmed in a personal act of freedom by each person. The passage here from death to life is symbolized in baptism by immersion in water and resurgence.

Thus the new sense of existence was that of being bursting into time

- it rejects being considered in any sense as nonbeing, or being treated as anything less than one's full reality;
- it directs the mind beyond the ideological poles of species and isolated self interest,
- it centers, instead, upon the unique reality of the person as a participation in the creative power of God -- a being bursting into existence, who is and cannot be denied;
- lived in the image of God this life is sacred; one is sanctified in sharing this with one's neighbors in what is now termed civil society, and with all humankind in what is fast becoming a global society.²⁰

It took a long time for the implications of this new appreciation of existence and its meaning to germinate and find its proper philosophical articulation. Over a period of many centuries the term "form" was used to express

both the kind or nature of things and the new sense of being as existence. As the distinction between the two was gradually clarified, however, proper terminology arose in which that by which a being is of this or that kind came to be expressed by the term “essence”, while the act of existence by which a being simply is was expressed by “existence” (*esse*).²¹ The relation between the two was under intensive, genial discussion by the Islamic philosophers when their Greek tradition in philosophy was abrogated as described by al-Ghazali in his *Munqidh*.

This question was resolved 150 years later in the work of Thomas Aquinas through his notion of the real distinction between essence and existence. Paradoxically this rendered more intimate the relation of the two principles which as principles of being are related as act and potency, and which opened a new and uniquely active sense of being.

This made it possible to carry Aristotle’s insights regarding the structure of civil society to the existential level and to see this as a self-creative work of human freedom in the third or existential sense of freedom cited above. This remained, however, objective knowledge. It was able to identify the exalted importance of the human exercise of freedom, the need for all to exercise it and even its eternal salvific implication.

However, this understanding did not yet enter into the distinctive inner subjectivity in terms of which freedom is consciously lived. This is the heart of religion as loving response to God and neighbor, and thus the motivation of civil society and of the willingness to work out its challenges. This enables one to take full account of the differences between cultures in terms of which freedom is exercised, of the unique sacrifices and creativity of each person and people, or therefore of the ways in which peoples can relate most deeply even in being most distinct. All of this now has become newly possible by a phenomenological effort articulated in terms of values, virtues and cultural traditions.

Should we say that this philosophical capability has been developed in response to the new sensibilities to these issues or that these new sensibilities have developed as a result of this philosophical insight? Probably the two are yet more intimately related, such that the philosophical work is the reflective dimension of the broad contemporary evolution of human sensibilities enabling it to be better understood and more responsibly oriented.

In any case, our effort here will focus on an examination of values and virtues as the cumulative exercise of the *arché* that is, of the responsible freedom which is at the heart of civil society. In these terms we shall seek to uncover afresh the conscious exercise of existence as lived over time by persons and peoples in and as civil society.

CULTURE*Values*

The drama of free self-determination, and hence the development of persons and of civil society, is most fundamentally a matter of being as affirmation or definitive stance against non-being implied in the work of Parmenides, the first Greek metaphysician. This is identically the relation to the good in search of which we live, survive and thrive. The good is manifest in experience as the object of desire, namely, as that which is sought when absent. Basically, it is what completes life; it is the “per-fect”, understood in its etymological sense as that which is completed or realized through and through. Hence, once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought, but enjoyed. This is reflected in the manner in which each thing, even a stone, retains the being or reality it has and resists reduction to non-being or nothing. The most that we can do is to change or transform a thing into something else; we cannot annihilate it. Similarly, a plant or tree, given the right conditions, grows to full stature and fruition. Finally, an animal protects its life -- fiercely, if necessary -- and seeks out the food needed for its strength. Food, in turn, as capable of contributing to an animal’s sustenance and perfection, is for the animal an auxiliary good or means.

In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the well-being of others, are the bases for an interlocking set of relations. As these relations are based upon both the actual perfection things possess and the potential perfection to which they are thereby directed, the good is perfection, both as attracting when it has not yet been attained and as constituting one’s fulfillment upon its achievement. Hence, goods are not arbitrary or simply a matter of wishful thinking; they are rather the full development of things and all that contributes thereto. In this ontological or objective sense, all beings are good to the extent that they exist and can contribute to the perfection of others.²²

The moral good is a narrower field, for it concerns only one’s free and responsible actions. This has the objective reality of the ontological good noted above, for it concerns real actions which stand in distinctive relation to one’s own perfection and to that of others -- and, indeed, to the physical universe and to God as well. Hence, many possible patterns of actions could be objectively right because they promote the good of those involved, while others, precisely as inconsistent with the real good of persons or things, are objectively disordered or misordered. This constitutes the objective basis for what is ethically good or bad.

Nevertheless, because the realm of objective relations is almost numberless, whereas our actions are single, it is necessary not only to choose in general between the good and the bad, but in each case to choose which of the often innumerable possibilities one will render concrete.

However broad or limited the options, as responsible and moral an act is essentially dependent upon its being willed by a subject. Therefore, in order

to follow the emergence of the field of concrete moral action, it is not sufficient to examine only the objective aspect, namely, the nature of the things involved. In addition, one must consider the action in relation to the subject, namely, to the person who, in the context of his/her society and culture, appreciates and values the good of this action, chooses it over its alternatives, and eventually wills its actualization.

The term 'value' here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient to attain a certain worth. This is reflected also in the term 'axiology' whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content -- the good must truly "weigh in" and make a real difference; but the term 'value' expresses this good especially as related to wills which actually acknowledge it as a good and as desirable.²³ Thus, different individuals or groups of persons and at different periods have distinct sets of values. A people or community is sensitive to, and prizes, a distinct set of goods or, more likely, it establishes a distinctive ranking in the degree to which it prizes various goods. By so doing, it delineates among limitless objective goods a certain pattern of values which in a more stable fashion mirrors the corporate free choices of that people.

This constitutes the basic topology of a culture; as repeatedly reaffirmed through time, it builds a tradition or heritage about which we shall speak below. It constitutes, as well, the prime pattern and gradation of goods or values which persons experience from their earliest years and in terms of which they interpret their developing relations. Young persons peer out at the world through lenses formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by that community throughout its history -- often in its most trying circumstances. Like a pair of glasses values do not create the object; but focus attention upon certain goods rather than upon others. This becomes the basic orienting factor for the affective and emotional life described by the Scotts, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, as the heart of civil society. In time, it encourages and reinforces certain patterns of action which, in turn, reinforce the pattern of values.

Through this process a group constitutes the concerns in terms of which it struggles to advance or at least to endure, mourns its failures, and celebrates its successes. This is a person's or people's world of hopes and fears in terms of which, as Plato wrote in the *Laches*, their lives have moral meaning.²⁴ It is varied according to the many concerns and the groups which coalesce around them. As these are interlocking and interdependent a pattern of social goals and concerns develops which guides action. In turn, corresponding capacities for action or virtues are developed.

Indeed, Aristotle takes this up at the very beginning of his ethics. In order to make sense of the practical dimension of one's life it is necessary to identify the good or value toward which one directs one's life or which one finds satisfying. This he terms happiness and then proceeds systematically to see which goal can be truly satisfying. His test is not passed by physical goods

or honors, but by that which corresponds to, and fulfills, our highest capacity, that is, contemplation of the highest being or divine life.²⁵

Virtues

Martin Heidegger describes a process by which the self emerges as a person in the field of moral action. It consists in transcending oneself or breaking beyond mere self-concern and projecting outward as a being whose very nature is to share with others for whom one cares and about whom one is concerned. In this process, one identifies new purposes or goals for the sake of which action is to be undertaken. In relation to these goals, certain combinations of possibilities, with their natures and norms, take on particular importance and begin thereby to enter into the makeup of one's world of meaning.²⁶ Freedom then becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination in the sense of determining oneself to act as described above. It shapes -- the phenomenologist would say even that it constitutes -- one's world as the ambit of human decisions and dynamic action. This is the making of the complex social ordering of social groups which constitutes civil society.

This process of deliberate choice and decision transcends the somatic and psychic dynamisms. Whereas the somatic dimension is extensively reactive, the psychic dynamisms of affectivity or appetite are fundamentally oriented to the good and positively attracted by a set of values. These, in turn, evoke an active response from the emotions in the context of responsible freedom. But it is in the dimension of responsibility that one encounters the properly moral and social dimension of life. For, in order to live with others, one must be able to know, to choose and finally to realize what is truly conducive to one's good and to that of others. Thus, persons and groups must be able to judge the true value of what is to be chosen, that is, its objective worth, both in itself and in relation to others. This is moral truth: the judgment regarding whether the act makes the person and society good in the sense of bringing authentic individual and social fulfillment, or the contrary.

In this, deliberation and voluntary choice are required in order to exercise proper self-awareness and self-governance. By determining to follow this judgment one is able to overcome determination by stimuli and even by culturally ingrained values and to turn these, instead, into openings for free action in concert with others in order to shape one's community as well as one's physical surroundings. This can be for good or for ill, depending on the character of my actions. By definition, only morally good actions contribute to personal and social fulfillment, that is, to the development and perfection of persons with others in community.

It is the function of conscience, as one's moral judgment, to identify this character of moral good in action. Hence, moral freedom consists in the ability to follow one's conscience. This work of conscience is not a merely theoretical judgment, but the exercise of self-possession and self-determination in one's actions. Here, reference to moral truth constitutes one's sense of

duty, for the action that is judged to be truly good is experienced also as that which I ought to do.

When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop which are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require, we are practiced; and with practice comes facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of our lives. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, “amount to”. Since Socrates, the technical term for these especially developed capabilities has been ‘virtues’.

But, if the ability to follow one’s conscience and, hence, to develop one’s set of virtues must be established through the interior dynamisms of the person, it must be protected and promoted by the related physical and social realities. This is a basic right of the person--perhaps the basic human and social right--because only thus can one transcend one’s conditions and strive for fulfillment. Its protection and promotion must be a basic concern of any order which would be democratic and directed to the good of its people.

Cultural Tradition

Together, these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised. This is called a “culture”. On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained or educated.²⁷ This sense of culture corresponds most closely to the Greek term for education (*paideia*) as the development of character, taste and judgment, and to the German term “formation” (*Bildung*).²⁸

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artists, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political into a fulfilling. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby, sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity for this cannot be taught, although it may be enhanced by education; more recent phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiries suggest that, at its base, culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation.²⁹ This leads us beyond self and other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both.

On the other hand, “culture” can be traced to the term *civis* (citizen, civil society and civilization).³⁰ This reflects the need of a person to belong to a social group or community in order for the human spirit to produce its proper results. By bringing to the person the resources of the tradition, the tra-

dita or past wisdom produced by the human spirit, the community facilitates comprehension. By enriching the mind with examples of values which have been identified in the past, it teaches and inspires one to produce something analogous. For G.F. Klemm, this more objective sense of culture is composite in character.³¹ E.B. Tyler defined this classically for the social sciences as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society.”³²

In contrast, Clifford Geertz focused on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people’s intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus to an experimental science in search of laws he contrasts the analysis of culture as an interpretative science in search of meaning.³³ What is sought is the import of artifacts and actions, that is, whether “it is ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said.”³⁴ This there requires attention to “the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs.”³⁵ In this light, Geertz defines culture rather as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of intended conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”³⁶

Each particular complex whole or culture is specific to a particular people; a person who shares in this is a *civis* or citizen and belongs to a civilization. For the more restricted Greek world in which this term was developed, others (aliens) were those who did not speak the Greek tongue; they were *barbaroi*, for their speech sounded like mere babble. Though at first this meant simply non-Greek, its negative manner of expression easily lent itself to, perhaps reflected, and certainly favored, a negative axiological connotation, which soon became the primary meaning of the word ‘barbarian’. By reverse implication, it attached to the term ‘civilization’ an exclusivist connotation, such that the cultural identity of peoples began to imply not only the pattern of gracious symbols by which one encounters and engages in shared life projects with other persons and peoples, but cultural alienation between peoples. Today, as communication increases and more widely differentiated peoples enter into ever greater interaction and mutual dependence, we reap a bitter harvest of this negative connotation. The development of a less exclusivist sense of culture and civilization must be a priority task.

The development of values and virtues and their integration as a culture of any depth or richness takes time, and hence depends upon the experience and creativity of many generations. The culture which is handed on, or *tradita*, comes to be called a cultural tradition; as such it reflects the cumulative achievement of a people in discovering, mirroring and transmitting the deepest meanings of life. This is tradition in its synchronic sense as a body of wisdom.

This sense of tradition is very vivid in premodern and village communities. It would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers, undoubtedly in part due to the difficulty in forming active community life in large

urban centers. However, the cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation as this is passed on in new ways. Attending to tradition, taken in this active sense, allows us not only to uncover the permanent and universal truths which Socrates sought, but to perceive the importance of values we receive from the tradition and to mobilize our own life project actively toward the future.

Community

Because tradition has sometimes been interpreted as a threat to the personal and social freedom essential to a democracy, it is important to note that a cultural tradition is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community or civil society and enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

Autogenesis is no more characteristic of the birth of knowledge than it is of persons. One's consciousness emerges, not with self, but in relation to others. In the womb, the first awareness is that of the heart beat of one's mother.³⁷ Upon birth, one enters a family in whose familiar relations one is at peace and able to grow. It is from one's family and in one's earliest weeks and months that one does or does not develop the basic attitudes of trust and confidence which undergird or undermine one's capacities for subsequent social relations. There one encounters care and concern for others independently of what they do for us and acquires the language and symbol system in terms of which to conceptualize, communicate and understand. Just as a person is born into a family on which he or she depends absolutely for life, sustenance, protection and promotion, so one's understanding develops in community. As persons we emerge by birth into a family and neighborhood from which we learn and in harmony with which we thrive.

Similarly, through the various steps of one's development, as one's circle of community expands through neighborhood, school, work and recreation, one comes to learn and to share personally and passionately an interpretation of reality and a pattern of value responses. The phenomenologist sees this life in the varied civil society as the new source for wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles of civil society into which one enters.

If it were merely a matter of community, however, all might be limited to the present, with no place for tradition as that which is "passed on" from one generation to the next. In fact, the process of trial and error, of continual correction and addition in relation to a people's evolving sense of human dignity and purpose, constitutes a type of learning and testing laboratory for successive generations. In this laboratory of history, the strengths of various insights and behavior patterns can be identified and reinforced, while deficiencies are progressively corrected or eliminated. Horizontally, we learn

from experience what promotes and what destroys life and, accordingly, make pragmatic adjustments.

But even this language remains too abstract, too limited to method or technique, too unidimensional. While tradition can be described in general and at a distance in terms of feed-back mechanisms and might seem merely to concern how to cope in daily life, what is being spoken about are free acts that are expressive of passionate human commitment and personal sacrifice in responding to concrete danger, building and rebuilding family alliances and constructing and defending one's nation. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns rather the meaning we are able to envision for life and which we desire to achieve through all such adjustments over a period of generations, i.e., what is truly worth striving for and the pattern of social interaction in which this can be lived richly. The result of this extended process of learning and commitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground and, hence, to the bases of the values which humankind in its varied circumstances seeks to realize.³⁸ It is here that one searches for the absolute ground of meaning and value of which Iqbal wrote. Without that all is ultimately relative to only an interlocking network of consumption, then of dissatisfaction and finally of anomie and ennui.

The impact of the convergence of cumulative experience and reflection is heightened by its gradual elaboration in ritual and music, and its imaginative configuration in such great epics as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. All conspire to constitute a culture which, like a giant telecommunications dish, shapes, intensifies and extends the range and penetration of our personal sensitivity, free decision and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as is history, simply everything that ever happened, whether good or bad. It is rather what appears significant for human life: it is what has been seen through time and human experience to be deeply true and necessary for human life. It contains the values to which our forebears first freely gave their passionate commitment in specific historical circumstances and then constantly reviewed, rectified and progressively passed on generation after generation. The content of a tradition, expressed in works of literature and all the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as something upon which personal character and civil society can be built. It constitutes a rich source from which multiple themes can be drawn, provided it be accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated.

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbears that our culture provides a model and exemplar. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have been defined,

defended and passed on through time the corporate life of the community as civil society.³⁹

Ultimately, tradition bridges from ancient Greek philosophy to civil society today. It bears the divine gifts of life, meaning and love, uncovered in facing the challenges of civil life through the ages. It provides both the way back to their origin in the *arché* as the personal, free and responsible exercise of existence and even of its divine source, and the way forward to their divine goal, the way, that is, to their Alpha and their Omega.

CIVILIZATION

Progress

Since the fabled days of the silk route Central Asia has always been considered the cross roads of the world -- the delicate balance wheel between East and West. Great civilizations have been challenged there to play that role: Zoroastrian, Christian, Islamic, Marxist. Now the new states in the region are faced with taking up that role in a context suddenly become global.

This is a daunting challenge: it is necessary to avoid losing the civilizing heritage from all of the above civilizations, yet to establish a clear and firm identity which distinguishes these nations from Russia to the North; to revive the Islamic roots of their identity, yet without falling into, or falling prey to, a fundamentalism which would impede progress; to develop their economic base, yet not at the cost of a new servitude; and to take their place politically in the world, yet to retain and promote their proper independence.

While moving from a centralized to a more open economy, the nations of Central Asia are engaged not only in balancing all the great forces of the world, but in integrating them into a new and viable whole. In this sense, the future of civilization is in play.

Truly humane progress will be possible only to the degree that these peoples are able to find ways of inspiring their disparate elements with spiritual values in a way that promotes both the dignity of the human person and the social cohesion and cooperation of its peoples. This challenge of our times finds its focus in Central Asia.

Professor S. Shermukhamedov provides us with an excellent description of spiritual culture. This is

the system in which the values of human society and humankind are reflected, impressed and incarnated with their needs, wishes, interests, hopes, beliefs, persuasions. This is the world of emotions, sensations, aspirations, views, wills, impulses and actions, as impressed upon the internal world of man and realized through the interaction between society and nature in which man is the subject of national and common values. Man is the highest value and his life, goodness, interests, harmony, happiness are the goals of society.⁴⁰

These words reflect an important shift taking place in contemporary culture.

Previously, in fact from the time of the great trio of Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, thought had shifted in an objectivist direction. Concern was centered upon the way things were, rather than upon the human person who knows and engages them. This orientation was radicalized at the beginning of modern times which came thereby to be characterized by rationalism.

It is then of epic moment that in our day we should become aware of not only the achievement of this orientation, but also of its limitations and of the way in which it has held us captive. Now the concerns so rightly underlined by Professor Shermukhamedov have come to the fore. They are reflected not least in the new freedom of Central Asia and in the new hopes and aspirations of its peoples.

This provides orientation for our search further into the nature of spiritual civilization, its foundations and its significance for social progress.

One of the most important characteristics of human persons and societies is their capability for development and growth. One is born with open and unlimited powers for knowledge and for love. Life consists in developing, deploying and exercising these capabilities. Given the communitary character of human growth and learning, dependence upon others is not unnatural -- quite the contrary. Within, as well as beyond, our social group we depend upon other persons according as they possess abilities which we, as individuals and communities, need for our growth, self-realization and fulfillment.

This dependence is not primarily one of obedience to the will of others, but is based upon their comparative excellence in some dimension -- whether this be the doctor's professional skill in healing or the wise person's insight and judgment in matters where profound understanding is required. The pre-eminence of wise persons in the community is not something they usurp or with which they are arbitrarily endowed; it is based rather upon their abilities as these are reasonably and freely acknowledged by others.

Further, this is not a matter of universal law imposed from above and uniformly repeated in univocal terms. Rather it is a matter of corporate learning developed by the components of a civil society each with its own special concerns and each related to the other in a pattern of subsidiarity.

All of these -- the role of the community in learning, the contribution of extended historical experience regarding the horizontal and vertical axes of life and meaning, and the grounding of dependence in competency -- combine to endow tradition with authority for subsequent ages. This is varied according to the different components of tradition and their interrelation.

There are reasons to believe, moreover, that tradition is not a passive storehouse of materials simply waiting upon the inquirer, but that its content of authentic wisdom plays a normative role for life in subsequent ages. On the one hand, without such a normative referent, prudence would be as relativistic and ineffective as muscular action without a skeletal substructure. Life would be merely a matter of compromise and accommodation on any terms, with no

sense of the value either of what was being compromised or of that for which it was compromised. On the other hand, were the normative factor to reside simply in a transcendental or abstract vision, the result would be devoid of existential content.

The fact that humans, no matter how different in culture, do not remain indifferent before the flow of events, but dispute -- even bitterly -- the direction of change appropriate for their community reflects that every humanism is committed actively to the realization of some common -- if general -- sense of perfection. Without this, even conflict would be impossible for there would be no intersection of the divergent positions and, hence, no debate or conflict.

Through history, communities discover vision which both transcends time and directs our life in all times, past, present and future. The content of that vision is a set of values which, by their fullness and harmony of measure, point the way to mature and perfect human formation and, thereby, orient life. Such a vision is historical because it arises in the life of a people in time. It is also normative, because it provides a basis upon which past historical ages, present options and future possibilities are judged; it presents an appropriate way of preserving that life through time. What begins to emerge is Heidegger's insight regarding Being and its characteristics of unity, truth and justice, goodness and love. These are not simply empty ideals, but the ground, hidden or veiled, as it were, and erupting into time through the conscious personal and group life of free human beings in history. Seen in this light, the process of human search, discussion and decision -- today called democracy -- becomes more than a method for managing human affairs; more substantively, it is the mode of the emergence of being in time, the very reality of the life of persons and societies.

One's cultural heritage or tradition constitutes a specification of the general sense of being or perfection, but not as if this were chronologically distant in the past and, therefore, in need of being drawn forward by some artificial contrivance. Rather, being and its values live and act in the lives of all whom they inspire and judge. In its synchronic form, through time, tradition is the timeless dimension of history. Rather than reconstructing it, we belong to it -- just as it belongs to us. Traditions then are, in effect, the ultimate communities of human striving, for human life and understanding are implemented, not by isolated individual acts of subjectivity -- which Gadamer describes as flickerings in the closed circuits or personal consciousness⁴¹ -- but by our situatedness in a tradition. By fusing both past and present, tradition enables the component groupings of civil society to determine the specific direction of their lives and to mobilize the consensus and mutual commitments of which true and progressive community life is built.⁴²

Conversely, it is this sense of the good or of value, which emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a people throughout its history and constitutes its cultural heritage, which enables society, in turn, to evaluate its life in order to pursue its true good and to avoid what is socially destructive. In the absence of tradition, present events would be simply facts to be suc-

ceeded by counter-facts. The succeeding waves of such disjointed happenings would constitute a history written in terms of violence. This, in turn, could be restrained only by some utopian abstraction built upon the reductivist limitations of modern rationalism. Such elimination of all expressions of democratic freedoms is the archetypal modern nightmare, 1984.

All of that stands in stark contrast to one's heritage or tradition as the rich cumulative expression of meaning evolved by a people through the ages to a point of normative and classical perfection. Exemplified architecturally in a Parthenon or a Taj Mahal, it is embodied personally in a Confucius or Gandhi, a Bolivar or Lincoln, a Martin Luther King or a Mother Theresa. Various terms "charismatic personalities" (Shils),⁴³ "paradigmatic individuals" (Cua)⁴⁴ or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal (MacIntyre),⁴⁵ they supersede mere historical facts. As concrete universals, they express in the varied patterns of civil society that harmony and fullness of perfection which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamizing -- in a word, liberating.

Nor is it accidental that, as examples, the founders of the great religious traditions come most spontaneously to mind. It is not, of course, that people cannot or do not form the component groups of civil society on the basis of their concrete concerns for education, ecology or life. But their motivation in this as fully human goes beyond pragmatic, external goals to the internal social commitment which in most cultures is religiously based.

It is necessary then to look into the nature of cultural traditions as constituted of freedom as it forms values, virtues and tradition and to the hermeneutics whereby these can be interpreted in a progressive manner.

Civilizations

At this turn of the millennium we stand at a point not only of numerical change to the series 2000 or even of a change within a system as with a substitution of political parties, but at a point of revision of the very nature of world ordering itself. Earlier the issue was one of the possession of territory under the leadership of great Emperors or of physical resources and the military-industrial power that entailed. More recently we have seen the world divided by ideologies into great spheres. Since the end of the Cold War, however, it is suggested famously in the work of Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*,⁴⁶ that the world order is being remade on the basis of the pattern of civilizations.

This reflects a deep transformation in interests and epistemology. Before attention was oriented objectively, that is, to things as standing over against (*ob*-against; *ject*-thrown) the knowing subject. In this perspective their quantitative characteristics were particularly salient and were given major importance.

In this century the subject and its intentional life or subjectivity and values, have come to the fore and phenomenological methods have been developed for their identification and interpretation. Whether it was phi-

losophers who brought this realm of subjectivity into central awareness or whether it was attention to subjectivity which evoked the development of the corresponding philosophical methodologies can be discussed. Probably the philosophical methods provided the reflective dimension and control over the new self-awareness of human consciousness. In any case, it is suggested that the new world order will be based not on the resources we have, but on the civilizations we are: not on having but on being.

According to Huntington, the notion of civilization seems to have developed in the 18th century as a term to distinguish cultivated peoples from the barbarian or native populations being encountered in the process of colonization. In this sense it was a universal term used in the singular. It implied a single elite standard of urbanization, literacy and the like singular for the admission of a people into the world order. When the standard was met, the people was "civilized"; all the rest were simply "uncivilized".

In the 19th century a distinction was made between civilization as characterized by its material and technological capabilities or by a more elaborate political and urban development, and culture, which was the values and moral qualities of a people. However, the two terms have tended to merge in expressing an overall way of life, with civilization being the broader term. Where culture focuses on the understanding of perfection and fulfillment and the evaluation of what leads thereto, civilization is more the total working out of life in these terms. Hence civilization is culture, as it were, writ large.

This appears in a number of descriptions of civilization where culture is always a central element: for F. Braudel civilization is "a cultural arena",⁴⁷ a collection of cultural characteristics and phenomena; for C. Dawson: the product of "a particular original process of cultural activity which is the work of a particular people";⁴⁸ for J. Wallerstein, "a particular concatenation of worldview, customs, structures, and culture (both material culture and high cultures) which form some kind of historical whole."⁴⁹

Taken as a matter of identity it can be said that a civilization is the largest and most perduring unit or whole -- the largest "we".⁵⁰ The elements included are blood, language, religion and way of life. Among these religion is "the central defining characteristic of civilizations",⁵¹ as it is the point of a person's or peoples deepest and most intensive commitment, the foundation on which the great civilizations rest.⁵² Hence the major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism) are each associated with a civilization, the exception being Buddhism which came as a reform movement, and was uprooted from its native India and lives only in diaspora among other nations.

Civilizations endure over long periods of time. While empires come and go, civilizations "survive political, social, economic even ideological upheavals."⁵³

International history rightly documents the thesis that political systems are transient expedients on the surface of civilization, and that the destiny of each linguistically and morally

unified community depends ultimately upon the survival of certain primary structuring ideas around which successive generations have coalesced and which then symbolize the society's continuity.⁵⁴

But this does not mean that civilizations are static. On the contrary, it is characteristic of a civilization to evolve, and the theories of such evolution are attempts to achieve some understanding of the process not only of the sequence of human events but more deeply of the transformation human self-understanding itself. Famously, Toynbee theorizes that civilizations are responses to human challenges; that they evolve in terms of establishing increasing control over the related factors, especially by creative minorities; that in the face of troubles there emerges a strong effort at integration followed by disintegration. Such theories vary somewhat in the order of stages but generally move from a preparatory period, to the major development of the strengths of a culture or civilization, and then toward atrophication. In any case these implies extend cycles extend over very large periods.

It is significant that in the end, however, Huntington is not able to give any clear definition or distinction of civilizations. Whereas Descartes would request just such characteristics for scientific knowledge, Huntington notes that civilizations generally somewhat overlap, and that, while no clear concept can be delineated, civilizations are nonetheless important.

Civilizations have no clear cut boundaries and no precise beginnings and endings. People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and shapes of civilizations change over time. The cultures of peoples interact and overlap. The extent to which the cultures of civilizations resemble or differ from each other also varies considerably. Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful entities, and while the lines between them are seldom sharp, they are real.⁵⁵

In this light it can be seen that a shift of world order to a pattern not of empires or commercial blocks, but of civilizations bespeaks a great development of inhuman consciousness beyond the external, objectivity and the physical to the internal, subjectivity spiritual and indeed religions. In contrast to Descartes, it appears that what is most significant in the relations between peoples, indeed what defines them as peoples, is a matter accessible by scientific definition, but is a matter of more inclusive aesthetic appreciation and that it is in these terms that one's life commitments, personal relations and interaction between peoples are realized.

Again we could ask whether this is the result of philosophical advances to open, for example, the dimensions of phenomenological awareness or whether these philosophical advances on the result of social history. My sense is that the two proceed together with the philosophical providing the reflective dimension to the social process, just as the cultures provide the sense

of perfection and values in the progress of civilization. In any case it reflects the crisis of objective reason and the turn to subjectivity as the new agenda. Let us look more in detail at this transformation.

PLURALISM AND HERMENEUTICS

Interpretation

First of all it is necessary to note that only a unity of meaning, that is, an identity, is intelligible.⁵⁶ Just as it is not possible to understand a number three if we include but two units rather than three, no act of understanding is possible unless it is directed to an identity or whole of meaning. This brings us directly to the classic issue in the field of hermeneutics, described above as the hermeneutic circle, in which knowledge of the whole depends upon knowledge of the parts, and vice versa. How can we make this work for rather than against the effort to live our religious tradition in our days?

Reflection on the experience of reading a text, including a sacred text, might help. As we read we construe the meaning of a sentence before grasping all its individual parts. What we construe is dependent upon our expectation of the meaning of the sentence, which we derived from its first words, the prior context, or more likely a combination of the two. In turn, our expectation or construal of the meaning of the text is adjusted according to the requirements of its various parts. As we proceed to read through the sentence, the paragraph, etc., we reassess continually the whole in terms of the parts and the parts in terms of the whole. This basically circular movement continues until all appear to fit and be expressive.

Similarly, as we begin to look into our tradition, we come with a prior conception of its content. This anticipation of meaning is not simply of the tradition as an objective or fixed content to which we come. It is rather what we reproduce uniquely in our hearts and minds as we participate in the evolution of the tradition, thereby further determining ourselves as a community of believers. This is a creative stance reflecting the content, not only of the past, but of the time in which we stand and of the overall life project in which we are engaged. In our religious traditions it is a creative unveiling of the content of the Revelation through the Prophets as this comes progressively and historically into the present and, through the present, passes into the future.

In this light, time is not a barrier, a separation or an abyss, but rather a bridge and an opportunity for the process of understanding; it is a fertile ground filled with experience, custom and tradition. The importance of the historical distance it provides is not that it enables the subjective reality of persons to disappear so that the objectivity of the situation can emerge. On the contrary, it makes possible a more appreciative meaning of our religious tradition, not only by removing falsifying factors, but by opening new sources of self-understanding and new perspectives. These reveal in the tradition unsuspected implications and even new dimensions of meaning of which we heretofore were unaware.⁵⁷

Of course, not all our acts of understanding are correct, whether they be about the meaning of a text from another culture, a dimension of a shared tradition, set of goals or a plan for future action. Hence, it becomes particularly important that they not be adhered to fixedly, but be put at risk in dialogue with others, as is the classical practice here in Qom as center of religious learning.

In this the basic elements of meaning remain the substances which Aristotle described in terms of their autonomy or standing in their own right, and, by implication, of their identity. Hermeneutics would expand this to reflect as well the historical and hermeneutic situation of each person in the dialogue, that is, their horizon or particular possibility for understanding. An horizon is all that can be seen from one's vantage point(s). In reading a text or in a dialogue with others it is necessary to be aware of our horizon as well as that of others. When our initial projection of the meaning of a text (which might be another's words, the content of a tradition or a sacred text) will not bear up in the progress of the reading or the dialogue, our passion to hear the word of God in the sacred text or of the other in the conversation drives us to make needed adjustments in our projection of their meaning.

This enables us to adjust not only our prior understanding of the horizon of the text or of other with whom we are in dialogue, but especially our own horizon. Hence, one need not fear being trapped in the horizons of our culture, and ultimately of our religion. They are vantage points of a mind which in principle is open and mobile, capable of being aware of its own horizon and of reaching out to the message of the Prophet and to other's experience of God in their lives which constitutes their horizons. The flow of history implies that our religious horizons are not limitations, but mountain tops from which we look in awe at the vast panorama of God's work with humankind. It is in making us aware of our horizons that hermeneutic awareness accomplishes our liberation.⁵⁸

In this process it is important that we remain alert to the new implications of our religious tradition. We must not simply follow through with our previous ideas until a change is forced upon us, but must remain sensitive to new meanings in true openness. This is neither neutrality as regards the meaning of the tradition, nor an extinction of passionate concerns regarding action towards the future. Rather, being aware of our own biases or prejudices and adjusting them in dialogue with a text or with others (and quite possibly both of these together, when in our national community we debate the meaning of our Constitution, or in our religious community we prayerfully examine our sacred texts) implies rejecting what impedes our understanding of others and of our own sacred texts and traditions. Our attitude in approaching dialogue must be one of willingness continually to revise, renew and enrich our initial projection or expectation of meaning.

There then is a way out of the hermeneutic cycle. It is not by ignoring or denying our horizons and prejudices, but by recognizing them as inevitable and making them work for us. To do so we must direct our attention to the objective meaning of the text in order to draw out, not only its meaning for the

author, but its application for the present. Through this process of application a religious teacher and preacher serves as midwife for the historicity of a text, a tradition or a culture, and enables it to give birth to the future.⁵⁹

Method of Question and Answer

The effort to draw upon a text or a tradition and in dialogue to discover its meaning for the present supposes authentic openness. The logical structure of this openness is to be found in the exchange of question and answer. The question is required in order to determine just what issue we are engaging--whether it is this issue or that--in order to give direction to our attention. Without this no meaningful answer can be given or received. As a question, however, it requires that the answer not be settled or determined. In sum, progress or discovery requires an openness which is not simply indeterminacy, but a question which gives specific direction to our attention and enables us to consider significant evidence. (Note that we can proceed not only by means of positive evidence for one of two possible responses, but also through dissolving the counter arguments).

If discovery depends upon the question, then the art of discovery is the art of questioning. Consequently, whether working alone or in conjunction with others, our effort to find the answer should be directed less towards suppressing, than toward reinforcing and unfolding the question. To the degree that its probabilities are built up and intensified it can serve as a searchlight. This is the opposite of both opinion which tends to suppress questions, and of arguing which searches out the weakness in the other's argument. Instead, in conversation as dialogue one enters upon a mutual search to maximize the possibilities of the question, even by speaking at cross purposes. By mutually eliminating errors and working out a common meaning we discover truth.⁶⁰

Further, it should not be presupposed that the text holds the answer to but one question or horizon which must be identified by the reader. On the contrary, the full horizon of any author and above all of the transcendent source of revelation and the Prophets is never available to the reader. Nor can it be expected that there is but one question to which the text or tradition holds an answer. The sense of the text reaches beyond what any human author intended. Because of the dynamic character of being as it emerges in time, the horizon is never fixed but is continually opening. This constitutes the effective historical element in understanding a text or a tradition. At each step new dimensions of its potentialities open to understanding; the meaning of a text or tradition lives with the consciousness and hence the horizons--not of its author, but of the many readers living with others through time and history. It is the broadening of their horizons, resulting from their fusion with the horizon of a text or a partner in dialogue, that makes it possible to receive answers which are ever new.⁶¹

In this one's personal attitudes and interests are, once again, highly important. If our interest in developing new horizons were simply the promotion of our own understanding then we could be interested solely in achiev-

ing knowledge, and thereby domination over others. This would lock one into an absoluteness of one's prejudices; being fixed or closed in the past they would disallow new life in the present. In this manner powerful new insights become with time deadening pre-judgments which suppress freedom.

In contrast, an attitude of authentic religious openness appreciates the nature of one's own finiteness. On this basis it both respects the past and is open to discerning the future. Such openness is a matter, not merely of new information, but of recognizing the historical nature of man. It enables one to escape from limitations which had limited vision in the past, and enables one to learn from new experiences. Thus, recognition of the limitations of our finite projects enables us to see that the future is still open.⁶²

This suggests that openness does not consist so much in surveying others objectively or obeying them in a slavish and unquestioning manner, but is directed primarily to ourselves. It is an extension of our ability to listen to others, and to assimilate the implications of their answers for changes in our own positions. In other words, it is an acknowledgement that our religious and cultural heritage has something new to say to us. The characteristic hermeneutic attitude of effective historical consciousness is then not methodological sureness, but a devout listening, a readiness for experience.⁶³ Seen in these terms our heritage is not closed, but the basis for a life that is ever new, more inclusive and richer.

II. GLOBAL UNITY: THE ONE

Parmenides began the history of metaphysics by showing the primacy of the One. Plato followed this with the integration of plurality through his notion of participation. Here in contrast, in treating the issue of communication between cultures our point of departure has been cultures as unique achievements of the creative freedom of the peoples. We began them with diversity.

It is time now to turn to the corresponding part of the foundational metaphysical issue, namely, that of unity. In terms of the plurality of cultures, especially in these global times, the unity that is sought is that of the global whole as the new cultural milieu within which we live.

GLOBAL CONCERNS

During the 1950s and 1960s the development of technological capabilities made it possible to design vehicles with sufficient thrust and precision to be able to break the bonds of earth and soar towards the planets. By the end of the 60s, as projected by President Kennedy, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. What he saw there was of little interest -- a barren rocky terrain, alternating between great heat and frigid cold. But what he saw from there was of the greatest consequence. With a few of his predecessors in space exploration, he was able for the first time in human history to look at the Earth and see

it whole. Throughout the millennia humankind had always seen fragments, piece by piece; now for the first time the earth was seen globally.

At the time, astronomers sought avidly to learn about the moon. But for philosophers the questions were rather what would be found about humankind, about relations between peoples and about their presence in nature. More importantly, they wondered if this would change the way in which people understood themselves in all these regards: Would this intensify the trend to see all and everyone as an object? Or could it contribute to overcoming alienation and anomie, to transforming antipathies into bonds of friendship? But, if this were to take place, would life be reduced to a deadly stasis? Though the stakes were high, the philosophical questioning at first was languid. Now, at the end of this millennium these questions of globalization emerge with a full and fascinating force.

Why now rather than then? This would seem to relate notably to the end of the Cold War, especially if this be traced deeply to the roots of the modern outlook as a whole. Professor Lu Xiaohe⁶⁴ has pointed out how, at the very beginnings of modern times, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744) identified the limitations of the then new modern way of thinking as bearing the potential to lead to violent opposition for lack of an adequate capability to take account of the unity of the whole. If the Cold War was the final denouement of this fatal flaw, and the world is no longer structured in a bipolar fashion, then it is no longer the parts which give sense to the whole, but the converse: the global is the basis of the meaning of its participants.

Proximately, this is a matter of communication and commercial interchange, but their full deployment depends in turn upon a *politique* of positive human cooperation in an integral human project. Thus today we reread Kennedy's words about bearing any burden in defence of freedom in terms of his positive context, namely, his invitation to all humankind to transcend limiting divisions and join together to make real progress. His promise to break beyond a divided planet and go to the moon by the end of that decade was symbol and harbinger. The process of globalization transcends regional concerns. This is not to deny them, but to respond to them from a more inclusive vantage point in terms of which all can have their full meaning and the opportunity to work together to determine their own destiny. This is the heart of the issue of globalization and cultural identities.

Until recently the term 'globalization' was so little used that it warranted only two lines in Webster unabridged international dictionary.⁶⁵ For the term 'global,' however, three meanings are listed:

- first, geometric, namely, a spherical shape;
- second, geographic, namely, the entire world, with the connotation of being complete. This was extended by the ancient Greeks to signify perfection itself: Parmenides spoke of the One, eternal and unchanging as being spherical; and
- third, qualitative, namely, the state of being comprehensive, unified or integrated.

It is interesting to note that Webster's saw this third character of global as implying "lacking in particularizing detail" or "highly undifferentiated". Today's challenge is more complex and richer, namely, to achieve a comprehensive vision whose integration is not at the expense of the components, but their enhancement and full appreciation.

For insight on these issues I would turn to Nicholas of Cusa, born almost six hundred years ago (1401-1464) at a special juncture in Western thought. Often he is described as the last of the medievals and the first of the moderns. In the high Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas and others had reunited the traditions of Plato and Aristotle on the basis of the Christian discovery of the special significance of existence. In this synthesis primacy was given to Aristotle whose structure for the sciences began with Physics as specified by multiple and changing things, whence it ascended to its culmination in the unity of the divine life at the end of his *Metaphysics*.⁶⁶ The ladder between the two constituted a richly diversified hierarchy of being

John Dewey⁶⁷ stressed -- perhaps too strongly -- the relation of that ancient hierarchic world view to the Ptolemaic system in which the earth is the center around which the sun and the planets revolve at a series of levels in a finite universe. He traced the development of the modern outlook to the change to the Copernican heliocentric model of an infinite but undifferentiated universe.

Nicholas of Cusa bridged the two. He continued the sense of a hierarchical differentiation of being from the minimal to the infinite, but almost a century before Copernicus (1473-1543) he saw the earth as but one of the spheres revolving around the sun.

His outlook with regard to the relations between peoples was equally pioneering. As Papal legate to Constantinople shortly after it had been taken by the Turks -- much to the shock of all Europe -- Cusa was able to see the diversity of peoples not as negating, but as promoting unity.

His broad and ranging political, scientific, philosophical and theological interests qualified him as a fully Renaissance man. In time he was made a Cardinal in Rome, where he is buried. The work of David De Leonadis, *Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa*⁶⁸ which I directed, was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 1998.

This section will proceed by looking first at the manner of thinking involved and, second, at Cusa's reconciliation of unity and diversity in a harmony which Confucius might be expected to find of special interest. Thirdly, on these bases, it will look at the special dynamism with which this endows one's sense of being. Fourth, it will sample briefly some of the implications which this global vision could have for the dynamism of a global economic, social and religious order.

GLOBAL THINKING

Any understanding of the work of the mind in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa must be situated in the context of the Platonic notion of participation (mimesis or image) whereby the many forms are fundamentally images of the one idea. For Plato, whose sense of reality was relatively passive, this meant that the many mirrored or were like (assimilated to) the one archetype or idea. Correspondingly, in knowing multiple things the mind, as it were, remembers having encountered and been impressed by, or assimilated to, the one archetypic idea which they image, all converging progressively toward a supreme One. For Cusa, with Plato, this appreciation of the one remains foundational for the knowledge of any particular. Here it is important to note how Cusa reconceives the nature of this one -- not only, but also -- in global terms.

To this, Aristotle, whose thought began from the active processes of physical change, added a more active role for mind. This not only mirrors, but actively shapes the character, if not the content, of its knowledge. As an Aristotelian, Aquinas too considered the mind to be active, but in the end the objectivity of its knowledge depended upon a passive relation to its object: beings “can by their very nature bring about a true apprehension of themselves in the human intellect which, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, is measured by things.”⁶⁹

Cusa’s sense of mind unites both emphases: the original measures the image, which in turn becomes like, or is assimilated to, the original. Sense knowledge is measured by the object; this is even part of its process of assimilation to the divine mind.⁷⁰ But, as E. Cassirer⁷¹ notes, Cusa shifts the initiative to the mind operating through the senses, imagination, reason and intellect. Rather than being simply formed by sense data, the mind actively informs the senses and conforms and configures their data in order that the mind might be assimilated to the object. Thus both “extra-mental objects and the human mind are measures of cognitive assimilation, that is to say, we become like the non-mental things we know, and we fashion the conceptual and judgmental tools whereby we take them into ourselves as known.”⁷²

But in saying this Miller seems not to have reached the key point for our concerns for global awareness -- or of Cusa’s, for that matter. This is not merely the classical realist distinction between what is known, which is on the part of the thing, and the way in which it is known, which reflects the mind by which the thing is known. Cusa has added two moves. First, the One of Plato is not an ideal form, but the universe of reality (and this in the image of God as the absolute One); second, the human mind (also in the image of the divine mind) is essentially concerned with this totality of reality, in terms of which global awareness all its knowledge is carried out.

Discursive Reasoning

In his study on mind,⁷³ Cusa distinguishes three levels of knowledge, the first two are discursive reasoning, the third is intellection. The first begins

from sense knowledge of particular material objects. This is incremental as our experiences occur one by one and we begin to construct a map of the region, to use a simile of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.⁷⁴

But for Cusa the knowledge of the multiple physical things by the lower powers of sensation and imagination raises the question of the unity of things which must be treated in terms of the concepts of reason and intellect.⁷⁵ For the forms in things are not the true forms, but are clouded by the changeableness of matter.⁷⁶ The exact nature of anything then is unattainable by us except in analogies and figures grounded essentially in the global sense had by our higher powers.⁷⁷

But while sense knowledge is inadequate for a global vision, Cusa considers innate knowledge or a separated world of ideas to be unnecessary and distractive. Hence, he concludes: (a) that sense knowledge is required; (b) that both the physical object and the mind are active in the assimilation or shaping of the mind, (c) that in this process the mind with its global matrix is superior in that it informs or shapes the work of the senses, and (d) that it is unable fully to grasp the nature of the object in itself.

As a result discursive reasoning as regards physical objects is limited in a number of ways. First, it is piecemeal in that it develops only step by step, one thing at a time, in an ongoing temporal progression. Hence, on the macro level discursive reasoning can never know the entirety of reality. On the micro level it cannot comprehend any single entity completely in its nature or quality. This is true especially of the uniqueness or identity, which for humans are their personal and cultural identities.

The paradox of attempting to think globally in these terms is that, as we try to form overall unities, we abstract more and more from what distinguishes or characterizes free and unique persons so that the process becomes essentially depersonalizing. Hence the drama of globalization as the central phenomenon of the present change of the millennia.

In the 20th century the technological implementation of depersonalization reached such a crisis that millions were crushed or exterminated -- hundreds of thousands in pogroms, six million in the holocaust, 50 million in the Second World War, entire continents impoverished and exploited. In effect the limitations Cusa identifies in discursive reasoning now are simply no longer tolerable, and new modes of thinking are required in order to enable life to continue in our times.

Cusa recognizes a second type of discursive reasoning, namely, that of mathematics, which does not share the limitations noted above. But here the objects are not living beings, but mental objects of the same nature as mind. Hence the mind can pivot on itself using its own resources to construct and process concepts and to make judgements which are exact because concerned with what is not changing or material.⁷⁸ This is Humes's world of relations between ideas.⁷⁹ But as it deals only with the formal, rather than the existential, it cannot resolve the above human problems, but serves to exacerbate them to the degree that its mode of discursive reasoning becomes exclusive.

Intellection

Hence Nicholas of Cusa turns to a third mode of mental assimilation, which is beyond the work of discursive reason, namely, intellection. Eugene Rice contrasts the two approaches to knowledge by likening discursive reasoning to a wayfarer walking through a valley and encountering things one by one, whereas intellection is like being on a hill whence one surveys the entire valley all at once.⁸⁰ The latter view is global and the particulars are understood as component parts; each thing has its proper reality, but is also an integral constituent of the whole. It is important to note that the unity of the scene as known by intellection is constituted not by a mere assemblage of single entities juxtaposed in space or time, but as multiple participations in a unity. (Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the multiple things in the physical order are also limited images of the whole.)

To express this in terms of the modern distinction of analytic and synthetic modes of thought would help, but not at all suffice. With Descartes moderns undertook a search for knowledge that was clear in the sense of identifying the simple natures of each thing, and distinct in the sense that such knowledge should be sufficient at least to be able to distinguish one type of thing from all others.⁸¹ This gave primacy to the analytic process of distinguishing all into its component set of simple natures. The supposition was that these were finite in number, that they could all be identified clearly and distinctly by the mind, and that they could then be reassembled by equally clear and distinct links in a process of synthesis.

This supposition has marked the modern mind and set its goals and its limitations. Having determined that only what was clear and distinct to the human mind could qualify for inclusion, due to the limitations of the human mind it was inevitable that the uniqueness of each entity would be omitted as not clear to the human mind. Further, any organic character of the whole also would be omitted, for synthesis could assemble only what was clear and distinct.

For Cusa, in contrast, intellection is knowledge in terms not of the parts, but of the whole in which all participate. Here the intellect grasps the meaning and value of the whole. It works with the imagination and reason to work out the full range of possibilities and to grasp how the many fit together: it “depends not upon the number of things which are known, but upon the imaginative thrust of the mind” to be able to know “all the multifarious possibilities which are open to being.”⁸² Finally it is guided by the senses to know which of these possibilities are actual. The significance of the actual beings is not merely what we can garner by the senses, but what is known primarily in terms of the whole by the intellect.

The Aristotelians build knowledge from concrete, changing and, hence, limited things. Cusa’s more Platonic heritage has him build knowledge rather in the global terms of the whole, and ultimately of the One of which the mind, as well as things, are the images. Where these were but form for Plato, for Cusa they are existents sharing in the active power of being.

The Enlightenment was so intent upon knowledge that it wound up tailoring all to what it could know clearly and distinctly. As with the Procrustean bed, what did not fit these specifications was lopped off and discarded as hypothetical or superstition. Cusa's attitude is notably different for it includes humility before reality which it recognizes, and even reveres, above all where it exceeds the human capacity for clarity of conception and power of control.

The human mind, he would recognize, has limitations at both ends of the scale of being. Even a minimal being cannot be exhaustively known. Like attempting to approach a polygon to a circle, no matter how many sides are added, more remain always possible; a circular shape can never be attained in this manner. Such knowledge though partial and incomplete, is valid as far as it goes, but it always can be improved upon. One can only project the circle by the thrust of the imagination.

Knowledge of the absolute, in contrast, cannot be improved upon. Moreover, it is basically unreliable, for there is nothing to which the Absolute can be compared.⁸³ Hence, the negative way of saying what God is not and the recognition of our ignorance in that regard constitute the relevant real knowledge, for which reason Cusa entitled a major work: *On Learned Ignorance*.⁸⁴

We have seen the limitations of knowledge constructed on the basis of multiple limited beings understood as opposed one to another. Unity constructed thereupon not only never manages to grasp such beings fully but simply discards what is not known. Thus the uniqueness of the person cannot be recognized and is lost. Conversely the unities which can be constructed of such contrasting realities remain external and antithetical. Hence, to the degree that it succeeds, discursive reasoning is in danger of oppressing the uniqueness of the participants. This is the classical dilemma of the one and the many; it is the particular challenge of globalization in our day and the basic reason why it is feared as a new mode of (economic) imperialism and oppression.

Cusa's suggestion of another mode of thinking whereby we think in terms of the whole is promising, indeed essential for our new age. But it faces a great test. Can it take account of diversity, and if so how can this be understood as within, rather than in opposition to, unity: Is it possible to conceive diversity as a contribution to unity, rather than as its negation?

Parmenides had shown unity to be the first characteristic of being by opposing being to non-being. In these terms each being was itself and nothing less. But such reasoning in terms of the opposition of being to non-being bespoke also contrast and opposition between beings, each of which in being itself was precisely not any other being. Today the global reality makes it necessary to ask whether there are more positive and relational modes of conceiving multiplicity.

GLOBAL STRUCTURES OF DIVERSITY IN UNITY

To summarize then we have seen the new global political, cultural and economic phenomena in which we are situated and in terms of which we

are called to act. In looking toward the thought of Nicholas of Cusa we saw that such a global response requires a new dimension of thinking. The characteristic modern discursive reasoning with its analytic approach of breaking all down into its minimum components and reassembling them synthetically, proposed by Descartes in his *Discourse on Method*, proceeds essentially in terms of parts rather than of the whole, of the discrete components without taking account of the overall unity.

As pointed out by Dr. De Leonardis, this entails that relations between peoples and conflict resolution can be carried out only in terms of compromises which leave no one satisfied and plant the seeds of further conflicts. If now the means for conflict are so powerful as to be capable of overwhelming the means for survival, we are faced with the imperative of finding how to proceed in terms of a capacity to grasp the whole.

This pointed to Cusa's power of intellection, joined with that of the imagination, to project what we cannot clearly conceive of the individual person and the divine, to protect what we can only acknowledge of our creative freedom and that of others, and to promote the growth of which we are capable but which lies hidden in a future which is not yet.

As such knowledge is directed toward an ordered reality -- ours and that of the entire globe -- the central questions are not merely epistemological, but ontological and ethical, namely, what is the global whole in which we exist, and how can we act in relation to other peoples and cultures in ways that promote a collaborative realization of global community in our times?

The Unity of the Whole

In response to this question Cusa would begin by identifying four types or levels of unity:

1. Individual unity -- the identity by which each exists as itself in contrast to others.

2. The unity of each individual being as within the whole of being. This is important in grappling with the issue of globalization in our times and is within the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

3. The unity of the universe by which the individuals together form not merely a conglomeration of single entities, as with a pile of rocks, but a unified whole which expresses the fullness of being. This may be the central contribution of Cusa's thought for a study of globalization.

4. Absolute Unity -- the One, God or Being Itself, which, being without distinction, plurality or potentiality, is all that being can be, the fullness of being, and hence not subject to greater or lesser degree.⁸⁵

The fourth is central and foundational for religions and for a metaphysics of the issue of globalization. Here, however, we shall focus rather on the ontology and its ethical implication. This directs our attention to the second and especially the third of Cusa's senses of unity to which the recent

development of a global awareness corresponds, namely, to the whole or total universe in which we have our being, live and intersect with nature and with others.

This has been appreciated in various ways in the past: in the totem which was the unifier for the life and universe of the primitive peoples, in the myths which united gods and nature in a genetic whole, in the One of Parmenides as the natural first step for metaphysics, and in the eschatologies and the classical hierarchies of being, to cite but a few. Now, however, after a long period of analytic and atomic thinking, under the impact of technologies which make conflict too costly and inundate us with global communications, there is special need to take up once again this sense of unity.

Diversity as Contraction

The situation is delicate, however, for in so doing it is imperative to avoid the kind of abstractive thinking described above in which personal uniqueness is dismissed and only the universal remains.

Cusa's solution is found in the notion of contraction,⁸⁶ that is, to begin from the significance of the whole and to recognize it in the very reality of every individual, so that the individual shares in something of the ultimate or definitive reality of the whole of being. One is not then an insignificant speck, as would be the case were I to be measured quantitatively and contrasted to the broad expanse of the globe. Rather I have the importance of the whole as it exists in and as me -- and the same is true of other persons and of the parts of nature.

The import of this can be seen through comparison with other attempts to state this participation of the part in the whole. For Plato this was a repetition or imaging by each of that type of the one ideal form. Aristotle soon ceased to employ the term participation as image (mimesis) because of the danger it entailed of reducing the individual to but a shadow of what was truly real. Cusa, too, rejected the separately existing ideas or ideal forms. Instead, what had been developed in the Christian cultures was a positive notion of existence as act⁸⁷ whereby each participant in being was made to be or exist in itself. This is retained by Nicholas of Cusa.

But he would emphasize that the being in which this person or thing participates is the whole of being.⁸⁸ This does not mean that in a being there is anything alien to its own identity, but that the reality of each being has precisely the meaning of the whole as contracted to this unique instance. To be then is not simply to fall in some minimal way on this side of nothingness, but rather to partake of the totality of being and the meaning of the whole of being and, indeed, to be a realization of the whole in this unique contraction or instance. It retains its identity, but does so in and of the whole.

De Leonardis formulates this in two principles:

- Principle of Individuality: Each individual contraction uniquely imparts to each entity an inherent value which marks it as indispensable to the whole.

- Principle of Community: Contraction of being makes each thing to be everything in a contracted sense. This creates a community of beings relating all entities on an ontological level.⁸⁹

Let us stop at this insight to explore its implications for diversity. Generally multiplicity and diversity are seen as opposed to unity: what is one is not many and vice versa; to have many beings is to imply contrast and even possible conflict. When, however, each individual is appreciated as a unique contraction of the whole, others which are distinct and different are complementary rather than contradictory; they are the missing elements toward which one aspires and which can help one grow and live more fully; they are the remainder of the whole of which I am part, which supports and promotes me, and toward whose overall good my life is directed. Taken together they enhance, rather than destroy, the unity. This, of course, is true not of Parmenidean absolute and unlimited One which is the complete and full perfection of being, the fourth instance of unity cited above. But it is true of the third of the above unities which are precisely the reality of global unity, and the second type of unity which is its components seen precisely as members of the global whole.

FORMS OF RELATION

Hierarchy

After the manner of the medievals Cusa saw the plurality of beings of the universe as constituting a hierarchy of being. Each being was equal in that it constituted a contraction of the whole, but not all were equally contracted. Thus an inorganic being was more contracted than a living organism, and a conscious being was less contracted than either of them. This constituted a hierarchy or gradation of beings. By thinking globally or in terms of the whole, Cusa was able to appreciate the diversity of being in a way that heightened this ordered sense of unity.

Lovejoy wrote classically of “The Great Claim of Being”⁹⁰ in which each being was situated between, and in relation to, the next lower and the next higher in the hierarchy. We had, in other words, our neighbors with whom we shared, but there was always the danger that we were correspondingly distanced from other beings. Thus the sense of the human as “lord of nature” could and did turn into exploitation and depredation. Cusa’s sense of beings as contractions of the whole unites each one intimately to all other realities in one’s being, one’s realization, and hence one’s concerns. This converts the sense of master into that of steward for the welfare of the parts of nature which do not possess consciousness or freedom. These become the ecological concerns of humankind.

Another approach, built upon this sense of each distinct being as equal, inasmuch as each participates in the whole, would image overall reality as a mosaic. But Cusa's sense of each of those pieces as also a contraction of the whole went further by adding the importance not only of each to the whole as in a mosaic, but of the whole in and by each being. Unity then is enhanced and is the concern of each being to the full extent of its own reality understood as an integral participant in the whole.

However, both these metaphors of a chain of being and of a mosaic are static. They leave the particular or individual beings as juxtaposed externally one to the other. Neither takes account of the way in which beings interact with the others or, more deeply, are even constituted internally by these relations to others. What Cusa sees for the realm of being is relationships which are not externally juxtaposed, but internal to the very make up of the individuals.

Internal Relations

This internal relationship is made possible precisely by a global sense of the whole.⁹¹ For this Cusa may have drawn more directly from the Trinity, but this in turn is conceived through analogy to the family of which individuals are contractions, especially as this is lived as the interpersonal relations of a culture grounded in such a theology. The philosopher can look into that social life as a point of manifestation of being. Indeed, hermeneutics⁹² would suggest that this constitutes not only a *locus philosophicus* whence insight can be drawn, but the prejudgments of philosophers which constitute the basic philosophical insights themselves. The critical scientific interchange of philosophy is a process of controlled adjustment and perfection of these insights.

In a family all the persons are fully members and in that sense fully of the same nature. But the father generates the son while the son proceeds from the father. Hence, while mutually constituted by the same relation of one to the other, the father and son are distinct precisely as generator and generated. Life and all that the father is and has is given from the father to the son. Correspondingly, all that the son is and has is received from the father. As giver and receiver the two are distinguished in the family precisely as the different terms of the one relation. Hence each shares in the very definition of the other: the father is father only by the son, and vice versa.

Further, generation is not a negative relation of exclusion or opposition; just the opposite -- it is a positive relation of love, generosity and sharing. Hence, the unity or identity of each is via relation (the second unity), rather than opposition or negation as was the case in the first level of unity. In this way the whole that is the family is included in the definition of the father and of the son, each of whom are particular contractions of the whole.

To highlight this internal and active sense of contraction and hierarchy Cusa uses also the analogy of a seed.⁹³ The seed is able to develop and grow only by heat from the sun, water from the clouds and nourishment from

the earth. Hence, all of these elements of the whole are interrelated in mutual dependence. Moreover, thereby the seed brings new being into existence -- which in turn will be creative, etc. Finally, by this action of the sun and clouds, the seed and the earth, precisely as contractions of the whole, the universe itself is made fruitful and unfolds. But this is identically to perfect and fulfill the universe. Hence, the plurality of beings, far from being detrimental to the unity and perfection of the universe, is the key thereto.

Explicatio-Complicatio

Cusa speaks of this as an *explicatio* or unfolding of the perfection of being, to which corresponds the converse, namely, by folding together (*complicatio*) the various levels of being constituting the perfection of the whole. Hence Cusa's hierarchy of being has special richness when taken in the light of his sense of a global unity. The classical hierarchy was a sequence of distinct levels of beings, each external to the other. The great gap between the multiple physical or material beings and the absolute One was filled in by an order of spiritual or angelic beings. As limited these were not the absolute, yet as spiritual they were not physical or material. This left the material or physical dimension of being out of the point of integration.

In contrast, Cusa, while continuing the overall graduation, sees it rather in terms of mutual inclusion, rather than of exclusion. Thus inorganic material beings do not contain the perfection of animate or conscious being, but plants include the perfections of the material as well as life. Animals are not self-conscious, but they do integrate material, animate and conscious perfection. Humans include all four: inorganic, animate and conscious and spiritual life.

In this light, the relation to all others through the contraction of being is intensified as beings include more levels of being in their nature. On this scale humans as material and as alive on all three levels of life: plant, animal and spirit play a uniquely unitive and comprehensive role in the hierarchy of being. If the issue is not simple individuality by negative and exclusive contrast to others (the first level of unity), but uniqueness by positive and inclusive relation to others, then human persons and the human community are truly the nucleus of a unity that is global.

THE DYNAMISM OF A GLOBAL ORDER

Thus far we have been speaking especially in terms of existence and formal causality by which the various beings within the global reality are to specific degrees contractions of the whole. To this, however, should be added efficient and final causality by which the ordered universe of reality takes on a dynamic and even developmental character. This has a number of implications: directedness, dynamism, cohesion, complementarity and harmony.⁹⁴ Cusa's global vision is of a uniquely active universe of being.

Direction to the Perfection of the Global Whole

As contractions of the whole, finite beings are not merely products ejected by and from the universe of being, but rather are limited expressions of the whole. Their entire reality is a limited image of the whole from which they derive their being, without which they cannot exist, and in which they find their true end or purpose. As changing, developing, living and moving they are integral to the universe in which they find their perfection or realization and to the perfection of which they contribute by the full actuality and activity of their reality.

This cannot be simply random or chaotic, oriented equally to being and its destruction, for then nothing would survive. Rather there is in being a directedness to its realization and perfection, rather than to its contrary. A rock resists annihilation; a plant will grow if given water and nutrition; an animal will seek these out and defend itself vigorously when necessary. All this, when brought into cooperative causal interaction, has a direction, namely, to the perfection of the whole.

Dynamic Unfolding of the Global Whole

As an unfolding (*explicatio*) of the whole, the diverse beings (the second type of unity) are opposed neither to the whole (the third type of unity) or to the absolute One (the fourth type of unity). Rather, after the Platonic insight, all unfolds from the One and returns thereto.

To this Cusa makes an important addition. In his global vision this is not merely a matter of individual forms; beings are directed to the One as a whole, that is, by interacting with others (unity 3). Further, this is not a matter only of external interaction between aliens. Seen in the light of reality as a whole, each being is a unique and indispensable contraction of the whole. Hence finite realities interact not merely as a multiplicity, but as an internally related and constituted community with shared and interdependent goals and powers.

Cohesion and Complementarity in a Global Unity

Every being is then related to every other in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends upon the other in order to survive and by each the whole realizes its goal. But a global vision, such as that of Cusa, takes a step further, for if each part is a contraction of the whole then, as with the DNA for the individual cell, “in order for anything to be what it is it must also be in a certain sense everything which exists.”⁹⁵ The other is not alien, but part of my own definition.

From this it follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, just as each team member must perform well for the success of the whole. But in Cusa’s global view the reverse is also true, namely, it is by acting with others and indeed in the service of others or for

their good that one reaches one's full realization. This again is not far from the experience of the family and civil society, but tends to be lost sight of in other human and commercial relations. It is by interacting with, and for, others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of being. Thus, "the goal of each is to become harmoniously integrated into the whole of being and thereby to achieve the fullest development of its own unique nature."⁹⁶

III. CONVERGENCE AND ANALOGY OF PEOPLES: THE ONE AND THE MANY

If the classical philosophical problem has always been that of the one and the many, we have now examined separately both of these in terms of cultures. Together these present us with the new metaphysical issue of communication between cultures, namely, how the multiple peoples and cultures relate one to another in their action or interaction and even more fundamentally in their being. The challenge here is to see how the very uniqueness by which each culture is distinct can at the same time be the impetus by which they converge. If so, then cultures as unique works of creative freedom are by nature building blocks of unity in peace and love.

If everything humans can do they can do badly then the same is true with regard to tradition. On the one hand, some would hold to it slavishly, seeing the ideal as the past and lacking confidence in the ability of human reason, often because of a sense of human nature as corrupted by sin. The result is holding to the past and an attempt to replicate it without deviation or development. This attitude where found among Christians has been called fundamentalism, a term which has been applied, perhaps by dubious analogy, to other branches of Christianity and to some Islamic groups as well.

Others would respond by seeing fidelity to a tradition as at best not important and hence destined to atrophy with time, or at worst a deterrent to progress which must be suppressed and removed. They miss the vital importance of culture and tradition for human life and are surprised when peoples defend their cultures as they defend their lives, indeed their souls. Both attitudes can be expected to exacerbate the problem.

Instead, there is need to recognize the vital importance of identity for a people and at the same time to show that this is not static or retrospective, but rather living and prospective. That is, cultural traditions must be engaged consciously in the projects of persons, peoples and nations.

Such consideration of tradition not synchronically, but diachronically through time has important implications for two key issues of our day; one reflects the multiplicity of peoples and tradition, namely, pluralism, the other is the interaction of so diverse a world with the emerging global horizon.

PLURALISM

In the previous lectures we have seen how a tradition grows from the experience of a people and how it includes not only horizontal pragmatic discoveries about the means for living or what works, but also vertical discoveries regarding limitless transcendent meaning and values. This implies that I have not yet exhausted the meaning of such terms as justice or love, nor have my people. If that is the case, then the question is how I can discover more of what my tradition means, and of the value included in my tradition.

This is the positive importance of pluralism, that is, of being able to meet people who share a different tradition and have different stories and texts. To hear repeatedly only one's own stories leaves one within the confines, not only of one's own tradition, but of what is generally already appreciated of that tradition. Thus, to meet someone of a different tradition with different stories enables one to look with fresh eyes into one's own tradition. This stimulates one's imagination in its work as spectroscope and kaleidoscope as described above and thereby enables one to draw out more of one's own tradition. Rather than being a circumstance in which my tradition is compromised or limited, meeting a person or people from a different tradition gives one the possibility of going more deeply into one's own tradition and drawing out more of its meaning.

This was my conscious intent when I had a first sabbatical opportunity to spend time in research away from teaching. It seemed at that time that it would be helpful to go outside the Western tradition to a totally different culture, which I did by going to India. The intent was not to find there something strange which I would juxtapose to my own tradition, horizon or studies, but rather to be stimulated by Hindu insights in order to go more deeply into my own metaphysical tradition, the better to understand its meaning.

The results for me were striking. I had always followed the Aristotelian pattern of beginning from the physical as that which was most obvious to the senses and proceeding from that to God. On the contrary, I found Shankara and the Sutras beginning from the Absolute which was self-sufficient and self-evident as the basis for the reality and intelligibility of all else. Upon reflection I came to understand this to be the essential message of Thomas Aquinas' classical five ways to God. The effect was not to invert my order of teaching and of discovering, but to deepen immeasurably my understanding of the nature and role of Thomas' five ways to God as a key to metaphysical meaning and to the relation (*re-ligatio* or religion) of all things to God.

Similarly, hermeneutics speaks of the importance of dialogue as the interchange between persons and peoples. This is not at all the same as argument. In an argument one looks for the weakness in the position of the other in order to be able to reject it as a threat to one's own position. In contrast, in hermeneutics one looks for the element of truth in the other's position in order to be able to take account of it. Indeed, one looks for how that can be strengthened and extended. For even if that position is not entirely true, whatever element of truth is there is very important and precious for me. It suggests ways

to go more deeply into my own tradition and bring out more of what it means to be, e.g., just, peaceful, truthful, etc.⁹⁷

But even this would not be truly liberative if it meant only going in search of means by which I might overcome other persons in order to gain some advantage and control. This would be still to proceed in terms of contraries as characteristic of the first level of freedom. I would be attempting not to free myself from my limitations, but to solidify them by imposing them on others.

Moreover, to assume a more positive attitude toward other cultures does not suppose that one rejects one's own tradition or considers one's own position to be wrong. It suggests only that one's appreciation of one's tradition is limited, that I have appreciated and made explicit only part of my tradition. This is to honor one's own tradition by the conviction that it has more to say to me than, thusfar, I have unveiled. In other words, other persons with other experiences are precious in order to liberate me from my restrictions in relation to my own tradition in my circumstances. They enable me to get beyond these limitations, to escape what has deceived me or held me captive and to learn from new experiences. This is to be liberated or free most deeply and personally and in that way to progress. The ability to listen to others is the ability to assimilate the implications of their answers for unfolding my own tradition.

This is the strength of a democracy which allows for the expression of different ideas. A pluralistic society is rich in the cumulative potentialities of peoples with different traditions. Democracy is a situation in which the many come together and interchange their ideas, thereby sharing different horizons and approaches to meaning. Again, it is not to imply that my tradition is deficient, but only that it is historical and that at this moment I have managed to bring to light only part of what my tradition contains and implies.

In sum, this means that to be faithful to my tradition I should work with others, listen to others, live with others. To dialogue with others is not to compromise my commitment to my tradition, but only to recognize that I am limited and that with my people, however rich our vision, we have failed to exhaust the full richness of our tradition. By listening to someone from another tradition one is enabled to go more deeply into the resources of one's own tradition and draw on it in new ways for new times.

GLOBAL UNITY

There is another contemporary condition which I would like to add in conclusion to this series of lectures, namely, globalization. This is especially significant for our own times as we escape earlier limitations.

Until recently the world had been divided between various absolute nations or great empires which were often at war one with another. Gradually these coalesced in ideological terms until there was but the bipolar world structure of the Cold War. With that now ended we find ourselves in a single geopolitical world system. Some read this in the economic terms of material

profit, others in the political terms of power and control. Both are limited essentially to the first level of freedom as competition and conflict. In these terms a global unity essentially suppresses freedom and imposes domination and control. It is necessary, indeed essential, then for freedom in our time to open to the third level of existential freedom in which unity does not mean suppression of difference.

This may have been stimulated as well by the development of space exploration and the ability to go beyond the world and to look back upon it as one. In launching the program to go to the moon by the end of that decade, President Kennedy spoke of going beyond the divisions of the world and uniting all in this great adventure. Technically this was a great achievement, but philosophically the challenge it produced may be even greater. What does it mean for humankind to be able to look at the globe as a whole; what does it mean philosophically to be able to look at this world whole and entire.

There is a thinker I would like to point to in this regard, namely, Nicholas of Cusa who lived in the mid-1400s. This was the time at which the Islamic peoples first took possession of Constantinople, which in the West was seen as a great catastrophe. The Pope sent Nicholas of Cusa, a young lay lawyer from Germany, to Constantinople as his legate. He returned to Rome suggesting that perhaps it might not be so bad, in fact it might be good. We might ask what kind of thinking was going on in the mind of Nicholas of Cusa and whether this would be helpful to us today in thinking about a world become increasingly one.

Knowledge

Nicholas of Cusa distinguished two capabilities of the human mind. The first is discursive reasoning in which the mind moves from one thing to another. As one observes some one thing and moves to another object, one could leave out or abstract the distinctiveness of one vis-a-vis the other in order to obtain a certain unity. But this would be to leave out what is most unique. In particular it would leave out the uniqueness essential in the exercise of freedom by the various persons, and simply add individuals together endlessly without ever really arriving at a whole.

In contrast Cusa would identify another capability of the human mind. It is not locked to the senses and hence to the distinct sequence of the realities one encounters, but rather grasps the total reality of the whole in which we stand. In the order of intellect it would be similar to observing a city from a tall building and grasping it as one, with the particulars being perceived as participants in the overall scene.

In this, however, it is necessary to find the correct balance; on the one hand, were one to think of this as providing comprehensive or exhaustive knowledge of each thing, that knowledge would be available only to a divine mind. On the other hand, were one to think only in the empirical terms of the first level of freedom one could gather and combine only a few things. Instead

Cusa refers to a knowledge which he describes as a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*).

In simple ignorance one does not know; one simply does not recognize that something is there. In *docta ignorantia*, in contrast, one knows that one cannot attain something. This consideration is very important for freedom, because freedom is so personal that it is unique to each person and not available directly to anyone else. Hence, one's thinking does not comprehend the freedom of another. To act on simple ignorance, would be to ignore and override the other's freedom, treating others as if they were not free. Learned ignorance by contrast takes account of the other's uniqueness and freedom while recognizing that I cannot comprehend this but must leave room for it.

Here I know both that you are unique and that I cannot exhaustively appreciate that uniqueness. Hence, I recognize your freedom and value, protect and promote it. I project what I cannot conceive clearly, namely, your freedom, the whole and the Absolute. This protects what one can only acknowledge, namely, the creative freedom both of myself and of others as well. It promotes the potential growth which still is hidden in our future.

This notion is not that distant from us. One might consider one's children as having no understanding, importance or will and then treat them as things or objects of manipulation. It has been the experience of people in our times that various great systems have ignored the distinctive moral freedom of people either by understanding only the community and not recognizing the significance of the person, or by recognizing the individual but not taking account of community.

Increasingly, however, people are now recognized as free, whose will, experience and concerns are very important. Raising children is now seen essentially as the delicate process of enabling the exercise of freedom to evolve in a unique manner in each young person. Only God can make someone to be free; humans, however, can evoke this freedom by love.

Being

Nicholas of Cusa had distinguished from discursive reasoning which grasped being serially, intellection which was able to appreciate the whole, in terms of which individuals are integrated as participations. To this corresponds a new sense of the reality of multiple things. As in the simile of observing a city from a high building, the many realities are seen in terms of the whole.

In this light, individuals are not only singles juxtaposed to others in order to constitute an external composite. Instead the individuals are conceived from the beginning in terms of the whole, each being a unique contraction of the whole.

This implies not only that each is important for what it alone is, but that each in itself contains the whole and thus its relation to each and all of the others, and of the whole to each.

Consequently multiple realities are not contradictory one to another, but are essentially complementary. That is to say, each provides an element of the whole which is missing to all the others. Thereby each helps the others to live more fully; the particulars are enhanced by the whole and by each of the other members of that whole.

In this light the reality of the many components is essentially relational to the whole and hence to the other components, just as the father is not father except in relation to the son and vice versa. Here the differences are by definition relative both to the whole and to the others.

Hence the particular person or peoples are not simply different and contrary to each other, but stand in positive relations of complementarity one to another. We are not contradictory or indifferent to others, but positively interrelated and complementary. One is concerned about the other and shares with the other. Our relations are more positive than conflictual or even competitive, for they are marked not by opposition, but by love and generosity, sharing and unity.

One acts then not only with the others as in a football team, but for others. This is a deep moral and humane relationship. We saw how Aristotle spoke of democracy as requiring the cooperation of many for the common good. Cusa sees this relation as inherent and constitutive of the many. It is not a matter of self-interest or self-seeking as understood in an empiricist individualism at the first level of freedom. This would not be a democracy, but a situation of violent competition and of exploitation of the weak by the strong. Rather, a culture and civilization is a way of living with, not against, each other. The metaphysics of Nicholas of Cusa provides a way of understanding one's reality or being as complementary to others and as sharing their concerns.

Moreover, whereas at the level of the absolute and infinite perfection of the divine it is unity that is essential, it is the opposite among finite beings. Just as time is required for the unfolding of human life, so multiplicity is necessary for the more ample realization of being at the finite level. The whole is made fruitful by multiplicity; plurality is not detrimental to unity and the whole, but perfective thereof.

Finally, considered not only formally but existentially, being unfolds through efficient causality whereby it realizes new reality, and through final causality or teleology whereby this new reality is ordered toward the realization and perfection of being. This dynamism is stimulated by the contrast between the limited character of the whole as a point of departure and the more perfect realization of the whole toward which things are directed and drawn.

This seems fully consistent with, but perhaps a deeper sense of, what Aristotle spoke of when he noted that a democracy was conceivably a good form of government provided each was acting for the common good. In this light the thought of Cusa can be a foundational contribution to the development of democracy, not as a mere matter of expediency or of structure, but as a basic issue of being human and its realization in and as community.

PLURALISM AND THE CONVERGENCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

As works of creative human freedom cultural traditions are differentiated from within. They are similar as being pursuits of their own perfection in their own way. The similarity here is had not by omitting or abstracting elements in order to achieve sameness or univocity between cultures, or by lessening the fervor with which each pursues their own perfection, but rather in the vigor of the pursuit of perfection by the many peoples, each in their own way.

This reflects the seeming paradox that as free, distinct and unique they are similar in the very uniqueness and distinctiveness of their free pursuit of perfection. How now is this to be understood?

Cultural Differentiation from within: Analogy of Proper Proportionality

Cornelio Fabro concludes the second of his two major studies of participation⁹⁸ with a chapter on analogy, which he describes as the language of participation. To look further into the nature of the relationship between cultures, it will be helpful to employ the tools of analogy and the long discussions on its nature and multiple modes.

What is salient for us is that analogy is first of all contrasted to univocity. Univocous terms have always and only the same meaning. It is the strength of science to proceed exclusively by this kind of term; as a result the conclusions are not only exact, but necessary and universal in application. Such terms are obtained by omitting what is unique to each. This is acceptable in the realm of things or objects. But cultures, as we have seen, are effectively the cumulative freedom of a people. Freedom, in turn, is precisely and essentially a unique affirmation of a being, expressing in turn the uniqueness of its author. It has been the tragedy of the past that this uniqueness has been suppressed and lost. It is the hope of the future that abstractive processes can now be supplemented by other modes of knowledge attentive to the uniqueness of cultures. Hence for work on culture and their relationships we need to move to another type of term, not univocous but analogous.

Beside univocity there is another types of predication, namely, equivocity, in which what is predicated is simply different in each case. This has a number of types. In one the same term happens to be used of two things only by accident, without any relation between them. Thus 'pen' is used for an instrument for writing and for a place for holding pigs. But, of course, the cases of equivocity which are of interest to us are those where the usage of the same term is intentional.

One is the analogy of attribution or "three term" analogy.⁹⁹ Here a term is applied to two or more cases due to the fact that each is dependent upon one reality as its cause. In this case the perfection formally exists only in the one cause or primary analogate, but the name is applied to the others inasmuch as they depend upon that one.

Another type of analogy is that of proper proportionality or "four term" analogy. It consists of at least two proportions which are not identical

or equal to each other, but are similar in the proportion that each represents, i.e., in the relations of B to A and of D to C

$$A:B :: C:D$$

Note that this is not metaphor in which what is real is only one of the proportions, of which the other proportion is only illustrative (the real smile on the face being described by an imaginary sun on the valley, or vice versa). In contrast, here in the analogy of proper proportionality both proportions are real.

In the effort to analyze the nature of the analogy of proportionality in the early 1930s in the face of the totalitarian threats of the times, it was seen necessary to underline the fact that this was not a half way point between univocity in which all were the same and equivocity in which all were different, for if the latter were not assured from the beginning, Penido found, it could not later be regained.¹⁰⁰ Hence the definition of this analogy as somewhat the same and somewhat different was rejected. Instead it was emphasized that this was in fact a matter of equivocity in which the two analogates were first of all simply different or equivocal. Thus, each element is distinct in the analogy:

$$\frac{\text{the existence of A}}{\text{the essence of A}} :: \frac{\text{the existence of B}}{\text{the essence of B}}$$

There is nothing of A in B, neither its existence nor its essence.

This is important for cultures as the products and bearers of human freedom in all of its uniqueness. One is simply not the same as the other in any part. Yet in the midst of the differences the two are somewhat the same in that each is a relation of its existence to its essence or an actuation of essence by its own proportionate existence. They are differentiated from their deepest principles, yet both are somewhat the same as realizations of existence, each in their own way.

When applied to culture as works of human freedom, it can be seen that each culture is differentiated from its deepest origin, that is in the very nature of its arising from human freedom. Their degree of sameness lies in each culture being a unique way of striving after one's own perfection. Consequently, attenuating the exercise of what is proper to my culture or religion is not a way of relating to, being more cohesive with, or being one with other cultures or religions. Rather, it is precisely in the uniquely personal exercise of one's freedom, i.e., in the total pursuit of one's perfection according to one's own culture, that we are alike. That is, humans as free beings are similar precisely in and by our free exercise of being by which we are most unique in ourselves and distinctive vis à vis others.

Convergence of Civilizations: Analogy of Attribution

There is a danger here rightly noted by Professor Gyeke, namely, that by so stressing the uniqueness and diversity of the many cultures and locating this in the vigorous pursuit of perfection in their own terms we might be trapped in isolation in our own culture, that our life might be simply incommensurable with other cultures, and that we would be unable to comprehend other cultures or work together with them.

In the four term analogy of proper proportionality it is necessary to assure that each pair, while not equal or identical (univocous) with the other, nonetheless does have real similarity to the others. For this we need to call upon another type of analogy, the three term analogy of attribution by which two are similar by their causal relation to a third on which they both depend. Here the proper perfection being considered is in the third, i.e., in the one upon which the others depend. This is the creative power of the divine source on which all depend, and which is unique to the absolute One in which all participate. This is reflected in the *pros hen* analogy of being in Aristotle¹⁰¹ or the mimesis of Plato. But because Plato and Aristotle were working in terms of substance as form this participation was in an identity of kind: it explained things in terms of their species, the perpetuation of which was their final purpose.

In the subsequent development of the appreciation of existence in the rich medieval tradition from the early Church Fathers and by the medieval Islamic, Jewish and Christian philosophers, this came to be seen as a matter not only of formal participation, but of intensive existential participation as developed by Cornelio Fabro.¹⁰²

What is essential in this existential, transcendental or metaphysical realization of participation is not that each is a replication of the same form in an identity of kind. Rather each is an actual realization of being according to the exercise of freedom that has come to constitute this as a unique culture. Yet each is similar in being related to the one cause on which each depends. Hence there is a similarity in each of the effects of the absolute one in that each depends for its being on the One Creator, source or efficient cause.

If now we reverse the type of causality in order to speak in terms not of the efficient cause or source, but of final cause, end or goal, something very interesting emerges that is especially appropriate to cultures. Cultures are ways of cultivating the soul, i.e., ways in which one's good or perfection can most appropriately be pursued.

When this is deepened to religions, which S. Huntington notes are the basis of civilizations and hence of cultures, as the specific relation (*re-ligatio* or 'binding back', as an etymology of 'religion') to the one God, then we find that each religion is totally distinct yet convergent in its direction to the One. In this case, it is not only that the religions are analogous by a proportion of proportions, but that all, while coming each from a distinct quarter, converge because tending toward the same Goal.

In this light, the danger of a relativism in which each is incommensu-

rable and incomprehensible to the other falls away in the very distinctiveness of the pursuit by each of the one divine. Rather than being simply isolated from, and against, one another, they are both unique and convergent in their deepest search for perfection and self realization. From this follows a founded hope, namely, that the more the cultures approach the one goal of their pilgrimages, the more they will be able to appreciate the significance and complementarity of each other. The cultures will be natively cooperative with one another precisely to the degree that they advance in their own realization.

CONCLUSION

In this way our global age opens new hopes for progress on the basic human challenge of diversity in unity.

First, in terms enriched by human subjectivity the various cultures can be read from within and seen, as with Heidegger's *Dasein*, as the mega-points of the manifestation of Being in time. In this light cultural traditions, each as the cumulative work of the existential freedom of a people, are unique and hence multiple. As belonging to the unique life projects of the many peoples they are not to be dismissed, but protected and promoted. This calls for hermeneutics to enable mutual understanding and communication between cultures.

Second, the other half of the philosophical challenge is to find unity in this diversity. This is brought abruptly to the fore by the present reality of globalization. Following Nicholas of Cusa's approach of thinking in terms of the whole, the many cultures are seen as contractions of the whole and hence as essentially interrelated.

Third, with both diversity and unity newly envisaged in terms of human life as self-conscious and self-responsible, it is today especially urgent to appreciate not only their essential relatedness, but more deeply their existential interchange or dialogue. Exploring this in greater depth, analogy enables us to appreciate some things that are truly amazing and unexpected. First, in terms of the analogy of proper proportionality cultures can be seen as similar, not in some formal abstraction either cut off from life or applied univocously to the destruction of their uniqueness, but in their own properly unique and distinctive pursuit of the good. Hence, e.g., Christians can appreciate and admire the single minded adherence to the One of Moslems and are able to do so through their own unique but analogous experience of devotion to the One.

Fourth, when seen in terms of the analogy of attribution, this mutual appreciation of cultures in their most basic pursuits becomes as well a process of conscious convergence. For the absolute good that is the one causal point of reference is not only the source or the efficient and creative source, but also the final cause as each culture pursues its own perfection. The image which emerges is that of Isaias in which all peoples of the earth are on convergent pilgrimages to the Holy Mountain, where God will be all in all.

The more consciously we approach this one goal, the closer we are to other cultures and civilizations and the more wonderfully do their chants ap-

pear. Taken existentially, convergence as communication of meaning founds loving cooperation, which, in turn, is the positive realization of peace.

NOTES

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²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Laches*, 198-201.

²⁵ *Metaphysics XII*, 7. For an extended analysis of this comparing Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas see Gerald F. Stanley, "Contemplation as Fulfillment of the Human Person," in *Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*, vol. II of *Ethics at the Crossroads*, George F. McLean, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1996), pp. 365-420.

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³⁷ John Caputo, "A Phenomenology of Moral Sensibility: Moral Emotion," in George F. McLean, Frederick Ellrod, eds., *Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Act and Agent* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), pp. 199-222.

³⁸ H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975), pp. 245-253.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Gadamer emphasized knowledge as the basis of tradition in contrast to those who would see it pejoratively as the result of arbitrary will. It is important to add to knowledge the free acts which, e.g., give birth to a nation and shape the attitudes and values of successive generations. As an example one might cite the continuing impact had by the Magna Carta through the Declaration of Independence upon life in North America, or of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the national life of so many countries.

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⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-278.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 333-341.

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⁶⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 1, 8. "Truth in the intellect is measured by things themselves," *ibid.*, I, 5.

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⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

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⁹¹ *Of Learned Ignorance*, I, 9-10.

⁹² H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

⁹³ *Dato Patris Luminum* in Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Metaphysics of Contraction* (Minneapolis: Banning, 1983), p. 25.

⁹⁴ De Leonardis, pp. 233-236.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁹⁸ Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et Causalité selon S. Tomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1961), and *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Torino: Societa editrice internazionale, 1950).

⁹⁹ See J. Ramirez, P.O. "De analogia secundum doctrinam Aristotelico-thomisticam," *Ciencia tomista*, 24 (1921), 34-38.

¹⁰⁰ See M.T.-L. Penido, *Le role de l'analogie en theologie dogmatique* (Paris: Vrin, 1931), pp. 37-40, 53-57; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 6.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978).

¹⁰² Fabro, *La Nozione metafisica di partecipazine*, p. 169.

Chapter II

Existential Turn and Communication across Cultures: Understanding the Modern Transformation of Chinese Culture

Zou Shipeng

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer points out:

The circle of understanding is not formal in nature. It is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves in as much as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it ourselves. Thus the circle of understanding is not a **'methodological' circle, but describes** an element of the ontological structure of understanding.¹

Gadamer's opinion is very important for us to understand the role of Hermeneutics in communication across cultures in a global age. In the same work, Gadamer brings his Hermeneutics into contact with Heidegger's "ontological orientation by interpreting hermeneutics as an 'existential'."² Actually, Gadamer considers "the Ontological Turn of the Existential" as a foundation of his Hermeneutics and then of communication across cultures.

The context of this paper consists in years of study of the ontological existential turn in Western thought as well as study of Karl Marx's philosophy of practice and humanities (though not his theory of revolution), together with some elements from Chinese philosophy.³ In this paper, I would rather discuss "the existential turn" together with the communication across cultures. Differing from Heidegger and Gadamer. This analysis is not only on the dimension of time, but also on that of space, that is to say, the different situations of nations or countries. The paper will have four sections: the first three sections constitute the existential turn and the transformation of modern culture. These will be discussed in three dimensions: the whole human being, the western, and the non-western. In the fourth section, as an important example, I will analyse the relation between the transformation of modern Chinese culture and globalization.

THE EXISTENTIAL TURN OF THE WHOLE HUMAN BEING

In factual and historical sense, the existential turn belongs to human being. In his work, the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl. Marx points out that: with the forthcoming of the world market, the regional history would give way to the world history, that is, **the world history is something the human being should face. But in Marx's view, the world history is economy, politics and environment, so from the concept of world history, he found exploitation, oppression, unfairness, colonialism and then the conflict of classes. It seems that Marx was reluctant to consider the world history in terms of culture, maybe because considered as culture, it would slip into idealism. Indeed, when world history is linked with historical materialism, culture should be an exterior element: it is just part of an ideological system that is subject to the political system and then to the economic system. Actually, Karl Marx discovered human being's existent condition in the phase of early capitalism, but since that time, the condition of human being has gone through an immense and also radical change, that is, culture is no longer a secondary part of existence, but should be considered as an important, absolute and decisive element in human being's existence.**

Based on this horizon, I can discuss the existential turn of the whole human being. I distinguish the turn in five aspects:

From abstract Ontology to Practical, Ontological Existentialism.

The traditional ontology is a substantive concept, However, in the modern horizon, **there is not a nominal ontology; it is just an adjective (ontological).** If it should be called a new ontology, we can name it existentialism, but here the meanings of existentialism are **localized in modern western** existentialism, for example, Heidegger's 'existentialism' especially for *Dasein*, Sartre's existentialism for a *singular* person. **Certainly, the concept of existentialism is intensified by Heidegger's and especially Sartre's existentialism. But if we consider the existentialism of the whole human being, we should transcend Heidegger and Sartre and connect existentialism to the whole human being and Humanity. And, if the existentialism is still undoubtedly limited to *Dasein* and the unique person, I would rather to call this new ontology by the term "existence-theory".**

From Territorialism to Globalization. Just as is the case with nationality, territoriality is an elementary character of Existence: **peoples exist in determinate areas, and territoriality is formed in history and also transmitted by history; contrarily, history strengthens the territoriality and then intensifies the territorial history.** The territorial history is a basic fact in traditional ages, but in global ages, if it is still limited in a country, a nation and a region, the territoriality would result in 'territorialism' directly. **There is a delicate balance between globality and territoriality, but how to sort these considerations out is a very difficult problem that peoples are facing.**

From Nationality to Humanity. Generally, nationality is a special form of territoriality, and should be a special character of Humanity. In the process of globalization, nationality needs to be protected adequately, —i.e., if there be no nationality, there is no globalization. **The multiformity of globalization is about different nationalities.** But if nationality rejects the globalization and limits itself to a narrow, anti-alien nation, the nationality would turn into ‘nationalism’. **So nationalism is something closed, narrow, conservative, and in some special conditions, can even easily slide into racialism.** Here nationality is an important element during globalization’s construction, but it should be recognized as such. **What connects with the globalization is humanity: only if humanity is conceived adequately, can the real globalization be realized.** How to transfer from ‘nationality’ to ‘humanity’ is a collective task that both non-westerners and westerners will have to come to face.

From Conflict to Harmony. Harmony is an absorbing ideal of contemporary civilization, and should be an essential trend too. In traditional civilization, we can find different conflicts, including conflict between human being and nature, conflict between material life and spiritual life, conflict between humanity and technology, conflict between politics, economy and culture, conflict between different nations, conflict between ‘western’ and ‘non-western’, and so on. **These conflicts have been intensified to a high-point and urge human beings to seek for a new life form, and at the same time,** the inner constitution of modern civilization is more complex than ever, so harmony becomes a new ideal of contemporary civilization. But, in the present state of affairs, we have to admit that harmony is just a dream for human beings.

From a Given-life to Becoming-life (an Existential, Out-standing Life). Given-life means negative, passive life: it is an ordered life form, so that just as in theism, especially in Christianity, our lives are bestowed by God or Goddess, and people offer thanks to God in return, so even the word ‘existence’ has a history not in common with the modern meaning: ‘outstanding’ is the Latin meaning. **The meaning of the Latin root, *existere*, means “what has emerged,” and as Joseph Owens explains, “The concept of existence is entirely empty,”²⁴ that is to say, existence is one with “flesh.” “For a Christian, life is breathed into structure from elsewhere.”²⁵ But in the modern horizon, existence has been put on the same level as God, and even God has been replaced by existence (i.e., in Nietzsche). Existence means human being’s being, human being standing out and transcending himself, human being becoming what he wants to become. In an atheistic age, this means an active, creative understanding of existence is due to Human Being him/herself.**

Overarching and underpinning the five aspects, the ontological turn is the essential turn, but it should come into contact with four other turns and then institute the concrete transformation of culture. **Essence should emerge as phenomena; otherwise our theory turns into an essentialism.** The other four turns are very close relatives of culture and they expand the ontological turn.

As such, they can be considered the cultural results of the ontological turn. At the same time these cultural results are the “background” of the ontological turn. There is an interesting hermeneutical circling between the ontological turn and the other four turns.

Every cultural form that has existed up until now participates in the existential turn of human being. Today, almost every traditional culture has gone through a transformation in the dimension of existential turn, but the problem is still that it is not at the basic balance between different cultures. In general we can say that the Western existential turn and the ensuing transformation of culture have proceeded the non-Western turn(s). But as we show in this paper, the transformation of culture should not be necessarily regarded as the transformation of economy and politics. The system of culture seems to have its own inside interpretation sometimes more complex and particular than the systems of economic or politics. But it is a visible fact that Western and non-Western forms of the existential turn and cultural transformation are not very balanced in relation to each other.

THE EXISTENTIAL TURN OF WESTERN CULTURE

Here the existential turn of the West will be analyzed under four aspects:

From Abstract, Substantial, and Transcendental Ontology to Practical Existentialism. Abstract, substantial and transcendental are three main characters of traditional ontology, on behalf of the co-relevant three dimensions of traditional ontology: theory, logic and belief. If these characteristics hadn't existed, the ontology would have not existed either. We can say that the modern Western philosophy criticizes and even animadverts the traditional ontology in terms of these three aspects, and the orientation of modern philosophy and also the basic ontological theory we can name practical existentialism. To some extent, the whole humanistic trend of thoughts (together with modern philosophy of existentialism, Nietzsche's voluntarism, Freudianism, Pragmatism, and early Marxism), are active propellants of and participants in the transformation. And the condition of today's Western philosophy is deeply reflected in the ontological turn of existence. It is certain that the great changes metaphysics has undergone and is still undergoing constitute a challenge during the transformation. If the shift were a rupture, it would be certainly from modernism to postmodernism, but for most Western philosophers, this hypothesis is doubtful.

In fact, we should admit that being is still the theme of existentialism, but here being is not abstract, substantial and transcendental, but is opening to existence, in other words, existence is opening to being, being and existence merged into each other in time and then in history, so the philosophy of existence essentially belongs to the whole human being. “If being is existence, which in turn is consciousness and which even further is bliss—as it is for the classical traditions both East and West—then being is essentially open and realized in

knowing and being known.”⁶ Furthermore, we find here that existentialism should be understood through *practice*. Philosophy of existence is the model paradigm of contemporary ‘practice philosophy’.

From the Objective World-View to the View of Life-World, from Dualism to Harmony, from the Paradigm of Epistemology to the Paradigm of Existentialism. From the times of Descartes, the philosophical tradition of Europe emphasized a paradigm of epistemology, the paradigm of epistemology seemed to intensify the antinomy and clash between the two aspects of the dialectic, and then the dialectic turned into a dualism and even a dogmatism. Phenomenologists always criticize traditional epistemology as an ‘essentialism’ because the paradigm of epistemology only regards essence as a substance and neglects the existential meanings of phenomenon. The world-view of epistemological paradigm is only objective, and even the subject was regarded as a special object. The new world-view is not the objective, but subjective and intersubjective. Here the world is not an objective, scientific and technological world; it is firstly a life-world. In the life-world, the relation between object and subject turns to be a new relation of intersubjectivity. And the intersubjectivity belongs not only to peoples, but also to the relation between human being and nature, experience and transcendence, humanity and technology, and so on. The intersubjectivity exists everywhere in our life-world. We can find that the above understanding will show us a new horizon of the paradigm of existentialism.

From the Former-Modernity’s Adjustment to Modernity, High-Modernity and Postmodernism. The situation of modernity is a basic background when we discuss the existential turn and the transformation of the Western tradition. Former-modernity refers to the one that had existed before the industrial revolution. In the usual view, former-modernity is rural, romantic and sometimes a classical life mode, but for the standard of modernization, this is only a backward, feudal, low-efficient and also unenlightened mode of life. For a long time, there is a tense relation between the former-modernity and industrialization, and at the same time, both of the two elements had to adjust to each other. Then, by self-checking and adjusting during the industry revolution and early capitalism, former-modernity developed into generic modernity and Westerners generated their superiority complex, and their confidence in modernity. In the middle period of the 20th century, with industry’s and technology’s high development, especially the revolution of new technology, Western modernity become the state that J.-F. Lyotard names ‘high-modernity’ (compared to the former modernity or generic modernity, high-modernity is characterized by fluidity, changeability and intensified technology). Then, as a critical, negative and also ironical form, post-modernity came into being. If we regard the high-modernity as the character of post-capitalism, the post-modernity should be regarded as a supplemental form of high-modernity.

From Western Existence to the Whole Human Being’s Existence. The

ontological turn of existence, in its orientation, is not only in westerners, but belongs to the whole human being. If in this turn existentialism still rested in the horizon of the Westerner, it wouldn't transcend individualism. Globalization would perpetuate the imperialism of colonialism; humanity would become anthropocentrism; the ideal of harmony would be relative to the ideology of universalism. Furthermore, in the situation of non-belief, so-called becoming-existence would reduce to nihilism very easily. There are many problems in the Western existentialist turn: suffering from a deep feeling of anxiety and nihilism and then becoming enmired in the mud of nihilism; seeking for modernity, converting into enslavement to modernity, seeking for the subjectivity bogged down in egoism; from the alienation of economy and politics to the alienation of totality, and so on.

So from the present situation, the existential turn from westerner to the whole human being is only an intentional trend and with too many conflicts and indeterminacies,—not only those obstacles coming from economics and politics, but also the puzzles of culture and heritages. The orientation of the western existential turn should be the whole humanity, but the humanity is not only an ideal. It needs to think of the multiformity of non-western cultural traditions and then each must understand the other. In other words, understanding is an interaction between western and non-Western, so, the same question recurs: is the non-western cultural tradition really open to the Western?

To some degree, the modernization comes together with the westernization, so much so that in the immediate past the westernization was the standard of civilization. But now this opinion turns out to be inaccurate, because the western culture should not represent the non-Western culture, and the non-Western can find its own modernity. Samuel Huntington said: “modernization, in short, does not necessarily mean Westernization. Non-Western societies can modernize and have modernized without abandoning their own cultures and adopting wholesale Western value, institutions, and practices.”⁷ But if non-Western cultures can obtain the creative ability, this rests on the contemporary existential turn of the non-western.

THE EXISTENTIAL TURN OF NON-WESTERN CULTURE

In relation to the modern transformation of non-Western philosophy and cultural tradition, the existentialism of Western philosophy and cultural tradition can function as a model which worked for westerners, but shouldn't be regarded as a standard. Essentially, both turns, western and non-western, can communicate with each other, but even this requires a really open mind and much interaction. To some degree, westerners should take an active role in communicating across cultures, and the philosophers should be the pioneers. Heidegger was just such a pioneer, differing from those western philosophers who scarcely paid attention to non-Western culture. Heidegger took an extraordinary interest in the non-Western cultural tradition, and in his philosophical and cultural endeavor, this interest is very related to the

ontology of existence. **It would seem that Heidegger wanted to regard the Dao as a meta-concept of his philosophy of existence, but his misunderstanding of the Chinese obstructed him. But in Heidegger we can find an orientation that faces to the west and the east. In their own respective headstreams of culture, west and east can find and develop their own forms of ontological turn. Indeed, the non-western existential turn of philosophy and culture can be continued after the western one has subsided or gone as far as it can go.**

There are two main aspects in the non-western existentialist turn of philosophy and culture tradition: [1] Turning from a closed, territorial mode of existence to an open, global mode of existence; [2] Turning from a former-modern, agricultural mode of existence to a civil society, and from a society of ‘neighbors’ to a broadly socialized society of ‘strangers’: a new mode of communication and existence suited to modern ‘market’ economics can be set up. Agricultural life means fixed, confined, autarchic and non-socialized life, with communication sustained by exchanges among family members (relatives). Modern life mode means an opening, changeable, marketable and socialized life, with communication via ethics (including ethics of religion). In short, law establishes relations in a new ‘civil society’. So the key to the transformation of life-mode in non-Western culture is the reform of the social structure. Civil society is certainly the prime target of development in this regard.

In general, the mode of non-Western existence has remained passive, even negative. The problem becomes how to translate this situation into an active, positive and constructive existence.

How to transform the non-Western social construct into the new cultural mode is our task. There is difference in cultures, but diverse cultural traditions can understand each other because there is, underneath differences, a universal ethic, namely, everyone should be good in his/her inner mind. Understanding between different cultural traditions is not firstly a matter of reason but of feeling. Ethics and morality are the fountain of mutual understanding. In Chinese parlance, we say, “The same heart, the same reason.”

Without nationality, there can be no authentic globalization. Nationality is the concrete expression of the *multiformity* of globalization. In authentic globalization, all kinds of nationalities and cultures should be respected and should communicate with each other. Cultural tradition should not be the cause of future social conflict. Samuel P. Huntington sums up contemporary civilization according to 8 forms: Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American and African, and argues that future clashes shall be ultimately cultural, civilizational, and especially, religious.⁸ In Huntington’s theory, civilization is decided by cultural tradition, and different civilizations come from different cultural traditions. In my opinion, Huntington should reassess his argument, since in past history it is economics and politics which have been determinant, and—I would argue—this remains the case today and for the future. For example, the contemporary Middle Eastern problem has been reduced according to some interpretations to a clash of religions, but when we look into the clash, we find the real cause

is economics. The religious difference is just a surface representation and in large part just a pretense.

During the process of globalization, the nationalism of non-western nations becomes prominent, but nationalism sometimes can retard modernization, because it is usually connected with conservatism. But at the same time another condition puzzles me: namely, in Western countries there is still much nationalism, sometimes even very excessive, but westerners seem to accept their own nationalism as normal while considering non-Western nationalism to be an illness.

In the existential turn of Western philosophy and cultural tradition, the transcendental is an insurmountable obstacle, because the transcendental has always been the essence of Western cultural tradition. But in the other hand, I think the problem of some non-Western cultural traditions is lack of transcendental constitution. One would think that non-western cultural traditions, having a history less dependent on the transcendental, will have an even more difficult time passing unscathed through the modern 'transformation', especially in terms of morality.

So from the view of existential turn, the modern transformation of non-western philosophy and cultural traditions is not really from former-modern, to high-modern and then to post-modern, but rather requires a restoration of cultural tradition. Thus and only thus can a modern horizon be formed and merge with modernity and modern practice. There is a noticeable relation between existential turn and cultural tradition: the turn seems to say 'good-bye' to tradition, but in fact entails another reversion to tradition. Only when we view tradition from this new distance can we really discern and clarify the tradition. So I would rather regard the existential turn as existential reversion, a reversion to the resource of humanity. Maybe this is a *dialectical* understanding of existential turn.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINESE CULTURE AND THE REBUILDING OF GLOBAL MODERNITY

In the usual opinion, in the whole modern age and the dominance of Western modernity, China hasn't really gotten ride of her 'weak and puny' condition, even with a background, now, in economic globalization. China in the opinion of many still plays the role of the 'other ego'. But in this paper, I want to propose another analysis and point out a different opinion, that is, in the modern age, the transformation of Chinese cultural tradition is based on forming a favorable mode of modernization, together with a kind of modernity that can be described as *self-determined modernity*. Moreover, in the globalization age, the transformation of Chinese culture has been an organic part of the reconstruction of global modernity. In other words, in the reconstruction of global modernity, China plays an important role.

We can regard modernity as regulation of the modern, but if we think of (it should be thought of as) the complexity, fluidity and the difference of modernization, we can see that it is very difficult to define modernity. But

then, for a convenient analysis, we can still differentiate modernity through three dimensions. The dimension is material modernity, that is, if we talk of modernity, we should gain a material condition in which we can exceed the agricultural condition and live a more affluent life: it is a necessary condition, but not the only condition. So we can refer to the second dimension is reflecting and examining material modernity, together with the self-understanding of the modern condition. And then there is the third dimension of modernity: which is that reason can be historically reconstructed and the human existential understanding can be truly realized.

In a way, the history of Western modernity has developed these three dimensions in sequence. The modernity of the 19th century (together with earlier capitalism) refers to the first dimension; then, the self-understanding of industry, market economy, civil society, contract ethics, and their concomitant legitimating institutions, came into being out of the former period of 20 centuries. But with this entry into the modern age, alienation also arrived, and the second dimension kicked in further: the self-reflection gives rise to post-modernity. Postmodernity looks like the replacement for modernity, but indeed it is also concurrent with modernity because it cannot transcend modernity in fact. The dialogue and interaction between modernity and post modernity is the expressed self-transcendence of the Western cultural tradition, but of course this self-transcendence is confined to the frame of Western culture. Contemporary Western culture cannot be representative of the whole human race. The reconstruction of Western modernity should tend to rebuild the Human Being's *reason*, and the reconstruction of global modernity should include the transformation of non-Western culture.

After an independent modernization, the transformation of Chinese culture has been an indispensable part of the transformation of the culture of all human being. Furthermore, the transformation of Chinese culture has been beneficial to the reconstructing of global modernization. The transformation of human being's culture is an 'inter-adjustment' of different cultural traditions to globalization. Xulaoyun once said: "Every cultural tradition should be transformed in the face of globalization so as to accommodate to the times"⁹. The transformation of Chinese culture has participated in reconstructing global modernization; in other words, without Chinese culture's participation, the global modernization would be unilateral and unwholesome.

In the West, the first side of modernity has been realistic, but if we think of the real condition of the non-Western (including China), we find that the global material modernity and social system is just a ruse. In China, the material modernity and social system is still an unachieved objective which we are working towards. If China has been lagging behind in terms of the modern condition, we cannot talk yet about modernity in China. So the material modernization is the *premise* of Chinese modernity, and the possible advantages of Chinese cultural tradition should correspond to the current status quo (in relation to economy and polity). Only with the rise towards collective national power, can we say that Chinese culture will contribute to the whole world actively.

The first side of modernity (material modernity) and the second side of modernity (as reflection of material modernity) are not two phases divided from each other in sequence, but it so happens western modernity that fastened on material conditions more than anything else. And we can easily see that material condition does not necessarily correlate favorably with healthy psychological condition. Western modernity, on the one hand, didn't think of the non-Western's needs or material well-being: thus there arose conflicts: between human being and nature, human being and society, humanism and scientism. So the transformation of Chinese culture ought to seek for a constructive modern project, not only drawing from Western good experiences, but also learning to avoid Western bad experiences. Actually, in China, many people, estates and districts have gained material modernization, but their material modernization has not brought about a valuable *life*. Some think they should give up Chinese culture, but more and more people are starting to refuse this kind of modernization. In fact, some phenomena called 'rich but not noble' and occurring recently in China should be reflected upon very thoroughly. We think the particularity of Chinese culture traditions, such as harmony, tolerance, morality, should play an important role in the reconstruction of global modernity. Max Weber regarded the reason of capitalism's emergence and triumph to be the Protestant ethic: he refused to explain modernization for and by non-Western cultural traditions. Now his thought should be corrected in some degree. There is a determinate relation between Protestant ethic and capitalism, but if we think of the nihilism in the post-religion age, maybe we can draw the conclusion that the Protestant Ethic does *not* suit modernization comfortably.

The problem is not the thought mode as such that explains modernization, but the *power* that comes from Western modernization, which tends to fight off any real interaction between the transformation of non-western culture and modernization. But in the thought mode, *fluidity*, an important particularity of Chinese tradition, has been neglected. We usually regard Chinese culture as a 'conservatism', but in Chinese tradition, the conservatism cannot be regarded as a rigid attitude toward culture. Actually, the conservatism ought to insist on the adjustment ability in relation to the corresponding times; sadly, Chinese 'radicalism' has neglected the gift of *fluidity* in Chinese culture.

From the success of the 'four small dragons' of east Asia (Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Hongkong), we can draw a conclusion that the transformation of Chinese culture can suit modernization: "In fact, the culture tradition can adjust itself in modernization, and in the same time, modernization can adjust itself by a suitable mode"¹⁰, said doctor Linganwu (a Taiwan scholar). Now more and more scholars trust that the Confucianist culture circle will play an important role in the reconstruction of global modernity.

The transformation of Chinese culture tradition should consider the necessity of modern civilization of polity. Modernity should include demands made of the polity system. From an overview, the polity system in China has not finished the modern transformation, and Chinese life remains in the

traditional existence mode of an agriculture society. The transformation of Chinese tradition is still puzzled by some negative contents of the culture tradition, such as,—‘regarding privileged-discipline and neglecting other-discipline’, regarding morality and neglecting criterion, regarding self-morality and neglecting public-morality, regarding behavior and neglecting practice, regarding relationship and neglecting contract, and so on. There is a complexity in Chinese tradition (especially the characteristic fusing politics together with education), which blocks the construction of a modern civil society. So a polity civilization should be regarded as a platform on which the transformation of culture can be realized. But the constructing of a Chinese polity cannot select the way that the West has taken; the reason for not so selecting is not owing to the polity as such, but to questions of morality and social psychology. The contemporary polity of China must closely and carefully consider polity and social system. In other words, the transformation of Chinese polity must consider the *continuity* of Chinese cultural tradition. The second side of Western modernity reflects on the contemporary polity system. The contemporary polity system insists on public criteria and the use of reason as a tool, but at the same time neglects morality, especially evil committed against humanity (the *sins* of capitalism). From the view of a social culture system, Western modernity neglects the human being’s self-enlightenment and its own self-enlightenment. In fact, the outer habits of a material polity system should be transformed into an inner discipline, solidarity in spirit. And the morality and harmony of Chinese tradition in this regard can be very beneficial to global modernity.

The third side of modernity expresses the historical reconstructing of philosophical reason. It’s not only western modernity, but also humankind’s modernity,—a real global modernity. As we have known, today a historical dialogue between Western culture and non-Western culture is coming into being. By the dialogue, each culture presents its variety and difference: and through the dialogue, a new idea of human being’s co-existence and also a new human cultural mode are coming into being. The new idea is not the transcendental and substantial ontological paradigm, also not dualism and essentialism of epistemological paradigm, but an existential paradigm that is based on the life-world and a modern social existential mode. But now the Existential paradigm is still not realized: it is the human being’s practical direction, and we find--in seeking for the direction- Chinese culture can and will play an important role. Compared to the Western tradition, Chinese tradition is much more Existential: the core of Chinese culture is existentialism, and it is being released out onto the world in this globalizing age.

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NOTES

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⁵ *Ibid.*, P11.

⁶ George F. Mclean: *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change*, Washington D.C. 2003, p. 26.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, published by Simon@ Schuster, 1997,p.78.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 45-47.

⁹ Xulaoyun : *On Reform of Chinese Culture Tradition*, Chinese edition, Sanlian Publishes, Beijing, 2001, p. 124.

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Chapter III

The Paradigm of Contemporary Science and Changes in Philosophical Theories

Jurate Morkuniene

TASKS OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

In the contemporary world, with the processes of social development gaining an accelerated rate, a new philosophical image of the world emerges, accompanied by the formation of a new philosophy.

Contemporary philosophy generalizes the most complicated and rapidly changing objects, such as society and man. In this sense social philosophy is always incomplete, relatively open and, therefore, theoretically “imperfect”, “non-systematic” and vulnerable theory. Philosophy develops by reconsidering the problems of order and disorder, complexity and simplicity, evolution, truth and error, etc.

Philosophy in the 21st century revives to the degree its methods correspond to the present paradigm of science. Before the task of all the sciences had been to eliminate vagueness, ambiguity and contradiction, whereas contemporary science accepts a certain vagueness or incompleteness of the phenomena and even of the concept employed in their explanation. It is important to understand that as philosophy responds too slowly to the changing paradigm of science, philosophical knowledge should change in its very essence.

It is no longer possible to study society solely in terms of logic and morals, considering it only as a subject to be studied. There is a pressing need to understand most urgently the truth in contemporary social cognition, namely, that new problems require new means of research and that those new tools of cognition must be “forged”.

Philosophy will recover when it creates a new network of conceptions and applies new methods of cognition. It can develop by reconsidering the problems of order and disorder, complexity and simplicity, evolution, truth and error, etc. Cognition is presently understood as a continuous, uninterrupted dialogue with reality. It already has been understood that no philosophical theory can exhaust reality, stop the process and exhaust its object.

In solving the social questions philosophy searches for truth; however, this is contemporary truth. Philosophy no longer has an absolutely accomplished truth: it is searching for the truth of its time. Truth can be ensured, solely ensured, by our thinking, our actions. Cognition is presently perceived as a continuous, uninterrupted dialogue with reality. As contemporary philosophy is the means of this thinking and action, new methodologies begin to be applied for solving the problems of man and society. “Thus human consciousness becomes the new focus of attention” (G. McLean, 2003, 6).

The present philosophy does not “kill” a process, does not dissect an integral life’s social phenomenon into parts, but “catches” this phenomenon, its deeply rooted relations and contradictions. The goals, the methods and the results are connected by a feedback relation. The feedback relation prevents the philosophy from becoming an unshakable dogma.

Contemporary philosophy is characterized by what could be called the new anthropocentrism or new subjectivity. The old, that is, classical anthropocentrism, is replaced by a new concept of the subject living in the world created by himself. Man is set up in the “center” only through his activity, creative work and knowledge, through his ability to perceive the processes going on in nature and society, to transform them by the methods ... unknown. Contemporary philosophy, reflecting a feedback between man and the world created by him, endows the man’s “centricity” with only a vectorial meaning. Man is perceived as being in the “center” of the world only for the sake of the idea of activity.

Contemporary philosophy is understood as conforming to the new paradigm of science. In this case what are important are such main methodological principles as understanding of the static and dynamic of the categories, the concept of systematization, the concept of preciseness, approach to rationality, the dilemma of idealization and conformity with reality, the concept of process, of openness, etc.

The complicated, self-developing systems such as society and man cannot be rendered in static categories. The basic theoretical principle of contemporary philosophy is to analyze both the present state of reality and its reflection in the concepts not as a stiff static structure, but as a process.

First of all philosophy is solving the problems of society as an open society. Investigation of the features of both open societies and open personalities becomes a main task of contemporary philosophy. In the philosophical sense, man’s openness means human identity. The prerequisites of openness are equal opportunities, involvement, association quality, etc. Openness recognizes the individual’s priority over the whole; subjectivity’s priority over objectivity: of an individual’s priority over a collective, of a citizen’s over the state, etc. Openness exalts and accepts diversity, dialogue, co-operation and “equal opportunity”.

Contemporary social philosophy deals with yet another super-task. It becomes the plan of actions, the principle of actions, and the predilection for action. Without philosophy as a meta-theory any scientific activity in a social environment proceeds by the method of trials (probe) and errors. This way is not productive and even dangerous while solving social problems, as it leads to experimenting with people and society. This entails the need for a philosophical education of society and of the individual as well. Every possibility to develop the individual’s responsibility and ability to decide is both a new level of his philosophical education and a new step of his civism.

The sense of responsibility is the pith of the personality, its most significant feature and its most important indicator. With it, man enters a new quality called culture. Only a man that does not fear and feels responsible

can express his opinion. However, this is not enough, for to have one's own, independent position one must know the essence of the matter, to be an expert. Here we encounter the problem of education. A direct relationship has been established between the rising level of education and the rising level of human responsibility for society and for others, thus the rising level of dialogue.

The need to understand the difference between "common sense" and the cultured, that is, cultivated, educated mind evokes the desire and striving, as M. Wertheimer would put it, not to be limited by "common sense" alone, but to try to perceive the essence of social life and to act accordingly.

THE NETWORK OF THE CONCEPTS OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Algirdas Greimas, wrote:

Over the last three centuries mankind almost exceptionally has been taking care of the progress of natural sciences and the technology of their application. Meanwhile the problems of man and society were left aside as those belonging to the sphere of moral or ideology. Both moral and ideology is the formulation of good wishes rather than the constation of realities. This is why in the middle of the twentieth century we found ourselves in the situation when man, taking command of the electronic machine, is both powerful and helpless. He is strong, because he knows the machine he rules, but he remains the immature child where the knowledge of himself is concerned. This disproportion, inequality between the degrees of cognition of man and of nature naturally poses an enormous danger to the very existence of mankind. Therefore it seems to me that creation of the sciences of man is not only the mission of the twentieth century, but also a necessity that predetermines the fate of the whole human-kind (1990, 30).

K.R. Popper maintained that our cognitive forces actually are adequate to the problem that we are due to solve (1965, 397). Hence, the methods of study should also be adequate to the new problems, new concepts and new goals of study or, according to W. Heisenberg, the method can no longer be separated from its subject (1974, 207).

There are two approaches to understanding of philosophical theory. In the first case the most important goal of theory is to substantiate or justify the existing theory, conception or notion. In the second case the goal of theory is to solve the problem, even at the expense of the classical, totally accepted "purity" of the former conception, not only to solve it theoretically, but also to attain the desired practical results.

What distinguishes the philosophy of our times from that of previous epochs is not so much the perception of man and the world itself as the new problems that emerge before man. In this case also the commonly known concepts acquire a new content, implying the need of the new concepts.

For example, the idea of human value in contemporary social philosophy is expressed by the concepts of distinction, diversity both of the individual and society. This means acceptance of the right to be distinct, to diversity of cultures, views, individualities, etc. (see Lévi-Strauss Cl.; Peccei, A.).

Even the content of personality presently undergoes considerable changes. Personality is one of the peculiarities of the most recent European culture. Manipulations with this concept without revealing its content contributes to its mythization. The myth of personality and freedom are the basis of every modern civilization, and even today the whole political life rests on it. But if they are merely myths, maintained U. Spirito, without their logical explanation evoked most diverse interpretations (1956, 105). The concepts of personality and freedom could become the sign-boards of various ideologies, and the banner of personality and freedom met the goals of egoism and egocentrism (*ibid.*). The question of how this philosophy of ambitious man or human-the-centre-of-the-world could be avoided is not senseless.

NEW CONCEPTS IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

I. Newton's theory had induced the appearance of analogies in politics and philosophy, so the methods of contemporary science have their analogies or are just emerging in the philosophy. In classical science there was a strict borderline between the simple and the complicated. That science was targeted at finding in complicated systems a certain simple level that is the level which is reflected by the deterministic and recurrent in time laws of nature, in which both the future and the past have equal rights. At present, science everywhere finds instability, imbalance, probability, irreversibility. This can be avoided neither by social sciences nor philosophy although they are much more inert. The world as a process is reflected by theories as processes, that is, open theories.

The methods of philosophy are first of all modified by understanding that history is incomplete and cannot be stopped at a certain phase by declaring it the absolute solution of human needs, aspirations and problems. New concepts are being adopted in philosophy. Concepts, such as openness, probability, feedback, dialogue, entropy, etc., appear and in turn become philosophical concepts.

Simplicity ("Facts" or Sum of Facts, Separate Elements, Kaleidoscopic Description) – Complexity.

Classical science strictly differentiated between the simple and the complex. The task of classical science was to find even in the most complicated systems a certain simple level, having in mind the level that is reflected

by deterministic laws reversible in time in which both the past and the future have equal rights.

Nor could methods of another kind exist in philosophy. Just as I. Newton's model gave birth to analogies in politics and philosophy, Ch. Fourier based the conditions of a society of harmonious interests and the theory of harmony in human relations on the universal law of gravitation: methods of contemporary science have their analogies in explaining the social processes. In the period when industrial society is turning into a high-technology society whose resources are information and the new non-mechanical technologies, new methods to cognize the world are being found.

Attempts to define the interaction of man and society by analysis of isolated elements in a narrow specialized sphere of science and then "to sum up" the result and present them as a certain arithmetical sum of ethic, political, ecological and other aspects, cannot provide the desired integrated picture of man and society.

Even today, priority often is given to mechanical, non-creative, and non-productive studies, out of the desire to get the answer "immediately" and the habit of acting blindly when solitary, isolated problems are being solved. The most difficult questions are left behind, because to answer them enormous energy and productive thinking is needed. It is much more difficult to find a deep, essential relation than a partial criterion of a partial truth. To begin with the "trials and errors" of theoretical thinking means blind, accidental and sometimes dogmatic theorization. However, errors in society can hardly be corrected by applying a new method. Therefore from the very beginning the special theories that deal with society and personality should depend upon the conclusions and criteria of fundamental theories, not make suppositions or "reinvent the wheel."

M. Wertheimer finds some social and psychological premises to explain why researchers are fond of analyzing separate elements and hastily systematizing them. What a subject regards as an essential relation depends on various conditions, forces, factors (pressure, career). To these factors can be ascribed also the inertia of habit, the principle of analyzing separate elements and the tendency to find pre-term relations among structurally alien elements. A scientific subject becomes a victim of the temptation to simplify a problem, to simplify a structure, and to make ill-grounded systematizations (1982, 279).

Scientists as systemizers seem like the mythical Procrustes in their eagerness to relate everything, even by inventing the missing links, guided by their sole desire to avoid any cracks in their system. Actually they exhibit only the laziness of mind. The extreme love of truth of which the scientists are so proud often turns out to be but a weak-spirited fear of vitally important questions, of what is troublesome and important. A system in this case satisfies the need to escape contradictions.

Of course, this does not mean that here the importance of systematization in science is being negated. What is actually meant is that a system as a theory or as an ideal model cannot be satisfied by a description of a phenom-

enon but should describe or reflect the optimum level of development of this phenomenon at just any level, without regarding it as final or eternal. For this love has already revealed not only the essential properties of the phenomenon, but also the essential contradictions. According to G. Hegel, a system is the “form” of a fully developed totality.

But in the approach that prefers analysis of separate elements, there is a danger of revealing accidental or “blind” relations. Relying on the analysis of separate elements it is impossible to give an adequate explanation of society as a complex social phenomenon. Indeed its source is the total social creative activities of the individuals, which modifies the conditions of the development of persons.

In complicated, self-developing systems, among which man and society are the most complicated, the properties of a whole cannot be derived from the sum of the properties of its constituents. What comprises the essence of a whole is not derived from the elements perceived as separate, kaleidoscopic fragments: this is a classical problem in the theory of systems. Quite the reverse, what is revealed in a fragment of this whole is delineated and predetermined by the internal laws of the whole. R. L. Ackoff and F. E. Emery are of the opinion that one of the basic characteristics of a system, which shows why a system is something more or something less than a mere sum of its constituents is the relation between its behaviour and that of its elements, both regarded as individuals (1972, 205). In turn, a social system is one whose elements are individuals striving for the goal (*ibid.*). In an analogous case M. Wertheimer employs the concept of “striving to improve the situation.”

Thus, the contemporary scientific paradigm can no longer be satisfied with partial, fragmentary truths, but demands truth that is deep and substantial. The most important thing in the development of philosophy is transition from a superficial, kaleidoscopic description to an adequate system of concepts. The whole as a system of concepts provides criteria for the evaluation of partial truths. Meanwhile an isolated explanation of partial, solitary phenomena provides no basis for deriving the criteria of evaluation. Experience or practice on the level of everyday consciousness is of no use here. Experience may mean collecting accidental facts and establishing simple factual, cause-and-effect connections. In M. Wertheimer’s opinion, as long as experience is expressed in terms of elements and blind relations, it cannot be the magic key to the solution of all problems. Knowing blind relations for example, the relation between the switch and the light, differs greatly from understanding or revealing the internal relation between the means and the goal.

When will the elements comprise not a sum, but a system? To analyse a whole does not mean to analyse all the facts. W. R. Ashby stresses that for this purpose it is necessary to select and study only those facts that are interesting to us from the standpoint of a definite goal (1964, 54). In creating an integral social fundamental theory it is necessary to select and study the relations and facts that are essential regarding the goals of social development. Let us try to analyse a system with respect to “facts”, the essential goals of humanistic social development.

Statics (Stability, Order, Equilibrium) - Dynamics ("Chaos, Disorder, Contradiction, Process)

In the mechanistic age, traditional science paid most attention to the static's: stability, order and equilibrium. It explained the world from the standpoint of closed systems. Representation by static categories of such a complex, self-organizing system as society can at times be rather correct and precise. However, this represents only the status quo of relations, which automatically leads to attempting to preserve the existing state of things and to conform to the existing social relations. Studies of this kind only describe the phenomena but do not rise to their understanding, and cannot serve as a tool to action.

The task is to reveal the new content of the concepts on the grounds of substantiated criticism and constructive analysis of the existing abstract notions. The basic theoretical principle of constructive analysis is to perceive and analyse both the existing state of reality and its reflection in concepts not as a stiff, static structure, but as an ordinary transitory phase or process.

Therefore we shall note two specific features of contemporary social philosophy. First, it is an open theory, as it explains social movement and discloses the essential internal contradictions of the social process with regard to their peculiarities, that is, to changeability, openness, and incompleteness.

Second, philosophical theory is a reproduction of the real processes in scientific reflection in the form of a theoretical model. This model reflects not an arbitrarily selected state of social relations, a moment of the process of development, or the manifestations or elements of the progress, but an optimal state or, as M. Wertheimer puts it, an "illustrious process" (1982, 258). Comparison of the existing state of a social phenomenon with the historically possible optimum state expressed by means of a theoretical, or ideal model is helpful in identifying the peculiarities of this less developed phenomenon and the degree of its maturity and thus to reveal and delineate the ways and means of attaining this optimum state.

Rationality (Accuracy) - Irrationality ("Error")

An important methodological precondition is the approach to rationality. The absolutization of the rational principle formulated in the philosophy of R. Descartes, G. W. Leibniz, and later by "technological rationality" served as a strong foundation for scientist views, which reached their culmination in M. Weber's "principle of rationality". However, the foundations of such absolute rationality were strongly shaken by K. Popper. In his opinion, the idea of "liberation through knowledge" is a powerful enemy of fanaticism in itself: it liberates us from our own ideas because of our critical approach to them instead of identifying ourselves with them (1968, 295). The "idea of error implies the idea of truth" (ibid.).

The criteria of accuracy also undergo changes. Rationality is no longer identified with "definiteness" or accuracy and probability with ignorance. M. Bakhtin stressed that "accuracy implies the identity of a thing to itself" (1993,

81). In the sciences of man and society, accuracy means understanding the essence, i. e. certain “individualized methods” (H. Rickert). The criterion here is not the accuracy of cognition in the sense of the natural sciences, but profound perception and understanding of the essence. Of decisive significance in cognizing the processes of man and society is not mechanistic or arithmetical accuracy, but the depth of one’s penetration into the essence. This means that in philosophy “accuracy” means adequate cognition of the relations and interactions, the more so as the statement: “each event has its cause” says nothing about accuracy (Popper K. R., 1965, 413).

Determinism (Strict Causality, Completeness) – “Dialog” with Reality (Incompleteness or Relative Completeness, “Feedback” Relations)

Changes in the paradigm are evident when we compare J.-P. Sartre’s philosophy, which has become classical, with present day humanistic studies on man and society. J. P. Sartre’s essential question was “either–or”: either a system, that is dead, self-identical “being in itself” or a process that is a live man, “being for oneself”. In L. Althusser’s interpretation there is also a dilemma: either theory is a strict system - and then it is science; or theory is something amorphous - and then it is ideology. Both these approaches were preparing the transition from strict determinism, the “deterministic nightmare” according to K. Popper, which was equally applied to both organic and inorganic nature and society, to what presently is called “both–and”: both the process and the system (E. Morin). This “both-and” method had already been applied by the Enlightenment which thought that by applying knowledge and enlightenment it is possible to modulate purposefully both the “environment” and “opinions”. Thus, there are no contradictions between the two but interaction. Thus the Enlightenment combined two fundamental theses in their doctrine: “The environment moulds opinions” and “opinions mould the environment”.

Late in the 20th century E. Morin defined the changes in the paradigm of science: in the course of the last one hundred years the problem of determinism has undergone essential changes. Instead of the notions of the ultimate final laws which direct everything that takes place in nature, what become predominant are the laws of interaction. The problem of determinism thereby is turned into that of the order of the Universe. This order means the existence not only of “laws” of the world, but also of limitations, invariants, stable of relations, this or that regularity (1984, 314).

Another concept – of “disorder” follows from the “dialogic” cognition (Bakhtin M., 1993, 17; Maziarz Edward A., 1981, 149). When the dialogical activity of the cognizing subject or of a perpetual feedback relation which can be enhanced by conscious self-criticism (Popper K. R., 1965, 409) are meant the methodology goes into the laws of interaction understood here as the organizing and creating principle.

By rejecting the strict determinism which K. Popper called “the deterministic nightmare”, the contemporary theories of society and man reject the

purely genetic or socio-biological approach to the mysterious (i. e. not fully understood) phenomena of social behaviour. Much of what was ascribed to the effects of biological reasons, or in other words to the deterministic effect of genes, is already being explained by social interactions taking place in the conditions of an open system.

Unfortunately, in social and philosophical theories strict determinism has survived even after W.K. Heisenberg, N. Bohr and other physicists had shaken its foundations. N. Wiener called the world “the world of the process and not of the final dead equilibrium” (1964, 220).

Present-day philosophical theories adopt from contemporary natural sciences methods already sought by G. Hegel: the concept of relations-interactions, explanation of the processes, acknowledgement of the openness of theories. The merit of G. Hegel was confirmed by E. Fromm, who acknowledged that to the radical conception of Heraclitus and Hegel about life being a process and not a substance in the Eastern culture corresponds Buddha’s philosophy. In Buddhism there is no concept of stable, unchanging substance, stable things or stable “ego”: nothing is true, except the processes. Contemporary scientific thought has become a renaissance of the philosophical conception of “thinking as a process” (Fromm E. 1976, 44).

Closeness (Closed “Chain”) - Openness

Social systems are open systems; this means that it is impossible to try to explain them mechanistically as totally complete, that is as totally closed. In philosophical cognition the description of the object in general cannot be final, exhaustive and “objective”. The course of events here cannot be stopped or repeated due to the understanding of existence as the “arrow of time” (see Prigogine I., Stengers J., 1984, 30); the social process is irreversible.

Our approach is to seek a philosophical theory to explain man which is based on the principle that neither the world which we want to cognize, nor the sum total of concepts, methods, theories which we develop while cognizing the world are historically unchangeable. The world (that is, a process) is reflected by theories that are processes, that is, open theories.

J. Bahm in his book, *The Model of the Philosophers’ World*, states that too many philosophers in the past were engaged in solving problems in simple, small, static societies. Today we live in a rapidly changing, complicated, inter-tangled megapolic and global society; therefore ever more complicated conceptions are necessary. Complementariness, emphasis on novelty, dynamism and multidimensionality are used in both the synthetic and analytical methods of solving the problems (see 1981, 2).

Development of this idea helped the new concept of an open world establish itself in philosophy. Because of human activities the material world is no longer beyond one but is embodied in the material and spiritual products of humans themselves, hence, the world can never be completed, closed, rigid in the form of an object or state. Because of human activities it is an incessant

process of formation, change and development (see Toulmin St., Prigogine I., Wertheimer M., Schrödinger E.).

Objectivity - Subjectivity (New Subjectivity, "Engaged" Thinking, Activity, Creativity, Responsibility)

This problem can be well illustrated by comparing conclusions made by B. Russell and E. Morin. In B. Russell's opinion, perfect science tries to be impersonal and abstracted as far as possible from man (1948), whereas in E. Morin's opinion, everywhere the need is born of science accompanied by consciousness. The time has come when consciousness is considered in the complexity of the whole of reality – physical, biological, human, social, political, – and in the reality of complexity (1990, 127). Presently, not only the man's world but nature's world is no longer regarded as only an object of cognition existing in a natural completeness independent of consciousness. The world is presently being cognised as a product of the practical activities of man; W. Heisenberg wrote that natural science always implies the presence of man. The object of study in natural science is not nature itself, but nature as the object of human problems. "Presently we live in the world which has been so remarkably transformed by man, that everywhere and every hour we encounter the structures that have been called to life by man, and in this sense we encounter only ourselves" (1956, 12, 18).¹

Thus man again finds himself in the centre of the world. However, he is no longer considered the ruler, the conqueror or the master of the world and nature, but only the main actor or worker. Man brings novelty into the world; as he is not satisfied with himself, he always tends to "improve the situation" (M. Wertheimer). The principle that in the world we actually deal with nobody else but ourselves, is rather new. However, we should bear in mind that this way of perceiving the world can be interpreted only as a vector, a direction, but not as the real state of the world of we are to escape absolutization of any of the relative truths. The same vector is the ascertainment of creativity in every man. In other words, the world is man in his material, intellectual, spiritual, sensual form. The world is not nature in its "intact" form for is not nature but the world that is incomplete: hence the image of the world as being created, or as open.

The incomplete world-process is reflected by theories-processes, i.e. open theories. For the philosophers to arrive to this conclusion, of significance were theories of the natural scientists E. Schrödinger, W. Heisenberg, M. Born, I. Prigogin, etc. Material reality, that is the world or environment is now perceived and explained not as finite or given once and for all and able to be observed and understood in a better or poorer fashion, but as an incessant process of formation, change and development, induced by human activities and practice. Thus nature is but the possibility of the material world or the world of practice. From the standpoint of contemporary social cognition, a description of any object cannot in principle be exhaustive, final and "objective"; society deals mostly with non-formalized phenomena and processes.

In H. Schelsky's opinion, not only social reality but also scientific cognition regards the behaviour and existence of man himself, which includes also the critical reflection of the subject, his consciousness, and his activities. This is "engaged thinking", or self-engagement. Engaged thinking is the essential basis not only of present social philosophy, but also of science. For example, A. Maslow dwells upon the conception of vectorial, that is, purposeful, science. W. Schrödinger spoke about the "physicist's subjectivity".

Characteristic is the statement that philosophers emphasize verification by the way of participation, without limiting science by an "objective" approach. "Science will develop, and the laws of nature will be treated as involving man as individuality" (Miller III J. F., 1981, 244).

There is no branch of humanitarian or social science in which every new problem would be approached without one's being guided by the principle of creativity and grounded in a concept of activity. In our cognition, information is not only related to the diversity of models, to paradigms, or to fields' theories, but we also acknowledge that we as individual human beings are the creative agents that create this relation. To paraphrase the S. Kierkegaard's idea that "truth is subjectivity", we in our times know that "truth is creativity" (Rhodes W. E., 1981, 233), from which follows the idea of responsibility.

In I. Kant's philosophy, man regarded his responsibility as duty to himself as a solely moral being. This duty is to him a formal correspondence between the *maxima* of man's will and the value of humankind embodied in his personality.

The most recent times, however, impose further corrections on the content and definition of the personality. This is the individual not only "for himself" but also "for others"; No longer is it "me and the world", but "me in the world, in the environment, in co-operation. The "me-individual" expressing the absolute meaning is replaced by "me-personality" claiming the right not only to original thinking, but also to original action.

Responsibility is becoming the core or main concept in contemporary philosophy. Formerly the individual was responsible for his actions, his activities; he bore the yoke of lonely responsibility. Presently, however, he becomes responsible also for the other; he cannot decline responsibility for the other, but must be capable of, and ready for, responsibility (see Fromm E., Losev A.). Only responsibility elevates individuality; without it life cannot have any philosophy but would be accidental in principle (Bakhtin M., 1993).

E. Morin feels the absence of an expanded concept of responsibility in scientific philosophy, because good intentions are not enough for one to be really responsible. Responsibility must confront the terrible uncertainty (1990, 109).

The concept of engaged thinking is becoming ever more popular in the works of philosophers. The concept of engaged thinking was substantiated and applied by A. Toffler, J. Piaget, M. Bakhtin, and M. Wertheimer in their theories. For "engaged thinking" a term introduced by M. Bakhtin is "the moment of fearlessness in cognition" (see 1993).

However, as J. Piaget stressed, “philosophical courage” was needed to reach this quality of philosophical thinking. He pointed out not only the epistemological, but also the ideological and social obstacles that should be overcome while proceeding to this new methodology (1968, 6, 3–4). The things that “deprive” one of courage are: philosophical schools, philosophical programs, scientific paradigm, conjuncture and ideology.

INTEGRATION AS A PRINCIPLE METHOD OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

The separate social problems are being dealt with by different sciences and conceptions. However, the arithmetical sum of the various approaches cannot provide the desirable integral image of man and the conditions for the realization of humaneness.

Without any doubt the solution of the problems of man and society is the sphere of interdisciplinary studies. As contemporary philosophy is being moulded in the context of the developing synthesis of sciences, the effect of the method of integration here, as everywhere in contemporary science, is especially obvious. It is important, however, to avoid a straightforward transference of the methods and concepts of natural sciences to a sphere where man and society are explained. According to M. Oelschlaeger, this kind of integration demands the new Renaissance generation of man, able to present assessments in several special sciences and to integrating this knowledge into a series of comprehensive systems (1981, 7).

The principle method of contemporary philosophy is integration on the level of conceptual analysis. Integration shows that contemporary theories emerge “in the clefts (splits) of the systems”. The philosophy borrows the concepts of the most advanced sciences, first of all cybernetics, theory of system, theoretical biology, theoretical medicine, social psychology, political economy, etc.

On the level of philosophical abstraction, we could not find the equivalents of the explication of concepts. For instance, the content of the concept “creative personality” could be concretized only by showing the social, economical, political, technological and other conditions of the personality’s activities. This is possible only by making use of the language and methods of study of political economy, sociology, psychology and other sciences. In the words of E. Morin, the former anthropological substrate has been joined by the economical network (1984, 328). In this interpretation philosophy loses its mysterious aura and becomes a “working”, open, provisional and transitory theory. G. Hegel maintained that a mature concept needs no myth.

The need arises to integrate, and as is often the case, the concepts of political economy to explain activities: work, leisure, surplus product, demand, production conditions and other concepts; the concepts of psychology to explain the prerequisites of personality: talents, productive thinking, interests, and needs. Significant for the conceptions of activities of personality, is also the concepts of: 1) genetics: natural “background”, heredity; 2) theoretical bi-

ology: the openness of a system, the comfort of a system; 3) theoretical medicine: physical, spiritual and social health; 4) cybernetics: feedback, management, optimum, model; 5) theory of systems: system, elements and of other sciences. What proceeds is a conceptual synthesis, a “joining” or intrusion into philosophy of the methods and language of the other sciences. The great discoveries and advanced theories emerge in the clefts of the systems, says E. Morin (1984, 328), though the concepts are used in an adapted form.

Hence the task of contemporary philosophy is not only to attain truth, but also to show how this truth can become active. Contemporary philosophy is the means of both thinking and action. Philosophy no longer has absolutely accomplished truth, but is searching for the truth of its time. Truth can be solely ensured by our thinking and our actions. Cognition is now perceived as a constant and uninterrupted dialogue with reality.

Therefore, new methodologies now begin to be applied to solving the problems of man and society.

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NOTE

¹ Artists came to understand it long before. J. Goethe wrote that exactly what an ignorant man considers as nature in a work of art is not nature from the outside but man, that is nature from the inside.

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Chapter IV

Radical Consequences of the Primacy of Experience in the Hermeneutics of Culture

Bambang Sugiharto

Throughout history philosophers have tried to solve problems which arise out of the tension between the capability of reason of constituting its own insight into the formal natures or the general principles of different objects, on the one hand; and on the other, the fact that life is experienced as a flux in which objects are fleeting, vague and elusive. This tension has fueled the dynamics and development of the history of philosophy in which experience has always been at stake.

One of the most significant features of the development of philosophy is precisely that experience is now viewed as the very centre of gravity, whose main pillar is the tradition of Heideggerian-Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics. This article will depict some radical consequences of this fundamental shift, especially as it is applied to problems of understanding cultures.

THE POSITION OF EXPERIENCE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Platonic dialectic the principle of constitution and intelligibility was not co-terminal with the experienced phenomena. Therefore the contents of experience must be viewed in terms which both relate an event to an idea and interrelate the cluster of aspects constituting the event. This has led philosophy to the search for truth as its main concern. The results depend on the reflexive mode of inquiry.

Aristotle's view was diametrically opposed to that of Plato. He agrees that experience is of the singular and science is always expressed in universals, but the latter is to be seen in a demonstrative rather than in a reflexive mode of inquiry. The universe is eternal in the sense of having perpetual motion and change. The meaning of the eternal world must be within the world, and its immediate principles of constitution are simultaneously the total source of intelligibility. Hence the overarching philosophical problem became the understanding of motion, and not the character of truth.

Medieval philosophy found its position between the two traditions. In spite of their differences, in general the medieval philosophers share the same view, that there has been a public Revelation. The Revelation exhibits the immanence of God in the affairs of men, and also speaks of the nature, history, and destiny of man. The acceptance of Revelation, however, created a problem alien to the Greeks: how could humanity interrelate the truth divinely given with those truths which s/he discovered and formulated.

The philosophic preoccupation of the medievals was then, the problem of truth. Revelation provided a warranty that human inquiry could result in the discovery of truth, but it also obliged the seeker to pursue her quest in an expanded universe of meaning. Revelation gave the quest for the intelligibility of the things experienced a gratuitous sanction which could not be discovered from experience. Everything was impregnated with divine causality; and there was equally an intelligible interrelatedness among all things which was synopsisized by the term “providence”.

But because the Revelation is public, the criteria of truth is also public. “All truths are true by virtue of the First-Truth” said Thomas Aquinas.¹ A notion which was common to such diverse philosophers as Augustine and Ockham. The publicly revealed criterion of truth, in turn, brought the consequence of making inquiry personal and reflexive. Erigena declared all created things to be “theophanies”. Augustine searched everywhere for vestiges of the Trinity. Thomas used Aristotle’s language of demonstrative science but organized his arguments in the Platonic dialectical mode. The fact was that the divine sanction of truth could not be encapsulated in propositions which were the products of human understanding. The application to theology of the method of Aristotelian science could result only in *hubris*, and a demonstrative philosophy that was properly ancillary to theology could hardly avoid pretentiousness.²

The Seventeenth Century had seen the real task of philosophy differently. For Descartes the task was in the construction of the philosophical “system”. Truly philosophical knowledge seemed to be attainable only when thought, starting from a highest certainty intuitively grasped, succeeded in spreading the light of this certainty over all derived being and all derived knowledge. The original certainty was found in a proposition “*cogito ergo sum*.” Based on such certainty the system was built by the method of proof and rigorous inference, which added other propositions to the first original certainty, and in this way linked together the whole chain of possible knowledge.

But it turned out that in such a rationalistic approach being was a mere concept rather than an experience. The process of clarifying it and of developing its implications was left to rational logic and argumentation. And then there was no point in arguing over the nature of empirical structures because they were too vague and confused.

With the coming of British empiricism, the whole situation seemed quite different, and the need for an empirical philosophy was clearly expressed. However, the view of the nature of sense experience here was oversimplified and reductive. No wonder that it has led to Hume to eventually reduce it to a mere succession of atomic impressions, which was lacking all relational structure.

This prepared the way for Kant, whose dismissal of sense experience (“the manifold sense”) brought forth another non-empirical form of idealistic rationalism: the synthetic forms of intuition and the categories.

If we now use the modern –and somewhat simplistic- categories of Subject and Object, the tension between subjectivistic and objectivistic orientations in relating human reason to the flux of experience along the history of philosophy is obvious. The Greek philosophy is an interesting struggle between subjectivity in the sense of Platonic personal-dialectic reflexivity, and objectivity in that of Aristotelian conflation of the natural constitution and its intelligibility to human reason. The trace of such tension was still strongly manifest in the medieval philosophy. With Descartes, however, modern philosophy started with a new foundation which was highly subjectivistic, that is, the certainty of one's existence. This was compensated later on by the objectivistic paradigm of British empiricism. And while Kant sought to make a synthesis of both lines, it was actually Hegel who, in spite of his shortcomings, deployed a more radical approach toward experience.

For Hegel mind is concerned not with reflective formalism but with the experience of the development of its own consciousness throughout history. The life of the mind consists precisely in recognizing itself in other being, hence the subjective in the objective. The mind directed toward self-knowledge regards itself as alienated from the “positive” and must learn to reconcile itself with it, seeing it as its own, as its home. In that this kind of reconciliation is the historical work of the mind, the historical activity of the mind is neither self-reflection nor the merely formal dialectical supersession of the self-alienation, but an experience that experiences reality, and is itself real.³

THE PRIMACY OF EXPERIENCE

While classical rationalism, British empiricism, and idealism, all discount the world of sense experience, phenomenology and existential philosophy are opposed to all three. They maintain that sense experience cannot be adequately accounted for as a mere confusion, a mere manifold, or the matter for dialectical synthesis, but must be recognized as an ordered world of perception and feeling. What is required is a closer appreciation of the concrete pattern of lived existence. Indeed, in so doing they have been repeatedly charged with subjectivism or even irrationalism. But the fact is that for an existentialist philosopher such as Kierkegaard, for instance, contrary to Hegel and idealistic philosophy in general, being is not contained within a conscious substance or spirit, nor does it result from a dialectical process of pure consciousness which externalizes itself. Instead, being or existence comes first. Thus Descartes' subjectivistic movement which passes from “I think” to “I am”, for the existentialist is wrong. I do not first think and from this deduce that I exist. I exist first of all, and on this ultimate ground I doubt and think. The primary aim of the existentialist philosophy is to gain understanding of the basic pattern and structures of our primordial experience in this life world.

Apart from Kierkegaard, Husserl's phenomenology was the basic inspiration for the existential philosophy, as well as for the subsequent development of various philosophical school of the twentieth century.

Husserl's initial purpose was actually to put philosophy back into a form of rigorous science in the Platonic-metaphysical sense. Ironically, however, it turned out that his phenomenology eventually resulted in most devastating critique of Metaphysics.⁴ Two concepts of his philosophy particularly play significant roles in overcoming the metaphysics of subject-object, along with its tendency toward foundationalism and representationalism, - the salient characteristics of modernism- namely the concept of "life-world" or *Lebenswelt* and "intentionality". In the beginning Husserl actually wanted to discover an absolute foundation (*Fundamentum inconcussum*) by probing into the realm of transcendental subjectivity. But this finally led him to the life-world, *Lebenswelt*, that is, the immediate flow of unreflective life, the world which precedes the modern distinction between subjective and objective, hence all scientific constructs. Thereby the "objective" world of science turns out to be mere interpretation, and not representation, of the real immediate life-world.⁵ Later on Heidegger caught the concept of life-world and brought it to further consequences. For him life-world is nothing other than existence, being which exists in history and in the world, that is, in society, tradition and culture.⁶

Another important concept from Husserl was "Intentionality", a concept which says that our ideas are essentially "of" or "about" something: an inherent interdependent relationship between consciousness and reality. Heidegger also later took up this concept. He shows that our forming representation of reality is made possible by the fact that we are already engaged in it, dealing with it, and at grips with it. This would mean that our representations of things are always grounded in the way we deal with these things. But this "foundation" is basically inarticulate and inexhaustible, since any articulative project would itself rely on a horizon of nonexplicit engagement with the world. From this follows that the task of reason is not to find the deepest and unshakable foundation, but rather, to disclose what the basic dealing involves. This would make the notion of the self as a disengaged agent no longer possible. Heidegger then shows how the self (*Dasein*) is defined in terms of a life shared with others, as being-together, hence socio-cultural life, with its particular articulation of Being in language.⁷

But it was Merleau-Ponty, in my opinion, who paved a more definite way for philosophy to deal with direct experience. Taking his point of departure in Husserl's phenomenology of the life-world, he shows that perception is our primordial contact with the world. Perception is the only mode in which the meaning of Being is originally constituted. And for the most part perception is pre-conscious and pre-personal. It is materialized by a bodily ego which is also pre-conscious. Since it concerns the pre-conscious level of existence, phenomenology is a matter of description rather than analysis (Husserl) or interpretation (Heidegger). The world is the natural field for all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions.⁸

Philosophers throughout history have tried to solve all problems by pointing either to eternal truths or to apodictic evidence. For Merleau-Ponty, however, we are always already in the realm of truth. And it is the experience

of truth, that is, the experience of the world, which is self-evident. The fundamental unity between myself and the world opens up more clearly in our desires, emotion, evaluation and behaviour, than in our objective knowledge.⁹

Thus, Merleau-Ponty shifts the centre of gravity from subjectivity to the world, from pure consciousness to experience. But the world is experienced as inseparable from subjectivity as it is from intersubjectivity. This is the reason why all my experiences in regard to the world find their unity only when I take up my past experiences in those of the present, and other people's in my own.

All this Husserlian-Heideggerian based tradition which hitherto bears the name of "hermeneutics" (Philosophical hermeneutics), together with phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, has led to the primacy of experience in today's philosophy, which finds its culmination in H.G. Gadamer. Taken as a point of departure, it will shed new light on understanding the phenomena of culture, history, tradition and self-identity.

Some important corollaries to the primacy of experience are as follows:

1. Experience or "reality" involves a complex, elusive, and inexhaustible character, in which subjectivity as well as objectivity dissolve.
2. "Relationality" as the keyword in the place of "substance" or "essence".
3. Seeing any claim of reality as only an interpretation of it instead of its one to one representation.
4. Conceiving reality as historical and ongoing process, instead of a-historical total system .
5. Analyzing reality in terms of linguistic modes of articulation (text, discourse, semantics, syntax, etc)
6. Truth is no more a matter of justified proposition, warranted assertibility or objective static correlation between the inner and the outer, but rather, a matter of action. Truth is the disclosure of greater and more complex possibilities for being and acting.¹⁰

Using the above principles as the framework for understanding culture and intercultural relation, along with its problem of identity and authenticity, may lead to unconventional insight.

CULTURE

Today a systemic a-historical approach to culture is no longer convincing. Culture, instead, is to be viewed as a historic process of plural influences and exchanges. It is a provisional imaginative picture of the junctions of various streams. As streams, what is primary is the flow, not the picture. The picture as abstract form of ideas and concept is secondary.

As a dynamic living flow every culture has its own internal principle of change. Culture consists of loosely connected elements that can be

ordered and reordered in accordance with changing circumstances (e.g., when beliefs and values become incompatible with each other; politics is in tension between opposing factions; new meaning subverts the old, etc.). In this case culture has its own indeterminacies, internal strains, conflicts and improvisations. It is a process of requests and counter-requests, of changing one's responses, of innovating new expressions, etc. It is also a struggle of power over meaning-giving to important aspects of life such as gender, private property, human rights, etc. Thus culture is a creative reordering and renewing capacity, processes of transmission and transformation, based on the existing condition and the possible.¹¹

Culture is not a closed-system. Its relation with certain social community is not necessarily one to one. Culture can cross geopolitical boundaries. In terms of culture some countries can overlap each other, at least in certain aspects. To some extent Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are of the same culture. In a different case, Chinese in mainland China, America or Indonesia may bear more or less the same traits. And today new forms of culture (pop-culture, cyber-culture) are thriving in transnational scale. In history the conflation of culture and social unit was oftentimes political. It served to legitimize the construction of a nation-state. And these days, especially when the survival of a particular community is threatened in the global game of political power, the need to overemphasize "cultural uniqueness" arises. In this respect, if Huntington says that what is political is basically cultural (civilizational), it would be better to say the reverse, that what is cultural is basically political.¹² In such context culture plays the role only as a temporary common focus for political engagement, a common reference binding the participants to struggle together for a common cause, even not necessarily with common understanding of what it really means. In this connection neither does it mean that culture is to be conceived as principle of social order. Social order does not depend solely on culture. It can be buttressed by techniques of surveillance, systematic use of terror, effective economic system, educational institution, or communication media.¹³

If we are to emphasize the uniqueness, then the uniqueness of culture is to be seen in the fact that it is a local manifestation of intersections and exchanges. What is peculiar is the way in which common elements of culture are used, handled and transformed.¹⁴ It is unique in the sense of secondary processes of taking over and making one's own what one finds or borrows.

To draw an imaginative picture of culture as a unitary whole we can use some analogies. One is that of an octopus (Geertz). Culture is like an octopus whose tentacles are partly integrated into one body, partly separate and autonomous.¹⁵ It is social as well as personal. The interrelatedness of its components is manifest in the social interaction. But its most compelling configuration is in its individual. It is in the event of personal relations, in dealing with the tentacles, that the real living culture is most compellingly manifest.

The other analogy is that of linguistic system. On the one hand culture is fixed and clear in the form of formal vocabulary (dictionary) and grammar (semantics and syntax), which can be seen as the so called "core value" or

the centre of gravity, in Huntingtonian sense. On the other, its real significance is only manifest in the concrete language usage, which is plural, personal, partial, elusive and capricious.¹⁶

Through these analogies we can see that although a culture can be envisaged as a whole, it is an internally fissured whole, a whole containing internal differences, including its own alternatives (“other”ness) and conceiving internal contestations.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Dialogue or communication is basically a process of coordinating our behaviour in “language” (in the broadest sense of the term) involving a complex choreography of ideas, emotions and body movements; a subtle behavioral synchronization of speaking and listening patterns in its detailed sequences. Therein the interlocutors weave and reweave their conceptual networks continually. Thoughts, emotions, symbols and self-awareness are time and again decomposed and recomposed.¹⁷

In the dialogue mutual self-interrogation takes place, hence self-criticism. Thus it is not always a process of “mirroring” or reflecting our own perspective in the sense of insisting our own point of view as if it were the best. It is, instead, an encounter that is also capable of disclosing inhuman and undesirable aspects tacitly lying in our systems of values and practices. Some kind of comparison is inherent in the process. Thereby we are exposed to the possibility of interpreting anew our own cultural tradition as well as our personal narratives, hence a new possibility to give sense to our life.¹⁸

To be sure the process is multifaceted. It involves translation, appropriation, resistance, subversion or compromise. Especially in translation and appropriation the boundaries of the translator’s language is extended, and so is his horizon. It is a process of self-enlargement. Vis-à-vis the other, or the ‘thou’, we realize ourselves, we realize the imaginative variations of the ego, the playful metamorphosis of the ego.¹⁹ It is also the process of recognizing the complexity, ambiguity and subtlety of each other’s “world”.

Understanding a culture is possible only through events. It is by nature a happening, in which both the interpreter and the interpreted mutually determine one another and are reciprocally changed (for better or for worse). Misunderstanding only comes to light and can be corrected in further dialogue. What emerges in the course of the dialogue is the truth that tells about both. And the truth becomes perceptible only through letting oneself “be told” by the other, being exposed to that otherness. This is an *infinite* relation. For the condition of the dialogue keeps changing, motivated by different interests, questions and prejudices.²⁰

The ideal mode of relation in the process of understanding is empathic participation, in the sense of letting ourselves be led by the tentacle of the culture, that is, by its personal or individual embodiment. In this way we can expect to catch inner logic and inner feelings of the culture, a glimpse at a time, while keeping the sensibility towards its unspoken elusiveness. At this

junction, the total picture of the culture is to be put as secondary and as an ongoing hypothesis.

But emphatic participation is by no means simply approving or endorsing the other. It is instead a process of ‘fusion of horizons’ as well as of correcting and extending our ambit of categories. What can be expected as the outcome from such participative relation is not the grasping of the “essence” of the respective culture, but rather, an ongoing disclosure of diverse inner logic and inner feelings about life, or inner struggle of human effort to give meaning to life in time and space.²¹

Modernization plays very significant role in broadening and intensifying the possibilities of cross-cultural dialogue as well as fostering greater autonomy of individuals in their relation with tradition, hence the primacy of personal reflection over tradition (the inverse of that in the pre-modern condition where tradition controls personal reflection). The process of selection and adaptation of cultural items among one another that occur in modernization, however, cannot be perceived simply as one which naturally will lead to re-integration into the core value of the respective culture, as envisaged politically by Huntington. It is instead, a process of Deleuzian deterritorialization of meanings and values, a subtle and unpredictable process of ramification, which in turn might even change the very core value of the culture itself.²²

Besides, as a process of heightening human reflexivity, the logic of negation or the logic of the “new” inherent in modernization would always compel cultural traditions to reformulate and translate their worldviews in terms of new frameworks of meaning, new demands and new opportunities. But the outcome of such processes is not necessarily negative or alienating, since in this way the long hidden potentiality and the unknown significance of a culture can also be rendered manifest to their most abundant flowering. As such, modernization is an ongoing translation of the “other” into our language, that is, into our horizon, biography, collective consciousness/unconsciousness, and vice-versa. It is an ongoing process of substantial changes in our consciousness and self-awareness.²³

In cross-cultural intercourse the emergence of universal values and rationality is possible as far as there are certain points of convergence among cultural specific rationalities. In this context rationality is nothing other than every systematic effort to make the *Lebenswelt*--the flows of events or the multiformity of experience--intelligible.²⁴ And since basically nothing human is absolutely alien to us, in the dialogical intercourse there is always a possibility for us to find some kind of interconnectedness in terms of basic humanity, in spite of our peculiar differences of worldviews. Further, since in the dialogue both interlocutors are exposed to new and greater possibilities to extend their own boundaries and horizons, it is simply logical for them to eventually recognize themselves as fragments of a greater universal reality, just as fragments are parts of a vessel.²⁵

Nevertheless, while it is possible even to formulate the universal consciousness into some kind of formal consensus, such as in the form of the “Declaration of Human Rights,” the universal consciousness would better be

conceived of as a kind of unifying mental state. In its pre-reflective and intuitive form such mental state is commonly found among children. In its most flowering form it is commonly experienced in high levels of mysticism or in advanced stages of moral development. But in a more modest reflective form it would be some kind of an elaborate mental horizon which, in seeing, feeling and imagining the other, is characterized by openness, broad-mindedness and universal solidarity.

IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICITY

As an agent of action each of us is an autonomous entity characterized by subjectivity, in the sense of a unitary mental-physical integrity, with the capacity to form values and to make its own judgment accordingly. Yet the content of our self-identity only comes up bit by bit in the ongoing process of dialogical relation with others. The decisive role of the relationship is such that we can even say that it is the relation which creates our subjectivity. Relation precedes self-identity, and not the reverse.

We are all the potentialities that we have. Even what we call “human nature” is not so much real nature as human interpretation and construction, based on relationship. In the structural coupling of the dialogical relation we interpret and construct our nature by way of metaphors, discourses, organizations and various forms of self-externalization in terms of (*vis-à-vis*) what we are not.²⁶

However, since our main distinctive capacity lies in language, that is, in linguistic conceptualization, the significance of relationship is mostly articulated in the form of discourse. It is in and through discourse par excellence that we define and evaluate our conduct, that we determine what we see and feel. Through discourse we form and understand our identity. Discourse is the screen on which we are imagined and represented (interpreted) to ourselves.²⁷

But in reality the representations about us are created by diverse parties and produced for diverse interests, be they political, commercial, philosophical, religious, artistic, in terms of gender, social class, income, political-orientation, etc. In this regard the representation is not always just and fair. It may unfairly foreclose our existential depth and richness based on intellectually-imposed discursive “mortgage” (Spivak).²⁸ Thereby problems of identity oftentimes are closely related to the hegemonic tendencies in politics of representation.²⁹ And basically representation is always aspectual. It cannot exhaust our existential reality and potentiality. Yet it can also create false consciousness of who we really are and what reality is.

Self-identity is in fact a transitory product of ongoing critical dialogical exchange with textual others. It is a secondary and capricious synthesis of the primary multiplicity of relations. In this reference the notion of true or authentic self becomes problematic. And this has much to do with our relation with the past and our conception of the “truth”.

History and tradition of the past are all the data, along with their interpretations, that have constituted our way of living, that we have made use of, and that time and again we are exposed to, as one textual other among many others. History and tradition are not objective representations of the past, but rather, possible interpretations of it, which are to be re-interpreted so as to transform us, to keep us on the move and to enable us to live meaningfully.³⁰

From the hermeneutical point of view, “truth” is a transformation process which occurs in all instances of understanding. It does not refer to correspondence with reality. It instead, refers to the disclosure of possibilities for being and acting that emerge in and by means of playful encounters with the other. It refers to self-enrichment and greater self-realization as a result of the play of meaning.

Authenticity, then, is to be seen as “being in the truth”. We are in the truth when we are true to ourselves, when in the process of self-transformations we are able to incorporate our specific tradition and personal histories, i.e., when our narratives are such as to contain a significant amount of ongoing coherence (emphasis on “ongoing”); when in our rewriting and retelling we are able to preserve and take up the significance of the past with greater subtlety and complexity of narrative. We are authentic also when we are able to overcome the distortions--systematic or otherwise--that constantly menace conversation; when we can maintain the openness of the conversation and keep it going. For what we most truly are in our deepest inner self is a conversation.³¹

STRATEGY OF CULTURE

Culture is now facing internal as well as external challenges. The internal problems are firstly the ignorance of tradition and history. Secondly, unawareness of the fictive character of our self-consciousness: of significant differences of perceptions even within our cultural frame of reference, and of the gap between the normative ideal vision of ourselves and our real more ambiguous and complicated selves.

The external problems are at least twofold. Firstly, we are facing multifaceted politics of representation constituting our identity in a hegemonic, foreclosing and unfair way. Secondly we are exposed to ever wider possibilities of cultural transactions, since every culture, including our own, is now available to become real option.

Although basically our true identity lies in the ongoing relation, hence a nomadic process, in facing the challenges a firm and solid footing is needed. In this junction incorporation of our past is indispensable. But the past is valuable and important not because it is the configuration of our uniquely “self-contained” system; not because, like all antiquities, our pasts are the repository of our high achievements and cultural richness; neither because our pasts are the manifestation of our autonomous self-determination. They are valuable and important because they are the fabric of our consciousness; the

collective unconscious root of our behaviour, practices and values; the basic symbols by which we have unveiled being in time and space; and the peculiar type of rationality by which life has been rendered intelligible to us.

It is this substantive grasp of our horizon which will make it possible for us to re-interpret and recreate our life, and that will make the dialogical relation with the other richer, more authentic and fruitful. But on the other hand, a basic attitude of openness is indispensable for developing our potentiality as being-for-others. We are what we authentically are only when open to the unimaginable and unpredictable creativity of human relation.

The role of philosophy and art in fostering such ongoing pilgrimage is unique and of great significance. Firstly, both philosophy and art are capable of dismantling the ambiguity and complexity of the human life-world: its dynamic and living movements, its underlying contradictions and conflicts, its yearnings and sufferings, as well as its eventful and fleeting characters. Secondly, in that way philosophy and art would be of great help in re-mapping the deeper existential problems underlying our ordinary life. And this, in turn, will pave the way for remaking and recreating life, for reformulating what is desirable and undesirable, and for disclosing better ways of understanding our humanity. Thirdly, in so doing both philosophy and art also serve as the conscience of culture. Since by re-mapping our human life they also help reformulate a new hypothesis of what our deepest vocation is supposed to be, - hence the exercise of our highest freedom as moral responsibility. Fourthly, philosophy and art, by way of their dealing with the concrete reality, are capable of revealing the universal depth of human experience, the intangible bonds which will draw mankind into broader and greater solidarity.

It seems that ultimately the one and the many, the particular and the universal, are but two sides of a coin: as we puncture one side we shall get to the other.

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NOTES

¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, trans. R. Mulligan (Chicago : Regnery, 1952) q.1, a.4.

² Cfr. Anthony Nemetz, "The Classical Philosophers" in *Reading Philosophy for the XXIst Century*, ed. George F. McLean (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989) pp. 102-103.

³ This is an interesting interpretation of H. G. Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, (London : Sheed and Ward, 1975) pp. 345-346.

⁴ Cfr. Ludwig Landgrebe, "Husserl's Departure from Cartesianism" in *The Phenomenology of Husserl*, ed. R. O. Elveton (Chicago : Quadrangle Books, 1970), pp. 260-261.

⁵ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and transcendental Phenomenology*, trans, David Carr (Evanston : Northwestern university press, 1970) pp. 123-135.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie et al. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) pp. 61-62.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to language*, trans. P.Hertz, (New York : Harper and Row,1971) pp. 121-123.

⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), pp. viii-xi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp xvii-xix.

¹⁰ Cfr. H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 263.

¹¹ Cfr. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 8.

¹² Huntington basically sees political problems of the global world today as problems of identity rooted in the differences of civilizations. See Samuel P.Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking the World Order* (New York : Touchstone, 1997), pp. 20-21.

¹³ Cfr. J. G. Merquior, *The Veil and the Mask: Essays on Culture and Ideology* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 63-65.

¹⁴ Cfr. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979); also Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 100-101.

¹⁵ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 408.

¹⁶ This analogy alludes to the Saussurian distinction in the Structuralist tradition between language as formal system, *langue*, and its use in practice, *parole*.

¹⁷ Based on Santiago theory (Maturana and Varela) in cognitive science, F.Capra depicts the situation of human conversation as involving a subtle and unconscious dance in which the detailed sequence of speech patterns is precisely synchronized not only with minute movements of the speaker's body but also with corresponding movements of the listener. See Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life* (London: Flamingo 1997), p. 282.

¹⁸ Cfr. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 263.

¹⁹ See P.Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology", in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. J.B.Thompson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 94.

²⁰ Cfr.Gadamer," Forward to the second German edition of truth and Method", in *After Philosophy*, ed. I.K.Baynes et al. (Massachusetts : MIT Press, 1991), p. 347.

²¹ Cfr. E.Laclau and C.Mouffe, *Hegemony and Social strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 112.

²² In Deleuzian perspective meaning and values as inscription of desire and produced by various "desiring machines" are deterritorialized along with the Capitalist formation. The deterritorialization happens in such an unprecedented way that the previous social inscriptions are no longer

needed. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

²³ This is especially inspired by Walter Benjamin's notion of "translatability" of the original. See Walter Benjamin, "The task of the Translator" in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 71-3.

²⁴ There has been a long debate on the impossibility of universality. Rorty, for instance, believes that rationality is rooted in the plurality of incommensurable language games and forms of life. However, this is by no means that intercultural relation is impossible. Every culture should have a chance to suggest ways in which we might cobble together a world society in free and open encounters, provided the rule of the game is persuasion. See R. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 212-215.

²⁵ Cfr. Walter Benjamin , *Illuminations*, pp. 73, 78, 80.

²⁶ Through Classical Philosophy we are so much accustomed to seeing reality in terms of independent entities as separate objects, including a separate self. But ever since the emergence of Quantum Physics, Prigogine's dissipative structure, Wiener's cybernetics, Santiago theory in cognitive science, not to mention the notorious Foucauldian claim of "the death of the Subject" and new philosophical insight into the metaphoricity of the human conception of "reality," today such a substantialistic point of view would appear too simple, unless interpreted in a loose and broad manner, in which substance and form are seen as two sides of a process, in the context of non-linear network.

²⁷ Cfr. George Marcus and Michel Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 98; also James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 201-2; or Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York : Columbia University press, 1989) pp. 94-111

²⁸ Cfr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

²⁹ See for example, Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms" in *Media, Culture and Society 2* (1980), pp. 57-82; and J. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture* (Stamford: Stamford University press, 1990).

³⁰ Michel Foucault, for instance, proposes a notion that by way of re-interpreting our history, self can also recreate her/himself. This is of course in line with the Nietzschean notion of self as a "work of art". See H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

³¹ Cfr. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. I (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 2.

Chapter V

**Culture and Religion –
The “Way” to a New Paradigm for Development**

John P. Hogan

INTRODUCTION

Our task, as I understand it, is to reflect together, from a philosophical, theological and social science perspective, on the patterns of cultural transformation going on in China today. I come to this task as a China novice who respects this ancient, complex and beautiful culture from afar. My perspective is also shaped by my career, for the most part outside the university, in overseas development work in Africa and Latin America.

I remember clearly my first visit to China in 1993. As I wandered around Tienamen Square on a Sunday afternoon, I was struck by the movement and diversity -- kids and kites, peasants, saleswomen and businessmen, and the ubiquitous cell phones. It was a swirl of Ming-Mao-MacDonalds -- globalization in motion. In my conversations at that time, no one spoke with me about philosophy, religion or politics. Business, economics and development dominated. The hidden costs in both the old and the new emerged: pressure on family life, internal migration from rural areas to cities and concerns about job creation and the environment. I remember thinking, where is China going? Around the time of my visit, the Gallop organization did its first consumer poll in China. Only heaven knows if it had any validity, but 68 percent of those polled claimed that, “Work hard and get rich” summed up their personal philosophy.” Only four percent cited Chairman Mao’s idealistic aspiration to “Never think of oneself and serve the people.”¹ I wondered at that time what kind of a national-global conversation had to take place to address the cultural transformation just beginning -- to incorporate the best of the old with the best of the new.

Modernization and its heir-apparent -- globalization is the atmosphere in which we all -- east and west -- now breathe. But we desperately need a global dialogue not only on Structural Adjustment Programs and the WTO but on the deeper ethical questions and apparent dichotomies: unity-diversity; center-periphery; rich-poor; urban-rural; industry-environment. Without this dialogue, globalization could end up being simply the 21st century’s form of economic colonialism, where local cultures fall before the juggernaut of the global corporation. Indeed, this is already happening.

On the other hand as Thierry Verhelst of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) points out:

Globalization offers a unique occasion to learn from each other. The future should not be one of uniformity and cul-

tural homogenization. On the contrary, it is the careful tending of our diversity in unity that requires unrelenting commitment. Forests are sustainable thanks to bio-diversity. Similarly, humankind needs cultural diversity for its survival. Each culture, each civilization is called upon to relate to others in a spirit of joyful interest and compassionate love, lest we fall into the deadly war games of Samuel Huntingdon's "clash of civilizations". Relating to the otherness of the other, entering into dialogue may be a difficult, at times painful exercise, but it is one of the highest callings of the human being. The Koran suggests to the Muslim faithful to go to remote places, all the way to China if necessary, in order to learn and enrich themselves.²

How does China's multifaceted culture and worldviews, with their historical development help as a guidepost at this historic intersection? Obviously, that dialogue needs to go on in China -- but hopefully with global partners acting in solidarity. My modest contribution, from the perspective of the practitioner, will try to offer some reflections on the emerging role of culture for development activities and how the global conversation has been changing -- even so slightly -- in the West with the introduction of an additional dialogue partner -- *religion*.

CULTURE, SPIRITUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Development, at least from the western capitalist perspective, has been understood in the very narrow sense of helping nation-states increase their GNP. With rare exceptions, development has focused on economic growth and the central role of outside, foreign "development experts." The track record of that paradigm, for the most part, has been dismal.³ Sensitivity to local cultures has not played a significant role. Indeed, in many parts of the developing world "development" itself is referred to as the "white man's dream" or dismissed as a "Trojan horse."⁴ Likewise, religion, particularly from societies bearing the imprint of Marx's critique, has been viewed as a flight from the world or a drug that merely clouds the pain of the world. To some extent various forms of fundamentalisms have contributed to this image. Moreover, religion has historically been perceived both as an obstacle to, as well, as a positive facilitator for cultural change and development.⁵ Rightly or wrongly, in the western world, the negative view of religion has been strongly reinforced by the events of September 11, 2001.

When relating culture and cultural transformation to development, it makes sense to understand culture, as Thierry Verhelst does, as a "coping system."⁶ Culture, with its symbolic (values, myths, religion), societal (family, community, governance) and technological (skills, technology, agriculture, architecture) dimensions forms the coping mechanism that ultimately allows communities to live life and find meaning. Verhelst offers a "handy defini-

tion,” culture “is the complex whole of resources which a community has inherited, adapted or created to pick up the challenges of its social and natural environment.” Culture can be a dynamic engine of freedom and creativity or if stifled, can lead to inertia.⁷ Harnessing the creative power of culture to development can provide the human dimension to growth and the ability of communities to adapt, screen and select freely from outside influences while resisting exploitation. “Culture is, in the final analysis, about meaning. That is why it is related closely to spirituality.”⁸

The development-modernization-globalization conversation now becomes much deeper and calls for penetration into peoples and communities on their own cultural terms. Addressing persons as free subjects and therefore architects of their own history and development is indeed a critical hermeneutical endeavor. Gadamer is a good guide. To get to the real felt-needs of a community, the development worker needs to engage in a cross-cultural dialogue just as Gadamer engages a text -- however alien in time or culture. An appropriate metaphor for this experience is a dialogue in two languages -- the case of translation. A common language must be found. “Translation seeks a common horizon and makes dialogue possible.”⁹ When one thinks of the interface of culture and development, especially with the implications of globalization for local cultures, Gadamer’s most graphic metaphor for the hermeneutical experience is the most helpful. What we need is something akin to a “fusion of horizons.” He states,

In truth the horizon of the present is apprehended in a constant learning process, in so far as we must subject all our prejudices to continuous testing. Not the least relevant opportunity for this testing is encounter with the past and understanding the tradition out of which we come. ...Understanding is always a process of fusion of such putative horizons existing in isolation.¹⁰

Gadamer’s hermeneutical process, built on Heidegger, Husserl and Collingwood allows for the critical appropriation of a tradition. It retrieves that meaningful part of the past that lives on in the present and projects a people towards its future. The hermeneutical approach militates against a merely instrumental use of tradition and culture and provides both community and development worker with the screens and filters for accepting the good in modernization while resisting exploitation. “In *Truth and Method*, Hans Georg Gadamer undertook, on the basis of the work of Martin Heidegger, to reconstruct the notion of the a cultural heritage or tradition as: (a) based on community, (b) consisting of knowledge developed from experience lived through time and (c) possessed of authority.” Although tradition sometimes can be interpreted as a threat to personal and social freedom, when it is understood in the sense of cultural heritage it is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community and enables succeeding

generations [to] realize their life with freedom and creativity".¹¹ These are the deeper ingredients of truly sustainable development.

Something of this approach has recently gained some credibility - even in the halls of the World Bank. In 1998 the Bank helped to establish the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) as a "dialogue among the religions of the world and between the religions and the World Bank, on the subject of poverty and development."¹²

Over twenty years ago Denis Goulet presented his graphic image of western development experts -- he called them "one-eye giants" -- an apt metaphor for practitioners and theorists who neglect the cultural, religious and philosophical dimensions of development.

The white man--came into Africa (and Asia and America for that matter) like a one-eyed giant, bringing with him the characteristic split and blindness which were at once his strength, his torment, and his ruin. The one-eyed giant had science without wisdom, and he broke in upon ancient civilizations which ... had wisdom without science: wisdom which transcends and unites, wisdom, which... opens the door to a life in which the individual is not lost in the cosmos and in society but found in them. Wisdom which made all life sacred and meaningful...¹³

Goulet's words were prophetic. The WFDD has picked up on his charge as well as Gandhi's, that all human activities fall under the sacred and that there are intimate linkages between economic development and the social, cultural, environmental and spiritual aspects of the development process. Heady stuff for the World Bank!

As noted above, historically culture, religion and development have been linked both for good and ill; but what is new is that the major western development institutions are now paying more attention to this interface. Why is this the case?

The *first response* is the West's belated realization in some circles that integral development, that is, full human development, both material and spiritual, is really the only kind of development worth pursuing. This approach with a rich history in the Buddhist and Taoist traditions as well as a strong basis in western philosophy has only recently gained some impetus in the West, most notably in Catholic Social Teaching. In the 1967 encyclical *On the Development of Peoples*, Pope Paul VI proposed that development must be "integral" and include the whole person and every person." He put emphasis on development "at the service of humanity", including not just a share in the earth's goods, industrialization, and productive work, but also literacy, family life, and legitimate pluralism. He underscored the importance of development's respect for culture, including the arts, intellectual life, and religion."¹⁴ Development should engage the individual person in the task of self-fulfillment, freedom and responsibility. The process involves the free

acting person, community, social structures, cultures and the quest for transcendence. This same approach is taken up again by John Paul II in *On Social Concerns* in 1988, where “authentic development” is treated not simply as straightforward “progress” in the sense passed on since the Enlightenment but rather as a call to recognize the spiritual and transcendent nature of human beings.¹⁵

However, for the most part, development, modernization and globalization are still dominated by a strictly secular economic analysis. Nonetheless, Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate in economics represents something of a retrieval of the approach outlined above. In his “effective freedom view of development,” development is defined “as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.”¹⁶ This includes not only the economic but political freedoms and social opportunities as well as cultural and spiritual values. This view enables people to enhance choices and pursue what they themselves value. Culture in this perspective plays a large role as the source of creativity and progress.

The *second response*, which gives credence to a more cultural and spiritual approach to development, is the criteria of participation, considered today a key ingredient for sustainability. This characteristic of including local stakeholders in the development process, from planning through implementation to evaluation, raises the correlative issues of “local knowledge” as a key plank in the bridge to “sustainability.” If you want participation you must deal with deep cultural values, the “thick description” of culture -- usually rooted in religion.¹⁷ Thus a methodological concern becomes an epistemological conundrum, demanding a hermeneutic. Understanding belief patterns and systems is not just helpful, it is essential.

A *third response* to my question as to why development institutions now seem open to a religious or spiritual dimension concerns the “World Religions” themselves. Each one of the “great” traditions has espoused a particular view of development and each religion -- Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Jewish, Christian and Muslim -- has made a distinctive contribution to the development debate.¹⁸ Moreover, the argument has been made that there is a family resemblance between the processes of historical and contemporary conversion and the kind of cultural changes implied in the very notions of development, modernization and globalization. “The changing social environment in which conversion so often unfolds is not simply a product of material forces. Its effects register not only in the actors’ material well-being but also in their sense of self-worth and community and in their efforts to create institutions for the sustenance of both. This problem of dignity and self-identification in a pluralized and politically imbalanced world lies at the heart of many conversion histories.” Conversion, like development, implies an “adjustment in self-identification” and a “new locus of self-definition”.¹⁹ Both imply forward movement and critical appropriation of one’s tradition.

This issue of a broader more inclusive notion of development is, at least, at the table. Ethics, values and a sense of solidarity are hammering, if only faintly, at the current paradigm.

Let us now look at a particular Chinese understanding of this question. Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Marxism all have significant contributions to the contemporary discussion of development. However, I will limit my remarks to a brief discussion of Taoism and development.

APPLYING TRADITION -- TAOISM AND DEVELOPMENT

At the 1998 meeting of the WFDD, Master Zhang Ji-yu, of the China Taoist Association, outlined some basic Taoist teachings on socio-economic development. What might upholding the Tao-the Way and knowing the Te -- virtue say to the development and culture questions? What are the lessons for the broader global transformation? Pursuant to the above discussion the message of balance and harmony between the material and the spiritual as well as the social ideal of "equality and affection" were clearly indicated. Harmony between human society and nature was presented as the key to sustainable development. Zhang follows the *Tao Te Ching*, "The Heavenly Tao takes from those who have too much, and gives to those who have little or nothing." (Tao Te Ching, 71) *Tai Ping Ching* says, "Wealth belongs to all that exist in the Heaven and on Earth, and should be used to nurture them. The wealth that the wealthy possessed should not belong to them alone. Those who have little or nothing may take from it." So, Taoism upholds that, in order to maintain harmony within human society, it is best to help the poor and the needy in economic development; only in this way may the whole society develop harmoniously."

Economic development can be healthy, stable and sustainable only provided that the balance and harmony between humanity and nature is maintained. . . . According to Taoism, it is the responsibility of the developed countries to help the developing countries to nourish their economy, at the same time the developed countries should let the developing countries choose their own ways of socio-economic development according to the principles of natural harmony and mutual respect. Only in this way can true peace and harmonious development in the world be maintained.²⁰

Zhang draws out of the *Tao Te Chang* and the *Tai Ping Ching* a number of criteria for economic development. The following summarizes his criteria:

1. A focal Taoist concept for development is that of Wu-Wei (actionless-action). The greatest leader is the "one that no one knows is there." The best development project is the one that listens to and benefits all participants and "the whole of nature as part and parcel of the Tao." The big schemes are "you-wei," without virtue and fail the people.

2. A project is judged by whether it is virtuous or not -- in harmony with the Tao. Development must seek the good of persons, the common good and the environment. Projects should build on what is already there and draw out the potential in human free subjects by respecting the inherent integrity of place, time and community.

3. Taoism espouses a development pattern that "ultimately benefits and includes all." Self-interest needs to be balanced by the common good--both human and ecological. This balance carries over into the need to develop not only physically but also spiritually. "It is perhaps possible to see this as the work of the Yin and Yang- the two opposing forces of the universe." Either spiritual or material alone would be a disaster. Both together produce a dynamic unity in diversity.

4. Wealth is not opposed but the deadening desire for wealth is. We need to understand that there is a universal mortgage on wealth with limits to property and ownership. Wealth cannot be amassed at the expense of the poor. Solidarity is central; the rich have an obligation to the poor." The heavenly Tao takes from those who have too much and gives to those who have little or nothing." (Tao Te Ching 77).

5. Taoism further flies in the face of the development industry and the neo-liberal model of globalization by disallowing development that is based on selfishness or self-interest. "A development project that is based on bad motives and bad models of human nature is likely to be bad. Conversely, a project that assures the best can draw out the best." Corruption is condemned as is the complacent acceptance of corruption. Bad means do not produce good ends. "Virtue is essential."

One does not need an overly fertile imagination to grasp the close correspondence between the Taoist position and the approaches of the other great traditions studied by the WFDD. The parallels with the Catholic social principles practically jump out at you. Integral development, human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation and the preferential option for the poor all find their counterparts in the Taoist criteria for sound development projects and the principles of balance and harmony. Likewise, the critical hermeneutical task of getting inside a cultural perspective and allowing individuals and communities to enhance what they value and create a more human future is mirrored in the Tao's vision of mutual respect, simplicity, equality and affection. After this comparison it is interesting to note the historical importance of the term "way" in both the Taoist and Catholic Christian traditions. Both "ways" conflict with the Western development consensus but have much to contribute to a balanced view of development, modernization and globalization.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Research and planning ought to be intensively participative. It is preferable for an outsider to hold up a mirror to a local community, rather

than research or act “on” people. From objects, people must become subjects. Outsiders can then act as “midwives,” helping people to deliver the wisdom that is already in them.²¹

My brief treatment of Taoism and Catholic Social Teaching were offered only as illustrations. My concerns are practical ones that call for reflection on development methods. Development must be grasped as the knowing, acting subjects’ quest for meaning and the greater good. It is an open-ended process that is in Goulet’s terms both an historical task and an opening to transcendence.²² When examining cultural transformation, especially in China, development planning and activities must be part of the discussion -- and desperately need cultural, philosophical and religious reflection as well as social science analysis. I would add that culture at its deepest levels has religion, in the broad sense of a metaphysic, a worldview, a cosmology, at its roots. This point has only recently dawned on western development agencies.

The World Bank deserves credit for opening itself to dialogue. However, it remains to be seen how seriously the “giants” of development (WB, IMF, Governments) will take the approach suggested by the WFDD. Or will they remain “one eyed giants”?

Nonetheless, development workers, both indigenous and expatriate, involved with the processes of modernization and globalization, need methodologies that take into account the crucial data of culture. It is that cultural horizon which molds freedom and community. Both communities and agents of change need to work through the whole cognitive-hermeneutical process together--experience, understanding, judgment and action.²³

It is only this kind of “fusion of horizons” that offers a modicum of hope for building a world economy with a human face and giving a “soul to globalization”. We get hints of the “midwife” role, mentioned above from such diverse methodological sources as the Chinese masters, Ricci, Gadamer, Lonergan, Freire, Goulet, Sen and maybe even, *Shadow Magic*.²⁴

We do not know if a new development paradigm will emerge, probably not. Nonetheless, historically the world’s religions are humanity’s longest surviving institutions. Even today, in spite of dramatic inroads by secularization and non-theistic philosophies, the religious cultural dimension provides the most complete inventory of beliefs that directly inform the individual’s conceptions of person, gender, justice, family, time, labor, health and happiness. It is the matrix out of which freedom, values, creativity and indeed development emerge. The way to a new paradigm is open.

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NOTES

¹ John Gittings, *Real China: From Cannibalism to Karaoke* (London: Pocket Books, 1997), p. 269.

² Thierry Verhelst, "Culture, Spirituality and Development," Occasional Paper (draft), (London: World's Faith Development Dialogue, 2001), p. 11, no. 5.2.

³ See for example, John Isbister, *Promises Not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1991); Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development* (New York: Atheneum, 1971); Peter Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Politics, Ethics and Social Change* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); David Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1995); Thierry G. Verhelst, *No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1990); Sharon Harper, ed., *The Lab, The Temple, and The Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion, and Development* (Bloomfield, CT: IRC-Kumarian Press, 2000).

⁴ Verhelst, "Culture, Spirituality and Development," p. 1, no. 1.1.

⁵ For recent studies of negative impact, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 2000) and Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Knopf, 2000).

⁶ Verhelst, "Culture, Spirituality and Development," pp. 5-7, no. 2. See also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁷ Verhelst, *ibid.*, p. 6, no. 2.2. Verhelst relates his view of culture to Paulo Freire's "culture of silence," see *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1970).

⁸ Verhelst, *ibid.*, p. 7, no. 2.3.

⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) pp. 310-341. See also John Hogan, "Gadamer and the Hermeneutical Experience," *Philosophy Today* 20, Spring 1976, p. 8.

¹⁰ Hogan, "Gadamer and the Hermeneutical Experience," pp. 8-10.

¹¹ George F. McLean, "Philosophy and Civil Society: Its Nature, Its Past and Its Future" (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, n.d.) p. 42.

¹² World Faiths Development Dialogue, *Poverty and Development: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: WFDD, 1998).

¹³ Denis Goulet, "Development Experts: The One-Eyed Giants," *World Development*, 8, July/August 1980, pp. 481-489. Goulet is quoting Laurens Van Der Post, *The Dark Eye in Africa* (New York: William Morrow, 1955) p. 118-124.

¹⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (Vatican City, 1967), no. 34. See also Fred Kammer, S.J., *Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) pp. 91-93.

¹⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Vatican City, 1988). See also, Peter J. Henriot, Edward P. DeBerri and Michael J. Schultheis, *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997) pp. 80-88.

¹⁶ Amartya, Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999) pp. 3-4. See also Chapter 1, "The Perspective of Freedom."

¹⁷ Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System" in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 87-125.

¹⁸ See for example: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1959); Amy L. Sherman, *The Soul of Development: Biblical Christianity and Economic Transformation in Guatemala* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997); Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1996); Bryant L. Meyers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999); Riffat Hassan, "Woman's Rights and Islam: From ICPD to Beijing" in *Interfaith Reflections on Women, Poverty and Population* (Washington: CEDPA, 1996) pp. 59-72; World Faiths Development Dialogue, *World Faiths and Development: Papers from the World Bank-World Religions Meeting at Lambeth Palace* (London: WFDD, February 1998).

¹⁹ Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1993), see especially pp. 3-44.

²⁰ See *World Faiths and Development* (WFDD) section on "Taoism and Development" by Master Zhang Ji-yu, Secretary General of the China Taoist Association, Beijing, pp. 1-6. See also Shen Enming, "Lao Tzu's Idea of 'Governing with Non-doing' and Modern Management" in *Beyond Modernization: Chinese Roots for Global Awareness*, Wang Miaoyang, Yu Xuanmeng and George McLean, eds., *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*, Series 3, Vol. 12 (Washington, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997) pp. 77-85.

²¹ Verhelst, "Cultures, Spirituality and Development," p. 9, no. 3.2.

²² Denis Goulet, *Development Ethics: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (New York: Apex Press, 1995) pp. 205-215.

²³ This is a short-hand summary of the approach of Canadian philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan. The approach represents a contemporary application of Ignatian spirituality and is currently being used at Woodstock Theological Center in Washington. See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970) and *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

²⁴ Gadamer, Lonergan, Goulet and Sen are all mentioned in previous notes. For Freire, see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973); for Ricci, see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984); *Shadow Magic* is a recent cross-cultural and insightful movie about the arrival of the film industry in China.

Chapter VI

Intercultural Hermeneutics for a Global Age

Chibueze C. Udeani

In the global world of today a lot is happening not only around but also within the human consciousness. Globalization is not simply an economic phenomenon but also “a new stage in the evolution of humankind and hence of creation as a whole. As it constitutes a new way of being in terms of the whole and hence relationally, the issue becomes that of living with all the peoples and cultures of the world.”¹ (McLean, *Hermeneutics for a Global Age*, Washington D.C., The Council for Research in Value and Philosophy, 2003, p.2.) Like any other branch of human life, philosophy today is affected by the phenomenon of globalization. It finds itself today in a fully diverse context. The fundamental philosophical issue of the “one and many” of “unity and diversity” is more central than ever before.

ON PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy as an enterprise is conducted within a surrounding culture. Hence it is a fact that the activity of philosophy is always influenced by its own particular cultural tradition. To understand a philosophical tradition one has to understand the nature of such cultural influences: acknowledge the essential role of the cultural context of a particular philosophy without necessarily getting trapped in a cultural relativism.

If the foregoing is to be assumed, one must be confronted with such questions as: if philosophy is culturally dependent, what possibilities do philosophers from different cultures have to engage in a philosophical dialogue with each other? Are there limits to what can be achieved? What justification do philosophers have to attempt such projects like this one? – “The Communication Across Cultures: The Hermeneutics of Culture in a Global Age.”

All (philosophers and philosophies) come from a culture and civilization which developed its distinctive character over vast temporal and geographical distances; they enter now a global forum of exchange of goods and information to which successful adaptation is a first prerequisite for survival. The deeper challenge... is to rediscover their identity within the new unity.”² (McLean in Gyekye K., *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity*, Washington, D.C., 2003, p.1)

On a somewhat personal note, I find myself, in a way, being caught

in such a paradoxical situation of philosophy and philosophers today, for I am simultaneously within and outside different philosophies. Belonging to different cultures and philosophical traditions is challenging. It makes the whole personally an existential and experiential issue. It makes it not only challengingly paradoxical but it also provides me with the opportunity of trying to see if there is the chance of contributing anything reasonable within this ongoing process in philosophy.

The philosophical endeavor of our day differs from the classical tradition of philosophy in that it is not a direct and unbroken continuation of it. Despite its connection with its historical origin, philosophy today is well aware of the historical distance between it and its classical models.... the emergence of historical consciousness over the last few centuries is a much more radical rupture. Since then, the continuity of the Western philosophical tradition has been effective only in a fragmentary way. We have lost that naïve innocence with which traditional concepts were made to serve one's own thinking.³ (H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, New York, 2003, p. xxiv)

The foregoing statement indicates that Western philosophy has always been confronted with new and changing situations and challenges to which it has been reacting in one way or the other and which have affected its own development.

But even at that, each of these times Western philosophy has always sought out ways of facing these developments and challenges of the different historical epochs. Hence Gadamer continues to maintain that "the conceptual world in which philosophizing develops has already captivated us. If thought is to be conscientious, it must become aware of these anterior influences. A new critical consciousness must now accompany all responsible philosophizing which takes the habits of thought and language built up in the individual in his communication with environment and places them before the forum of the historical tradition to which we all belong."⁴ (*Ibid.* p. xxv)

The on going discussion shows a possible way in which philosophy could be done today. It would imply, among others, an inquiry into the history, development and suitability of philosophical tools or concepts. It means also a substantive exposition and treatment of these tools. Hence the treatment of hermeneutics in philosophy in global age is urgently called for.

ON HERMENEUTICS

Indubitably Greek and Western in its entrance and usage in Western philosophy, the idea and practice of hermeneutics as an art of interpretation remain anthropologically constant. Hermeneutics grew up as an effort to describe more subtle and comprehensive patterns of comprehension, more spe-

cifically the “historical” and “humanistic” modes of understanding. As the study of interpretation and understanding of texts, it “involves two different and interacting focuses of attention: (1) the event of understanding a text, and (2) the more encompassing question of what understanding and interpretation as such are.”⁵ (Palmer R.E., *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, Evanston 1969, p.8)

Though hermeneutics is not a household word be it in philosophy or literary criticism, not to talk of common areas of human activities, most of the human daily actions could be termed hermeneutical. Most of these are efforts towards or processes of interpretation and understanding. One needs to consider the ubiquity of interpretation and the generality of the usage of the term interpretation. In fact, from the time we wake up in the morning until we sink into sleep, we are “interpreting”. On waking we glance at the bedside clock and interpret its meaning: we recall what day it is, and in grasping the meaning of the day we are already primordially recalling ourselves the way we are placed in the world and our plans for the future; we rise and must interpret the words and gestures of those we meet on the daily round. Interpretation is, then, perhaps the most basic act of human thinking; indeed existing itself may be said to be a process of interpretation.⁶ (*Ibid*, p. 8f)

In our global world of today, if existence in itself could be understood as a “constant process of interpretation”, the issue might then boil down to these questions: “how can hermeneutics contribute to our response to present cultural dilemmas; how must hermeneutics be transformed in order to do so in our newly global age?”⁷ (McLean p.2) According to K Mueller, the “concern for hermeneutic problems has become quite common in recent decades... Today the term hermeneutics denotes a concern that is shared by... diverse fields of knowledge...”⁸ (K. Mueller, ed, *The Hermeneutic Reader*: New York, 1985 p. ix).

This is an important development for what seemed at first a strictly continental affair, restricted only to small special fields of studies, namely, theology and philosophy, is now occupying an important place in the global and scientific world of today. Even at that, this philosophical tool – hermeneutics – must be examined on the basis of its capability of fulfilling the roles being assigned to it today. One of the reasons is because “even the term hermeneutics itself is frequently found to have contradictory or at least ambiguous connotations.... The problem is that hermeneutics is both a historical concept and the name for an ongoing concern in the human and social sciences, and for the historical aspect of hermeneutics a single definition will not do.”⁹ (*ibid*. p. ix)

Also as a historical concept it means like such concepts, hermeneutics is in process. “The science of hermeneutics as an act of interpretation and understanding undergoes a fundamental change in today’s global context... and it experiences an unprecedented widening of its horizons...”¹⁰ (Mall, A.R., *Intercultural Philosophy*, Lanham, p. 15). As a human and hence historical concept hermeneutics is culture-bound. The hermeneutics as found and used in Western philosophy, and-- in short-- in its various forms as found in every other philosophy or philosophical tradition, “has its own culturally

sedimented roots and cannot claim universal and unconditional (validity and acceptance. Any dialogue – most important, of course, is the intercultural one – has to take this insight as its point of departure.” (*Ibid.*) The foregoing applies equally to philosophy and any other philosophical endeavors, which make use of the tool of hermeneutics in today’s global world. The question remains, how is hermeneutics to be understood and applied so as to meet the challenges of the global age?

ON INTERCULTURAL HERMENEUTICS

Briefly and *ad hoc* answered, one could suggest that hermeneutics, in order to meet up with these challenges, must be done interculturally, hence the idea of intercultural hermeneutics. Here it is not principally an issue of developing a totally new form of hermeneutics as one may try to understand the concept intercultural hermeneutics. “Intercultural” here is more an adverb than an adjective. It emphasizes more the “how” of doing hermeneutics. Maybe the German expression “hermeneutik interkulturell” (hermeneutics intercultural) brings it out clearer. The emphasis lies on how hermeneutics as the study of understanding of the works of human beings, which transcends the particular cultural circumstances within which these works are done. It is then as such fundamental to all the human endeavors and should be occupied with interpretation and understanding of these human works.

The term intercultural hermeneutics as it is applied here is neither a trendy expression nor a romantic idea in this global age. It is must not be taken as compensation by non-European and non-Western cultures born out of an inferiority complex. Intercultural hermeneutics is also not just a shift made while facing the *de facto* encounters of today’s world cultures. It is more than being just a construct, an abstraction, or a syncretic idea. The concept - intercultural hermeneutics - stands for the conviction and the insight that no culture is the one culture for the whole of humankind.¹²

The fear that we may thereby deconstruct the general applicability of terms such as philosophy, truth, culture, religion, (hermeneutics), and so on, is unfounded. The concept... does however deconstruct the monolithic, absolutistic and exclusivistic uses of these terms. Intercultural thinking thus stands for an emancipatory process from all centrisms, be they Euro-, Sino- or Afrocentrism. The spirit of interculturality approves of pluralism, diversity, and difference as values (in themselves) and does not take them as privations of unity and uniformity.¹³ (Mall, p.14f)

The foregoing recalls our attention to what philosophy *ab ovo* has always presupposed – the issue of one and many, and unity in diversity. The emphasis here might be seen in the standpoint that the unity must have to be viewed from the context of diversity. This is the point where intercultural

hermeneutics is called for. It supports the idea of the universal cross- or intercultural applicability of the philosophical tool, hermeneutics, taking seriously the challenges of cultural relativism in the sense that it denies such monolithic convictions which claim to be in possession of an absolute cultural and historical “Archimedean standpoint” over and above the bounds of other cultural and historical contexts.¹⁴ (*Ibid.*, p.15) Intercultural hermeneutics strives towards a genuine recognition of diverse hermeneutical traditions found in different cultures and philosophical traditions. Hence intercultural hermeneutics is in a position to fulfill these expectations of our global age.

Linking intercultural hermeneutics to the Greek foundation of the hermeneutics would imply that it involves the process of bringing cultures to understanding. This will be a kind of mediation and “message bringing” process from one culture to the other. This implies three dimensions. Firstly the culture in question has to express itself. This is a stage where it is left for the particular culture in its peculiarity to express itself as such. This is not an issue of instrumentalising the cultures, be it by its members or external agents to achieve whatever purpose except that of making culture be appropriately understood. But here an honest effort towards objective self expression of the particular culture is presupposed.

Subsequent to this is the phase of explanation. Here that which is brought to expression in the first phase is made intelligible to the culturally other or cultural outsider. It is an introduction into the intrinsic logic, values, judgments and conclusions etc, of the culture in question. This is followed by the phase of translation.

The expressed and explained culture could be translated into the cultural framework of outside its own. Hence giving room to what would be an understanding of the culture in question. Intercultural hermeneutics would then refer to a laying open of a culture or cultures, a laying out that implies “reasonable explanation” and translation from one cultural world into the other.¹⁵ (Palmer p.13) One notices that “the foundational ‘Hermes process’ is at work in all three cases, something foreign, strange, separated in time, space, or experience is (could be) made familiar, present, comprehensible; something requiring representation, explanation, or translation is somehow ‘brought to understanding’ – is ‘interpreted’¹⁶ (*Ibid.* p. 14).

Another important aspect of intercultural hermeneutics would then be the application of the logic of question and answer as an aspect of hermeneutics. Gadamer pointed out that “the hermeneutic phenomenon too implies the primacy of dialogue and the structure of question and answer. That a historical text is made the object of interpretation means that it puts a question to the interpreter”¹⁴ (Gadamer, p. 369f.) Intercultural hermeneutics would then imply doing hermeneutics interculturally, i.e., entering into dialogue with other cultures, philosophical traditions and objects, texts, and works of human beings in these cultures and allowing them to pose questions to the interpreter from their respective standpoints and hence making the interpreters to go in search of answers within and outside of that very particular culture.

The dialectic of question and answer involved in the structure of such hermeneutical experience is constant and pervades also the understanding of culture in our global age. Hence culture could then be seen as the product of the dialectics of the sum total of questions and answers with which a particular group of people, at a particular point in time and space have been, are and will be confronted with.

Due to the fact that in different places and at different times peoples are respectively confronted with different questions to which they respond differently, it implies that the resultant sum total of these questions and answers differ from place to place and also time to time. It is not an issue of absolute difference because there abound proven similarities in central questions of life and as well in the responses to these question in respective cultures. Consequently there is a declared need for a form of openness in which every culture as such in its essence would be perceived without prejudice. This is more so today in our global age where the entire human race is being culturally jolted in the process of globalisation.

From the foregoing, intercultural hermeneutics is then needed in the communication across cultures when it comes to the hermeneutics of cultures in a global age. It enables the a cultural outsider to a particular culture among others, develop this prejudice free openness in approaching other cultures and to state more exactly what kind of consciousness the hermeneutical consciousness in this age should be, i.e., intercultural hermeneutical consciousness.

An important point here is the fact that Palmers (as we saw above) talks of being “somehow brought to understanding”. Here one is reminded of a salient aspect of intercultural hermeneutics. This being brought “somehow” to understanding makes us aware of what might be termed the boundaries of classical hermeneutics.

For Hunfeld, in our global age the strange cultures are no longer far away as they seemed to be in the past. The stranger has become normal as a part of almost every given culture in the world of today. There is a strong tendency among others, to approach this normalcy of the strange (Normalität des Fremden) with traditional patterns of understanding which is mostly euphoric about the strange and tackles it with the understanding routine (Verständnisroutine) that do not do justice to the strangeness of the strange so as to allow it be understood deforming it so as to absorb it into the already known and practiced without traditional frames of understanding at the expense of its central essence – strangeness. Hunfeld tries to bring attention to the boundaries of traditional understanding. He talks of skeptical hermeneutics which unlike classical hermeneutics is not so popular in philosophy.

Skeptical hermeneutic recognizes a delaying support (Verzögerungshilfe) in the ideal scenes of historical misunderstandings and misinterpretations and absorptions of the foreign or the strange, which creates distance to the accustomed and makes the established conceptuality appear and be experienced differently. This limitation of the horizon of understanding is the point of departure for the skeptical hermeneutic. Paradoxically this is also liberation from the ghetto of the pressure of traditional understand-

ing of the foreign/strange (Fremden-vestehenszwänge) (Hunfeld Hans, *Fremdheit als Lernimpuls – Skeptische Hermeneutik – Normalität des Fremden – Fremdsprache Literatur*, Bozen, P. 46). In a sense intercultural hermeneutics is a skeptical hermeneutics for it, among others, struggles towards creating awareness for the limitations of the classical hermeneutics when it comes to the hermeneutics of culture in global age. Furthermore its main thrust is laying a balanced base for the appropriate understanding of cultures both in their similarities as well as in their uniqueness.

Finally, intercultural hermeneutics is also an “analogous hermeneutics”. It is “neither the hermeneutics of total identity, which reduces the other to an echo of itself and repeats its self-understanding in the name of understanding of the other, nor that of radical difference, which makes the understanding of the other impossible. It does not put any one culture in an absolute position of generality and reduce all of the others to some form of it. There is no universal hermeneutic subject over and above the sedimented cultural, historical subject; it is, rather, a reflexive-mediative attitude accompanying the different subjects...”¹⁵ (Mall, p.16). This is intercultural hermeneutics as hermeneutics done interculturality. That means hermeneutics as a philosophical tool that helps to overcome the limitations of the respective particular culture-bound hermeneutic traditions. It lifts us beyond the “boundaries of the fictions of commensurability and incommensurability” and places us on the terrain of interculturality, thus enabling us to engage in communication across cultures in a global age.

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Chapter VII

The Place of Poetry and the Poet's Participation in Fields of Knowledge

Rosemary Winslow

Does poetry writing have a place in writing across the curriculum? If so, what place? What is poetry and what does it do that might make it valuable to learning academic subjects?

Although the writing-across-the-curriculum movement has demonstrated the effectiveness of expressive and transactional writing to assist subject matter learning, poetic writing remains nearly absent in classrooms and research studies. Yet, when the first theorists of discourse in composition—James Britton, James Moffett, and James Kinneavy—worked out the theoretical models for discourse that became, and remain, the central ones for the research and teaching of writing, they included poetry (in its broad meaning of all literature) as a major mode and function of discourse. These and other theorists and researchers advanced arguments and evidence that poetry offers learners a way to imagine (and to image) through sudden global insight, to organize their experience, to connect new knowledge to other areas of knowledge; yet, their appeals for poetry's place in a full curriculum have been only rarely heard beyond the elementary school level. Why its neglect? In an essay written in 1963, "The Relation of Thought and Language," Janet Emig demonstrated that even English curricula, as rhetoric and writing textbooks have given evidence since Hugh Blair's first (1784) text, have suppressed creativity (Emig 1983, 3-42). She concluded that the problem was a view of language solely as a "vehicle of communication" (35).

Since then, some degree of creativity has been restored to writing texts, but at the same time literature has become increasingly separated from the teaching of writing and research and theory on composing. College English, for example, no longer publishes poetry or creative non-fiction. And poetry written by students has suffered the worst neglect, by-and-large complete dismissal. In a summary overview of papers by top scholars envisioning the future of the field and presented at the Composition in the Twenty-First Century Conference, Lynn Z. Bloom targets the almost total lack of concern for creative writing by the leading scholars in composition studies (Bloom 1996, 276). Shirley Brice Heath's essay in that volume is the only one to present research on teaching creative genres. Reporting on two separate studies of adolescent writers and adult writers, Heath found that people frequently seek out and value creative genres in preference to "gate-opening" genres that lead toward economic advancement. She predicts that writing curricula will inevitably include a wider range of literacy practices that engage the fuller dimensionality of human existence.¹ If she is right, we will see a change in the current state of values Robert Scholes has described: the academy values con-

sumption over production; students are consumers of what others have produced. Even in English departments, the status of the expert writers of literature is far below that of the consumer professionals—the historians, theorists, and critics. If student compositions have little value in a consumer-oriented discipline, even less value accrues to student poetry, which is production of the least valued sort. What Emig noted 30 years ago remains too often the case today: “Too often . . . the teacher [is] interested chiefly in a product he can criticize rather than a process he can help” (Emig 1983, 92-93).

The perception of language as a communicative tool still holds sway, and remains the central roadblock to understanding the value of the poetic as a process that assists learning. Despite two decades of theoretical work and research on social constructionism, deconstruction, and other post-structuralisms, the view that poetry is a distinct kind of language has only been replaced by a prevailing view that it is a subcategory of rhetoric, and this view has served to propel poetry further to the margins of the educational system. Poetry has come to be seen as yet another tool for representing—for conveying—the suppression of individuals through cultural systems. This view serves to disguise an older, and still current, view—that poetry is self-expression: it says that poetry merely reproduces what already widely exists; it conveys nothing new of knowledge value to a community. On the other hand, if writing is seen as a process for discovering and developing thought, the processes writing poetry activates engage both a fuller, more expansive discovery and development in which the individual actively learns something new and a remaking old orders into new orders.

In this view, poetry does not operate to reproduce existing personal, social, and cultural constructs, but rather to remake them. The writer of poetry uses reason and imagination to break down old orders of the world with the purpose of remaking these into new possible orders. Poetry remakes reality, it cannot be a mere tool of communication. The chief value of poetry in learning is its capacity to alter the old by incorporating new organizations of reality by a thoughtful participation with and across domains of knowledge.

In this essay, I want to present the case that poetry has an important place in learning precisely because it enables this remaking of old constructs of knowledge into new organizations. It is actively participatory, engaging the writer in crossing boundaries among fields of experience and knowledge, breaking these into parts, selecting elements from constructs and rearranging them in new patterns of connection in and across fields. Poetry-making has had this function historically from its earliest recorded times, and it retains this renewing function. This creative, reordering, renewing capacity makes it valuable to learning across the disciplines.

As James Britton’s ‘theory of discourse-functions’ has been the central model applied to writing across the curriculum (Fulwiler 1986, 23-4), it seems most useful to consider how his category of the poetic has hampered its value to ‘writing to learn’, and how it can be revised to define the literary as a mode in which learning happens. Particularly at issue is Britton’s naming the role of the poetic writer as spectator and placing it on a pole opposite the

transactional in which the writer is participant. Britton's view makes the writer relatively passive, stepped back from specific reality to gain a global view. Rather, the writer (and the reader of the poetic) actively participates in construction of a view of reality, to remake old orders of world and language into new possible orders. To develop this point, I will first consider what Britton had to say about the poet as maker and his retreat to a passive spectator role. Second, I will trace a brief overview of the historical place of the poet as a re-maker of knowledge. Third, I will consider how relevant contemporary literary theory, particularly the phenomenological and anthropological work of Wolfgang Iser, enables a view of the poet as re-maker. Finally, I will return to Britton to consider his writing on the spectator function and conclude with implications on the value of the participatory role of the poetry writer to learning in the disciplines.

BRITTON AND HIS CONTEXT: THE POET AS IMAGINATIVE PLAYER, THINKER, AND MAKER OF ORDER IN LANGUAGE

The first theorists of discourse in the contemporary field of composition were engaged in the task of carving out a paradigm that could ground English in the manner of scientific disciplines. For Britton, as for others, the theory of discourse presented by Roman Jakobson at the Indiana conference on Style in 1958 provided the first such formulation, as it laid out a model, proposed study, of language kinds and functions, not restricted to but including poetry. In his conference address, Jakobson was interested in locating the field of poetics within linguistics; as a result, his theory, and those built from it, distinguished the nature of discourse functions as kinds of verbal expressions. Jakobson divided discourse functions into six kinds, which were based on six constituent factors of language: context, message, contact, code, addresser, and addressee. All of these, he said, were found in every instance of speech, but one dominated in any speech instance (Jakobson 1967, 353). When the poetic function dominated, the kind of discourse was poetic; when the context was dominant, the discourse type was referential; when the addresser was dominant, the kind was expressive discourse. Of the six kinds of discourse based the six dominant functions, these are the three that became most important in Britton's theory. Jakobson claimed, for the field of poetics, the study of verbal elements as they operated in the poetic function, but he asserted that the poetic occurred in all discourse acts. He defined the poetic as a free play of pattern-making: an imaginative play (not held to restrictions of "reality") that was made into ordered structures. The mode was marked by a high enough density of patterning that it called attention to language, to its 'made-ness', to the materiality of construction dominating its representational and communicative functions.

Tzvetan Todorov reaffirmed Jakobson's field definition and research direction in 1982, stating that poetry may be used by other disciplines, but the study of its semantic, verbal, and syntactic aspects were the territory of poetics (Todorov 1981, 8). Poetry can be used in all disciplines because it

presents existing views in dialogue with new, possible views of all aspects of human concern: from politics, psychology, economics to morality to the natural world. Past, present, future; actual, imagined, and potential: all may be found and studied in poetic texts.

In an early essay, in 1953, Britton recognized poetry's broad and deep relation "to life itself," calling it a "strong instinctual drive." It is "an interpretation of experience . . . a penetration of experience, not a mere purveying of a distilled essence, or key formula, or a mathematical solution. There is something in it of a reconstruction of events—and yet an ordered reconstruction" (Britton 1982, 21; emphasis in original). In the next three decades, Britton expanded and refined his definition of the poetic as construction, or making. He came to view the maker as primarily a "spectator," an "onlooker"; following D.W. Harding's work in psychology, he emphasized a stepped back, passive looking instead of the active constructive aspects of poetic activity. This positioning made sense in that Britton was attempting to distinguish the social place of transactional writing from the poetic. And although Britton's discussions on the mental activity of poetry making clearly show regard for its active nature, the term "spectator" that he settled on conveys neither the activity in consciousness nor the activity of remaking social/ cultural knowledge that is helpful in understanding how poetry writing involves acts of learning.

ABRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: POETRY'S PLACE IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE AS REMAKING KNOWLEDGE

Poetry has been many things in different cultures at different times, but one constant is its capacity to reorder structures of knowledge and experience into new orders, re-forming the old when new circumstances and experience require changes in knowledge. Poetry is a social institution in the wider culture beyond educational institutions and has existed from long before formal education. Traditionally, it was not confined to a subject in educational institutions. Before written technology was developed, knowledge of every area of life was held in rhythmic chunks and narrative paradigms, which made it possible to remember information and ideas more easily. Knowledge was passed on when the oral poet re-assembled the chunks into verse form using paradigmatic outlines. Oral poets did not remember word for word whole texts but rather pieced parts together. The oral tradition of composition made incorporating change in knowledge--updating it--easy because the verse makers would incorporate new elements and leave out old. Even for centuries after the advent of writing, poetic forms remembered and supported the values of a culture while creatively renewing them. A people's literary store held communal patterns of identity and values embodied as narrative and the metaphors out of which narrative is spun. The literary store gave models of understanding and action-- guides to make coherent sense of self and society's fit in the world. The pleasure that poetic forms gave came to be regarded as a suatory force for instructing toward understanding and action; rhetoric and poetry were conflated until the Romantic period two centuries ago. That

critical point in history coincided with the rise of modern science, which had by that time overtaken and supplanted a major aspect of poetry's traditional community and cultural function. It was also the time of a critical shift in the relationships of individuals to society, marked by the political revolutions in America and France. Poetry became more centered on individual expression, value, and views of the world. Poetry came to be a locus of the individual's envisioning new relations to the natural world and to social institutions (economic, political, religious, family, intimate couple, etc.). But poetry is not primarily a private art, even though it may nowadays be written and read primarily in private. Its function of binding an individual to society and culture remains. What has shifted from previous times—and it has been a gradual shift—is the function of poetry as a place for the individual to reconfigure the binding relations in our present circumstance of rapid change and collision of cultures.

As a social institution, poetry serves to mediate between the culture and the individual. In poetry, the writer has a great deal of control in this ordering. Three of its institutionalized aspects support this control. One is that all knowledge areas are open to it: it is a mode in which the writer may bring the whole of life—all knowledge, all contexts, and all dimensions of the person—psychological, intellectual, imaginative, emotional, moral, spiritual, even the physical as the breath is used in rhythmic organization and as the emotions begin in bodily sensation. A second is that it is a zone of imaginative play; it is a mode of potential and possibility, where new thought arises and is ordered in ways that renew the individual writer. Potentially it may renew culture if a sufficient number of readers experience changed views through experiencing the new configurations available in the work. The third is that poetry assumes a constructed speaker (often called a 'persona' in the last 100 years) and addressee; the speaker and addressee inside the work are assumed not to coincide with poet and hearer/reader. This condition sets up the zone for imaginative play—a place for what if? What these three aspects mean for writing across the curriculum is that learners know they can draw from a rich knowledge base, play with possibility, imagine the new, fit the new and old together, and make an ordered construct in which they relate themselves to something larger—the self to other fields, for example, to a body of course material, to a discipline, to other areas of culture and other aspects of his own life.

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS: THE POET AS MAKER OF CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SELF AND "FIELDS" OF KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE

During the past 20 years, researchers and theorists working on identity issues in many disciplines have come to a consensus that one major aspect of the literary—narrative and its undergirding metaphors—is that it serves to form identity. Narrative is the vehicle by which individuals make their identities—their sameness and distinctiveness—in a community of others. The process is

two-way: available cultural forms and materials make the individual, but the individual by making a narrative helps to remake—renew—culture (Habermas 1987, 136-7). Charles Taylor finds, in the loss of the grand heroic myths, a loss of the “enchantment of the world,” which spelled the loss of connections between head and heart—between reason and the political, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions of life (Taylor 1991, 3-4). The major imaginative framework for understanding one’s connection to the world—for one’s meaning-full place—was lost. Of the literary genres, short story and novel rely most heavily on narrative, but poetry has additionally significant lyric dimension, reaching out-of-time, beyond boundaries, toward the unknown, in a global direction in contrast to narrative’s linear movement and structure. (Pure lyric is extremely rare.)

A clear view of poetry’s constructing operations and value is presented in Wolfgang Iser’s phenomenological and anthropological theories. In his early, 1970s’ work, Iser developed an interpretive practice and theory of aesthetic response which he termed “a process of re-creative dialectics.” Text, author, and reader are the three participants in re-creative interaction. The text is a “reformulation of an already formulated reality, which brings into the world something new that did not exist before” (Iser 1978, x). An extension of Jakobson’s value of the poetic function as an interplay via selecting and combining elements in new patterns, for Iser the literary is an interplay of patterns of the real into possible new organizations of the real, a dialectic mode since the patterns of the real and the potential interact with the reader causing him to notice and break down old schemata of reality. The dialectic engages a critical looking and potential changing of views of the real. The world of the text constructed by the author is a set of schemata incorporating conventional organizations of the real world and of literary genres. The reader actively constructs meaning from the text’s schemata using his prior knowledge of them. In literary texts that are not merely reproducing conventional social, cultural, and literary schemata (such as popular romance novels do, for example), the world view constructed by the author and embodied in the text presents a critique of conventional schemata by setting them into a new order of relationship that brings them into view against potential relationships. The reader, in the process of constructing an understanding of the text, has to change his view of the world—which is held in schemata of the real—when he assembles the new arrangements of familiar schemata, or he cannot continue to read, to make sense of the text. Both the writing and the reading of literature require acts in consciousness that change ways the world is known, that is, known in human consciousness. Thus it is the remaking of old orders of the world and language into new possible orders that distinguishes the poetic from the transactional, for in the transactional mode, the participants have to fit into existing, conventional schemata of the real world and language use. Both the poetic and the transactional modes require the full range of cognitive abilities—comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing. But the poetic mode uses all of these, uses them in a richer expanse of world and personal dimensions, and uses more intensively the partially unconscious

processes of pattern noticing and making, which lead to new insight, to new knowledge.

For Iser, literary activity is necessary to human consciousness and it bears a necessary renewing social/ cultural function (Iser 1993, 246). In his early work, Iser focused on the processes of individuals reading individual texts by individual authors. He noted, however, that his ideas explained an essential need and process of human fulfillment (Iser 1978, xi). Iser took up this larger human function of literature in *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (1993), proposing there a view of how the poetic, or literary, is an ordering mode that must constitute a primary human drive, or it would have disappeared. The poetic is necessary because it connects the “real”--communally-held organized views, or schemata, through which we see and understand the world--to renewing potential views. Iser seeks to explain how the literary provides a cultural place in which the new organization can be tried out in experience as writers connect the imaginary to the real in new orderings and readers experience the remaking of an old order into a new order. A selection of schemata and their elements is put into intersection and a network of new connections among schemata that cause the reader to raise them into consciousness, to consider them critically, to try out new orders of the personal, the social, and the cultural--new ways of ordering and experiencing ourselves and our world. Through the reader’s process of experiential remaking, a change in the schemata of the real--the organization of its elements--is brought about. The shared schemata of the real can be changed in a society or culture if enough readers experience new possible ways the world (or a part of it dealt with in the text) might be. The sense of the self and society expands through the imagined versions of self and social realities, and renders them flexible to further change. The same expansion happens in a society when enough readers engage in experiencing the imagined extensions of roles; the experiencing is an expansion of consciousness.

As an example of the literary’s place as interplay for critique and imagining of potential renewing versions of the real, Iser examines the pastoral genre as a place of imagined mixing of social roles. The playful disordering and reordering of class and gender schemata was variously envisioned for several centuries in pastoral works before the roles in actual society began to break down. At the time of the political revolutions of the late eighteenth century, the pastoral ceased to exist, because its function as a place of imagined mixing was no longer necessary. The change in human consciousness had occurred to a sufficient extent to become actualized in the real world. The example of the pastoral demonstrates how the literary “crosses boundaries” of the real, imagines them differently, and composes a new possible order for them that may become part of the real. And it is literature’s position in culture as removed from immediate tasks that allows its long term, flexible work to be done (Iser 1993, Chapter Two).

REVISING BRITTON'S SPECTATOR ROLE: THE WRITER AS PARTICIPANT IN FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Except for its focus on active, participatory reordering of world views and its emphasis on the literary as pragmatic, Iser's re-creative dialectic model and his tri-partite model of individual renewing of social and cultural consciousness--the real-- through imaginary and fictive means--share some features with Britton's social functional model of discourse. And where they depart, Iser's views offer implications for learning processes.

The distancing from immediate, pragmatic work is the central point on which Britton differentiated the poetic mode from the transactional. The spectator role provided an explanation of non-doing that allowed this distinction to be made. But the conception restrains the view of a more complete range of thought processes, in favor of the immediacy of the work's being an object of value in itself at the expense of its long-range cultural work. (I retain the word "work" here, though repetitive, to give some of the meaning of the German term "*Wirking*" and Iser emphasizes on the inadequacy of translating it as "response" or "effect," Iser 1978, ix, note 1). Iser's model suggests that Britton's role distinction fails to capture the operations of the constructing mind using language creatively for self- and culture-remaking and renewal.

Writing out of the era of formalist aesthetics, Britton is concerned with the nature of the finished individual and unique literary work in its relationship as unique and of interest "for itself" (Britton 1975, 93-94). Expanding and refining his model in 1982, Britton relied heavily on Jakobson and on Burkean and Kantian notions of the spectator in art (through D.W. Harding and Widdowson) (Britton 1982, 46-58). Intent on building a functional theory of discourse, Britton emphasized the contemplative and "fine art" aspects of the poetic as distanced to distinguish it from the useful communicative work of the transactional. Here is Britton's definition of the three types of discourse:

Transactional is the form of discourse that most fully meets the demands of a participant in events (using language to get things done, to carry out a verbal transaction). Expressive is the form of discourse in which the distinction between participant and spectator is a shadowy one. And poetic is the form that most fully meets the demands associated with the role of spectator--demands that are met, we suggested, by MAKING something with language rather than DOING something with it (Britton 1982, 53; emphasis and parentheses in original).

Clearly, Britton does see the poetic as active--as "making": the writer of poetry lets it be, so to speak, rather than putting it forward into a situation to accomplish something specific there. In light of the discussion of Iser, the following distinction can be drawn instead: transactional writing does something in the world; poetic writing does something with the world. Transactional

writing has, Britton says a “localized” context, and the poetic has a “globalized” context (Britton 1982, 55). So, it is the restriction of contextual area that enables transactional writing to focus on a specific situation and task therein. Poetic writing, however, because it is global, encompasses more fields of knowledge and allows a freer play among discourses. Poetic organizing crosses situational and discourse boundaries; potentially it uses any available fields of knowledge in the making process. Its arena is global because it is not field-dependent or restricted.

Yet global in this sense does not mean holistic. Rather, it means the participant is moving across knowledge domains, searching for fit and for new ways of connecting their elements. The writer interacts with schemata: writers participate with world views, seeing through them, out of them, and beyond them as they select out of schematic intersections new views of order (Iser 1993, 9). The interaction takes place among areas of old knowledge and new knowledge, making the writer a creative participant with the old. This participation is a social role insofar as the institutional role of the poetry writer is assumed to be a re-configuring of the old into new organizations. Likewise, when a reader experiences a literary work, he participates with it creatively because he must bring his knowledge—the old schemata, as known—and remake it as he reads the text. As a process, the writer is moving among the old formations, to a certain extent below the level of conscious awareness, searching for new patterns to bring into consciousness. These may arise as whole images, configurations, or discursive structures.

The process of writing creatively can be related to the process of creating new knowledge. Martin Greenman has applied Graham Wallas’s four-stage model of the psychology of new thought to the formation of concepts in philosophy. Wallas’s stages are preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. The preparatory stage is an acquisition of material and ways of using the material (processes, methods). The incubation stage is unconscious; it happens out of sight and for this reason it is often neglected in curricular planning. It cannot be seen directly, it cannot be taught, but it can be allowed and encouraged to emerge. The illumination stage is the sudden coming into awareness of an insight, the “click” or “eureka,” the experience of new knowledge come into view—“an immediate seeing of something that one has not seen before” (emphasis in original, Greenman 1987, 126). The verification stage, renamed “validation” by Greenman, is also conscious; it involves checking out the insight by whatever methods a discipline uses. The entire process is cyclical in that new knowledge goes into the preparatory base to be used for further thought-- a feedback loop.²

Poetic thinking and writing and transactional thinking and writing (including disciplinary) both follow this process. They differ in the areas they range over and in the kind of fit, or ordering, that has to be achieved. In disciplinary knowledge and transactional writing, the new insight has to be assessed for fit with existing structures, then either accepted in, discarded, or held as anomaly for subsequent cycles of thought. Researchers know this cycle well; they are learners, they produce new thought. When they arrive

at a new insight that “checks out,” it becomes knowledge new to the discipline. Students learning a discipline go through this process in order to learn course material. The old knowledge of a field is new to them. In a sense they recapitulate the core insights of the field when they gradually build up an understanding of its structure, details, and methods. They have to remake their old schemata to accommodate the new information. But the new knowledge does not stay within neat disciplinary borders. It bumps up against other areas of the individual’s life, other fields of schemata. This “bumping” knocks the schemata in these other fields, which then requires that learners re-envision, rethink, and adjust the structuring of the other fields. An advantage is that it adds to the preparatory base he can use for other thought, in the same field or in others. This is what happens when cross-boundary thinking emerges in new scientific insights; in inventions; in the formation of new fields, for example. Each piece of new knowledge alters the whole, and if some pieces cannot be made to fit, and a sufficiently substantial aggregate of them emerge, a new order of ideas—a new framework, or paradigm, may emerge (Emig 1983, reviewing Kuhn, 147-8) And, as Einstein reported, sometimes new thought arrives as image, not word, just as it does in poetry (Gates 1993, 150). Poetry by contrast, is systematic within each poem; new insights must fit the developing system of order it is becoming. But poetry’s insights can make connections within structures of a field or with other fields of knowledge and experience. These new insights all feed the preparatory base, for disciplinary learning and for other fields of the learner’s life, with new schemata and their elements. The stages for re-creation of knowledge are congruent with Iser’s literary re-creative dialectics; thus, offering the view that the process of re-creative learning is a poetic mode.

Britton’s model has been widely applied to writing to learn pedagogy because his category of expressive writing provided a way of accessing the preparatory base, the store of schemata and elements out of which thought incubates, as a stage toward connecting and forming. In expressive writing, the role of the addresser is a “shadowy one,” he says, where spontaneous thought and feeling, that is, whatever is coming into consciousness, can emerge. Writing gives it a chance to emerge, even requires it, as writing in sentences connects new to old information. Its purpose in learning is to generate ideas that can be revised toward the end of either transactional work or poetic work. The shadowiness results, in his view, from an uncertain, loose mixing of the participant and spectator roles. Mixed in role, it is mixed in structure, with a mix of felt and rational aspects. Writers can explore freely, letting their minds follow threads of meaning until understanding is reached, or if not reached, they can discover the lack of resolution. Anything a person experiences and knows can be brought forward. Its function is wide-ranging searching: possible connections and meanings can be tried out. There’s no penalty for wrong direction; there is a continuing search for ideas. Like Britton’s category of expressive, Iser’s imaginary is immediately arising, loosely structured, drifting, the “matrix” of new ideas, to use Britton’s term with an emphasis on the root meaning of the word-- “womb.” As Britton envisioned it, the expressive

was the beginning point for both the transactional and the poetic. Revision toward the transactional narrowed the domains to a local context, and revision toward the poetic moved the writing toward making order in a global context. In view of Iser, the category of expressive is subsumed in the poetic processes of consciousness. What for Britton is an expressive area of crossing back and forth loosely among domains and functions, knowledge and feeling, is for Iser the place for re-creative dialectic. Britton's stepped back spectatorial position is but one aspect of the imagining process as writer and world, reader and text, exchange roles in participatory interaction with the schemata we call knowledge.

The very meager research that exists on using poetry writing to learn in the disciplines has given evidence that poetry writing helps students to learn course material and to learn it and value it more deeply.³ I have hoped to show how and why the poetic as renewing remaking brings about understanding, critique, integration, and synthesis of knowledge; how the poetry writer is a participant with fields of knowledge in the dialectical process of remaking; how the creation of new thought is initially a poetic process.

If Heath's prediction is right, creative writing will become essential--not an "extra"--to human life as our educational population changes and our world becomes increasingly globalized. One indication of this need is that poems began to appear in the media immediately following the events of September 11, and sales of poetry books tripled. In crisis, in confusion, people turn to poetry. They need to renew by remaking the torn views of the world. In totalitarian regimes, poetry acquires a high value; its suppression and regulation by the state and the vitality of banned literary works attest to this fact. As Heath says, people need poetry "at particular periods in their lives" (Heath 1996, 231). I would argue that as our culture intersects with increasing rapidity with other cultures, the students in our universities need the poetic as a participatory reordering, renewing art in order to deal with the burgeoning information and colliding views of the world in order to re-create, intelligently, our world. Poetry writing not only assists learning; it assists meaningful connection of course knowledge to other areas of students' lives and provides a valuable art in which to continue to search out 'renewing' thoughts and possibilities.

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NOTES

¹ Poetry is one of the "fine" arts, often classed dichotomously to the "useful" arts, such as medicine, business, engineering, even architecture, which crosses the boundaries of the distinction. As everyone involved in education is probably aware, the fine arts are the first to go when budgets are cut. They are perceived as "extras," not essential, not useful, an enhancement only.

I was once told and much by a major media corporation when I was seeking funds--a mere \$1,000--to print a collection of poetry written by women in a homeless shelter: the company was already giving money for food and shelter, and poetry was not important. Yet, the evidence of the women's statements and lives demonstrated the opposite, as I reported in "Poetry, Community, and the Vision of Hospitality: Writing for Life in a Women's Shelter."

² For a more detailed explanation of the creation of new knowledge, see Martin A. Greenman 1987; Rosemary L. Gates Winslow, 1989 and 1993.

³ I say "almost non-existent." A few publications exist on the topic: Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Dean's *Beat Not the Poor Desk* incorporates the literary knowledge of the two excellent poet-authors into a full writing curriculum that blends the ancient trivium with contemporary language and literary theory; Toby Fulwiler and Art Young collected essays on literary writing in literature classes in *When Writing Teachers Teach Literature*; Art Young explores the use of James Britton's model of the poetic function, focusing on Britton's trait of poetry as including values; Michael E. Gorman, Margaret E. Gorman, and Art Young have done a fine study of students writing poetry in a psychology class; Louise Z. Smith explored the way metaphoric language exposes the gaps and darkneses of the unknown, that language is inadequate to represent--the places we must "write" (hypothesize, interpret, understand); Winslow and Mische developed and reported on a curriculum for at-risk students that uses literary and visual art forms, elements and processes to teach academic reading and writing; and A. Merrill has edited a collection of poetry written by students enrolled in a wide range of courses, from humanities and sciences to architecture and engineering.

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Chapter VIII
Media Technology

Spencer Cosmos

INTRODUCTION

The work I have been doing is technical and narrow compared to the work of many of you, and I am only beginning to explore its implications in the global context. Here I will briefly describe some of the things I have been thinking about as a background for speculating about ways in which our interests may be mutual. Think of this as a precis of a work in progress.

All human beings have in common that they live in a limited space and time and within specific cultural institutions that confine their experience while at the same time affording the means by which to get on throughout their lifetime. Among these institutions are many means by which to communicate, the most preeminent being language. But humans also communicate by the ways they hold themselves, the way they move, gesture, dress, arrange space, eat, and in possibly thousands of other ways. The twentieth century saw extraordinary advances in understanding human communication from the point of view of many different disciplines of study: neurology, psychology, cognitive science, anthropology, sociology, languages and letters, philosophy.

My own involvement in these matters began a good number of years ago as a philological investigation, grew into a full fledged hermeneutic inquiry, and then into a proposal for an approach to intercultural understanding, first among my own tribe, and now globally. As such I think, if you bear with me for awhile, it may be of interest to this group. The inquiry began with trying to discover procedures for answering three questions:

What did the text say?
What did the text mean?
What does that mean?

Those of you familiar with literary study will recognize immediately the philological character of these questions for establishing authentic texts, interpreting them in the sense of the lower hermeneutic, and interpreting them in the context of the higher hermeneutic. In the third question, the antecedent of that is of course ‘what the text meant’, giving the rather unwieldy question: “What does what ‘that meant’ mean?” ... a question which takes us to the far edges of hermeneutics and some way into the domain of cultural process, and, by implication, perhaps even into intercultural action.

Over the years, for it has been the central, unifying intellectual project of my life, the terms of the question have undergone considerable meta-

morphosis. If the original scope of the investigation focused on text in the usual sense of that word, the investigation broadened to include, such terms as image, gesture, movement, arrangement of space, organization of time and other forms expressing the cultural content of human experience.

Still saddled with the philologist's preoccupation with process and detail rather than theory, the following is organized to proceed from language to imagery to action and behavior. I begin with language.

PHILOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Not very long ago it was common to believe that the study of language was integral to the study of literature. One was perhaps naive in the belief that reading a text was simply a matter of reconstructing in the mind thoughts directly recorded in writing by an author. The idea of literary study in the sense of *belles lettres* is relatively recent. The study of books and writing grew out of much more practical concern, to paraphrase Augustine of Hippo, "All that is written is written for our instruction." But since an author may have written in a time and place different from the reader, one allowed that language and usage might have changed. Hence the need to scrutinize language. When old texts use both the words 'no' and 'nay', was any difference in meaning intended? Answers to questions of this sort required arduous tasks of investigation, including the collection and classification of instances of the words, observation of the many written forms and spellings of the word, the syntactic and semantic contexts of the word, as well as some consideration of the social and generic contexts in which it was used. In this case such investigation yielded the conclusion that, for Chaucer and his contemporaries of the 14th century at least, 'no' was a much stronger, more emphatic word than 'nay', a conclusion of interest to the careful reader of texts. There are some who regret the disappearance of training in philological method from programs of literary study. Giants such as Wilhelm von Humboldt and August Boeckh and D. W. Whitney recognized the excitement and complexity of the relationship between linguistic form and the conceptual realities of the minds that authored in far away times and places.

On the other hand, many attitudes manifest in philological study of, say, a hundred years ago, now seem naive, quaint, and hopelessly inadequate. For example, the archives and special collections of the university here hold many grammars of the languages of indigenous peoples of North America. Many of these are written in French, some in Latin. The collection of such grammars is in fact a major collection of the more than 200 languages of those who were once called the American Indians. What is striking about these grammars now is the way in which each of these many languages is presented as having essentially the structure of Latin, including noun classes analogous to the five declensions of Latin, and verb structures contorted and tortured into the mold of the Latin tenses and aspects. Imagine the distortion of Navaho which doesn't exactly have a word class corresponding to what we call nouns, or the very different and to the untrained English speaking mind

the complexities of the verb in Seneca, an Iroquoisan language found in the eastern United States.

The contributions of the great anthropological linguists of the 20th century, Sapir, Bloomfield, Whorf, Bolinger, Chafe to mention only a very few, did much to sophisticate and reshape educated understanding of the character of these and many hundreds of other languages throughout the world. And at the same time the knowledge gained provided evidence of the validity of thinking in entirely new ways about the nature of language itself--in the work of Zelig Harris, for example, and that of his more famous student, Noam Chomsky. Or in the work of the Prague School, Roman Jakobson, and the Institutional Linguistics of J.R Firth and Michael Halliday., who came to widen interest in the uses and users of linguistic form, in linguistic pragmatics.

20th century philosophers did not fail to notice these developments and the work of Wittgenstein, Whitehead, J.L. Austin, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault . . . gives evidence of a widening interest in the circumstances of linguistic practice in larger contexts of human affairs. At the outset of the 21st century, then, a picture of language has emerged that looks something like the following account.

Human language is a 'hard wired' endowment of the human species, not perhaps unique to the species, but infinitely more highly developed than in other species. This competence is put to a great many uses essential to social functioning and intellectual experience, and to higher development of these. As a cultural phenomenon, language appears to be four-dimensional.

The Propositional Dimension of Language

Many Sentences overtly express logical propositions which have a truth value; others have an implied truth value. Moreover all sentences can be related in some way to logical propositions. Even very complicated sentences can be seen as networks of embedded and concatenated propositions. For example, "The man standing on the corner is my uncle" can be related to the propositional series:

There is a man.
The man is my uncle
The man stands on the corner.

Each of these propositions can be judged true or false and each of the terms can be judged accurate or inaccurate. Thus one might argue with the accuracy of the term 'stand' preferring to use the term 'crouch' as a more accurate expression. One can also describe the relations among terms by characterizing the logical roles they play, describing, for example, 'stand', as the expression of a state rather than an action or a process. Moreover, such description is hermeneutically useful in describing such subtleties as the following:

'is standing' expresses a state
'is crouching' expresses an action of changing states.

similarly

'John is drying the dish' expresses an action and a process (John acts and the dish undergoes a process.)

while

'The dish is drying' expresses a process which the dish undergoes, thus expressing the role of patient.

Such descriptions, which are now commonplace in language study, are more precise, economical and elegant than those of traditional grammar and they can be especially salient in representing the structure of experience organized in the linguistic behavior of speakers of languages other than one's own. From the point of view, then, of the propositional dimension, languages are considered in terms of their organization and articulation of reality (taxonomy and lexicon) and in their manners of expressing truth and falsity apropos of that organization.

The Modal Dimension:

Language is also a functional tool by which speakers accomplish purposes and express attitudes. The speech act--excuse me, would someone please hand me a pencil?--the speech act is a means by which, using language and paralinguistic, in this case gesture, facial expression and melody, I was able both to direct another's behavior and also get a pencil into my possession. I could also commit myself, make real world binding judgments, express with greater or less emphasis internal and otherwise tacit experiential states and processes such as disappointment, frustration, joy and other attitudinal experience. The success or failure of such expression can be measured by observable results--I have the pencil in hand or I don't--and by the reactions such expression elicits among my interlocutors. The traditions of western thought have not disseminated very explicit models of the modalities of language in general education. Consequently the modalities of linguistic expression are great sources of intercultural misunderstanding. It is my intuition that some other cultures are much more acutely aware of modal meanings than are speakers of American English and have a more highly developed hermeneutic in this regard.

The Institutional/Contextual Dimension:

Utterance (actual speech *hic et nunc*) is invariably situated in a physical context and within a socio-cultural institution that mediates and facilitates understanding. Speech face-to-face, talk over the telephone, chat on the internet, correspondence by e-mail and snail-mail, authorship of a book or magazine article, all are governed by institutions that define genres. These in turn regulate the appropriateness of linguistic behavior. Within this gathering

it would clearly have been inappropriate for me to get a pencil by means of the utterance “Gimme the pencil!” or “Hey you! Pencil!”

The Historical Dimension

When speech has been frozen in auditory or audiovisual recording or when it has been committed to writing, it is greatly disembodied and much more in need of hermeneutic process. Literacy is only one such process, philological apparatus is another, as in reading Chaucer, the Koran, or the Bible. But even were modern hermeneutics to have audiovisual recordings of, say, the Sermon on the Mount, there would be great need to listen and watch very carefully in order to interpret the significance of such things as tone of voice, gesture, dress, movement, spatial configuration, location and so on. The greatest issue in the hermeneutics of the historical dimension is to discern the *significant*, to distinguish it from the insignificant. Nowhere is the technology of the discovery process more important, indeed, more vital than in interpretation of the historical dimension of linguistic experience. I turn now to the technology.

HERMENEUTICS AND MEDIA

Human communication is authored on one hand and interpreted on the other. Media technology links authorship with hermeneutics, often tacitly and even covertly. A certain quality of voice may be said to “convey authority” and thereby enhance the credibility of a message. Another quality of voice may do just the opposite; and yet the “quality” of a voice, as I am using the term here to indicate a technology of the human vocal instrument rather than a stylistic manipulation of that instrument, that “quality of voice” is a characteristic of a specific human body as an endowment, and thus outside a speaker’s obvious control. A speaker endowed with such a voice must develop other means of signifying authority, perhaps by means of dress, demeanor, or the arrangement of space.

The idea that a quality of voice does or does not “convey” authority is probably culturally specific in so far as the specific details of exactly what elements of the speech signal are deemed *significant* or signifying. Nevertheless one will find widespread agreement among speakers in the recognition of an authoritative voice. The determination of a news anchor or a presidential candidate routinely includes consideration of just such a detail. One has heard often of actors who failed to make the transition from silent to sound cinema because of the quality of their voices.

But more than that. One can see in old movies, for example, the limitations of recording technologies, film sensitivity and quality, staging conventions, lighting technique, and genres of acting style. This list includes both technological characteristics and social and theatrical conventions, the last two of which I propose to regard as cultural technologies for the purposes of discussion. Let us here consider just one, the technology of sound recording

and reproduction. The ability of instruments to record and reproduce sound accurately is referred to as fidelity. In contemporary media, instruments are capable of recording and reproducing a range from 20 to 20,000, thus exceeding the capabilities of human hearing. Every nuance of voice and human speech--pitch, volume, timbre, breathiness, quality--can be accurately conveyed, as therefore, can every nuance of significance, say, from an attitude of slight vocal hesitation indicating the possibility of doubt to an expansive expression outright disbelief, all delivered with the fidelity of actually being there, witnessing the enactment. The recording technologies of old movies had no such range and fidelity. In accommodating the limitations of the technology speakers projected in ways that now seem stilted and theatrical. The hermeneutic problem is analogous in a microcosmic way to the problem of reading the ancient Jews. Allowances must be made for and account must be taken of the technology of reproduction.

Audio recording and reproduction technology, in particular, has now reached such a high state of development that it is common in American households for a person to answer a telephone only to find that it was a representation on radio or television--and not the telephone--that one has responded to. A conversation can be recorded with such fidelity that it can be played (as we like to say, not without significance) with such fidelity that people in another room will believe that it is actually happening just out of their fields of vision. Moreover, this technology can be effected with very inexpensive instruments.

Digital audio and video technology in particular have become so faithful in rendering actuality and so inexpensive to acquire that they have lead to an incredible restructuring--still in progress--of the media industries. And they have begun realizing the potential of realigning the paradigm of global communication. There is evidence of an enormous and fundamentally important important struggle to gain control of this realignment. Here are some examples.

The CEO of CNN wrote a memorandum warning that the age of big television production news gathering crews was at an end, and that persons wanting to advance in the organization would do well to master the new small digital video cameras and learn to edit material on their laptop computers.

The Washington Post issued a similar memorandum saying that it would soon be a requirement for certain stories that they be filed both in print and in video for presentation on the newspapers web site where, incidentally, many stories can now be found in video or audio format. These reporters too edit their video material on laptop computers.

Dirck Halstead, a major White House correspondent of *Newsweek* magazine, has created a web site, The Digital Journalist (www.digitaljournalist.org) as a kind of clearinghouse for digitally processed journalism and discussion of issues related to digital journalistic practice.

Major motion pictures intended for theatrical release are more and more being produced in digital video because of its economics.

Movies are being made and directly posted on web sites or distributed on DVD by their authors rather than through the traditional industry means of distribution.

There is considerable buzz surrounding the deluge of digital audiovisual media, much of it of a gee-whizz variety. There is both great danger and great potential in this technology for human development and intercultural understanding. Unfortunately precious little is being done to explore the cultural implications of this accelerated change in media practice.

Many features of the new technology add up to creating instruments that can record reality with astounding accuracy and intimacy. Digital recording directly to a memory buffer completely eliminates any noise created by the mechanical movement of parts and the diminution of microchips allow for placement of the recorder itself in places where the microphone would have been used formerly, thus eliminating the possibility of line noise. Indeed cameras and audio recorders can now be so small and can function so autonomously that they can almost literally be the extension of the human senses that Marshall McLuhan envisioned in *Understanding Media*.

Sigmund Freud articulated a number of insights very useful for organizing an understanding of media authorship, although he writes specifically of the processes of creating dreams. Freud distinguishes the manifest dream from latent dream thoughts. The manifest dream consists of the visual images, movements, sounds, speech that one experiences in a dream, along with the emotions that attach to one's witness of these. The latent dream thoughts are memories, thoughts, emotions that one has experienced and which give rise to the manifest dream in a process referred to as transformation. As Freud says in *On Dreams* (18),

The transformation of the latent dream thoughts into the manifest dream content deserves all our attention, since it is the first instance known to us of psychical material being changed over from one mode of expression to another, from a mode of expression which is immediately intelligible to us to another which we can only come to understand with the help of guidance and effort, though it too must be recognized as a function of our mental activity.

Dream thoughts furnish the material which is transformed. Freud believed that this process was motivated by the need to resolve unfulfilled desire. But since some unfulfilled desire is unacceptable to the ego for whatever reason, the transformation process introduces distortion and disguises these thoughts in such a way as to permit reestablishment of emotional equilibrium. The latent thoughts that provide material for dreams are most often in the optative; they are wishes that might begin if only. . . . Among the transformational processes are the following:

- Condensation: A single image gives expression to and combines several different thoughts, often in apparently illogical or riddling ways.
- Dramatization: an optative thought becomes expressed in images representing a situation that has a narrative structure. A wish is expressed as a story. The relationship of the story to the wish may require interpretation. For example, a young child who wants to be grown up dreams of sleeping in a bed too small for her.
- Distortion: Some features of the dream thought are retained in the manifest dream content, but other features are deleted or transformed, leaving only clues for skilled interpretation to relate the original thought to its expression in the images of a dream. For example a person who wants to attend a specific football game dreams of going to a zoo where all the animals are tame. The words ‘tame’ and ‘game’ provide the key consistency in their rhyme. Thus the features are all distorted: the stadium becomes a zoo, the players are animals, their conduct in a game is tame. The association of players with animals and the rhyme ‘game:tame’ provide clues for the skilled interpreter.

Many of Freud’s observations can be directly transferred to a consideration of media authorship. In *Sculpting Time*, Andrej Tarkovsky uses remarkably similar language to describe the process of cinematic authorship. I shall curtail specific discussion of this relationship in order to summarize and conclude.

Actual human experience is bounded by space, time and cultural institution. Experience originates both endogenously and exogenously. Endogenous experience comprises memory, desire, and imagination. Exogenous experience comprises interest and the sense organs. By interest, I mean the organization of the senses in such a way as to be more responsive to some stimuli than to others. The rods and cones making up the nerve endings in the eye, for example, divide into groups such that one group perceives only movement, another only angles and curves, another lines, and so on. No set of nerves “sees” the shapes, light, color, textures we see and call reality. The brain puts it all together through processes that are learned rather than innate. (This last being the case, it is not yet established that the brains of all human beings everywhere and at all times “see” the same reality, even at this level of discussion.)

All communicative process involves authoring and interpreting. Authoring is a process by which mental experience is rendered perceptible by transformational processes resulting in structures that range from the highly symbolic (speech and writing) through a range of media complexities from painting and theater (highly complex) to cinema and music (highly immediate). Hermeneutically, this range extends from readers to witnesses. Aesthesis is pertinent to the entire range, not in its enervated modern sense of ‘pertaining to beauty’ but in its older Greek meaning as a perfective of ‘to perceive, perceive completely.’

Authoring can be a commercial, institutional process or an aesthetic process. As an aesthetic process authoring always originates in the *hic et nunc* of actuality, not necessarily immediately, but as archived in the memories and desires of an author. In a process I call enactment the author organizes and thinks about things, people, situations remembered and submits them to the imagination, much as a foundryman scavenges through scrap metal in a junkyard for material suitable to his purposes. He gathers and then smelts what he finds useful to produce ingots of just the right composition of alloys. He makes the patterns and molds that will hold and form the molten metal that will become the casting. He smelts at exactly the right temperature and produces castings which will be put to use in thousands of ways over which he no longer has control.

In very, very skilled hands, and if the media tools are available, enactment can be recorded directly in the manner of direct cinema (which, however, seldom reaches such levels of intimacy and immediacy--but think of some of the videophone dispatches from Iraq, or of the digital video of the pediatrician who became trapped in confusion during the twin towers disaster.) Less direct are some kinds of documentary, and some of the experimental cinema now beginning to be made. Still less direct are some of the work of the Dogma 95 group exemplified perhaps by *The Idiots*. Cinema such as this brings the interpreter into direct witness of highly personal experience embedded deeply in cultural practice and issues of socially defined normalcies. Interpretation of such cinema can provide an excellent occasion for intercultural interpretation and discussion.

Reenactment introduces another set of possibilities for intercultural action. By reenactment I mean aesthetic process that deliberately reconstructs direct experience introducing more conscious and methodical purpose, but still informed (given form) by personal experience and vision. The transformation of thought in reenactments should not result in theatrical dramatization. This is an important point because cinema inspired by theater is essentially literary and not cinematic. Literary authorship is a very different kind of thing, requiring readers rather than witnesses. Its origins are formed by genre, not by actuality. Reenacted cinema affords opportunity both for interpretation and for authoring in an intercultural context. I think of Louis Malle's 13 hr. *Phantom India*, as a prototype in this sense. In no other place-- book, lecture, film--have I gotten such an appreciation of the social and cultural complexity of that continent. I do not understand India, but I feel I have at least witnessed it.

Reenactment also offers more opportunity for intercultural authorship. Sometimes the authoring of cinema is simply unfeasible for an individual, who will require assistance of very substantial sorts in the production of reenacted cinema. If this assistance is intercultural, then the very process of creation can itself become an occasion of heightened intercultural intercourse. And the text that results may well arouse that aspect of an audience's interest. I believe Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* may be a case in point. Conceived and written from his own memories to such an extent that his usual director of photog-

raphy refused to work on the film and his usual studio rejected it as too personal, it was actually produced in the Faeroes Islands by a primarily Swedish Production crew with a French producer, with actors who spoke everything from English to Italian, and with a director who, of course spoke Russian. The Director of Photography was a Swede Sven Nykvist, a great cinematographer who photographed most of the films of Ingmar Bergman. The intercultural character of the collaboration in this film is evident in the documentary about Tarkovsky, and in the critical reception of the film. Enacted cinema may well remain a very small part of cinema production, prone as it is to allowing great personal indulgence and lack of aesthetic discipline; but reenacted cinema offers me great hope for intercultural cooperation and achievement of even profound understanding of certain aspects of life on our globe.

Disembodiment

By disembodied *cinema* I mean cinema whose impulse originates in considerations of genre, style, economics or any impulse other than the personal memories and aspirations of an author. Such cinema may be authored or corporately determined, but it is not instigated by an enactment of any sort. More than 99.9% of cinema is of this variety. Because of its close association with economic concerns, disembodied cinema poses dangers to intercultural communication and is often a vehicle of cultural imperialism. Because disembodied cinema is so well established in the ways of life of much of the globe, it clearly has the upper hand in future developments. But it carries with it some things that militate against authentic achievement. One of these is the star system that places great value on celebrity. In America this has reached the point of being a mass cultural illness.

CONCLUSION

Anything that can be perceived can be used to signify in an act of communication. So a record of an intercultural communication that includes as much of perceptible reality as is possible is richer in actuality than one that is simply a transcription. This richness can serve as basis for discussion and dialog. Relating expression to meaning and meaning to implication has a very long history in textual hermeneutics; but the hermeneutics of nonverbal communication is in its infancy. The widespread availability of simple and easy to use digital audio and video recorders can be used in enactments of culturally sensitive behavior and cooperatively in culturally rich reenactments that far outreach traditional production, which, because it is monolithic and disembodied, remains superficial. The exclusive and banal obsession with celebrated persons is far less compelling to watch than deeply realized realities of everyday life which are the very substance of human life. The incredible popularity of the current "Reality" genre of American television suggests in an ironic and sad way the hunger Americans have for witnessing the actual, and thence acting in authenticity. Moreover, the technology of local access

television, required by law in the United States and threatened by acts under consideration in Congress, allows for television programming at the community level, the neighborhood level. Imagine the idea of communities far separated in distance and cultural practice trading community-specific programming, creating new programming documenting reaction to the programming and then returning that programming to the first originators for their reaction turn. Sounds almost like dialogue, doesn't it?

Part II

The Self-identity of Peoples and Communication across Cultures

Chapter IX

The Influence of Islamic Culture on International Relations

Ye Qing

The world today is diverse and plural. Different cultures run in a rhythm of conflict and integration, shaping all aspects of world politics. As Muslims are more than one fifth of the world's population, Islamic culture represents both the norms that guide their behavior and the place to which their feelings eventually resort. With the upsurge of contemporary Islamic movements and the ever-increasing roles Islamic countries are playing today in the world arena, Islamic culture has become an important factor affecting current international relations. As more and more scholars of International Relations focus upon it, the study of Islamic culture is no longer a reservoir of other disciplines such as those of religion, sociology and anthropology.

This article will approach Islamic culture and its role in international relations from a historical and evolutionary perspective. Attempts have been made to integrate the structural methodology of IR and the social perspectives of cultural studies in order to properly locate the role of Islamic culture. The following text will be divided into three parts.

The first part will review in brief two main methodologies in the study of Islamic culture: the traditions of orientalism and the **functionalist trend** in order to point out their respective deficiencies.

The second part will summarize the two core values of Islamic culture and its three characteristics. The aspiration for Islamic unity and the pursuit of social justice are the two pillars of Islamic values, and the three distinct traits of Islamic culture are its **practical, retrospective and expressive characters**.

The third part will study the influence of Islamic culture on the foreign policies of Islamic countries in three interrelated fields: its objectives, design, and implementation and concretization.

REFLECTIONS ON TWO METHODOLOGIES FOR STUDIES OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

The Tradition of Orientalism

In studying the versatile and complicated Islamic phenomena of the contemporary world, many scholars, especially those in the West, are influenced by the tradition of Orientalism. They tend to seek answers retrospectively from the textual resources of Islam. They attribute the negative effects of those Islamic phenomena on international relations to the backwardness and conservative attitude of Islamic culture, directing their criticism of the violence and terror activities of the Islamic extremists to Islamic culture itself.

Their conclusion is that Islam no longer meets the requirements of ‘development’ in the modern era, and thus constitutes a serious threat to the stability of the international system.

First of all, “Islam is state and religion”. This is the most classical statement on the relationship between Islam and politics. As Carl Brown summarized, “Islam, it was believed, prescribed a particular form of politics: secularism, or the separation of *din* from *dawla*, was inconceivable. Nor could there be any opting out of worldly concerns. Muslims must work to achieve the divinely ordained political community in this world, the *dunya*. Thus, the three *ds*, *din*, *dawla*, and *dunya*, cohered to provide a distinctly Islamic approach to political life.”¹ Built on this, three conclusions can be drawn: first, this excludes the ideological freedom and organizational flexibility required for the development of modern social, economical and political systems. Second, the unity of state and religion is prone to adopt authoritarian regimes which oppress people internally and seek expansion externally. Third, the leader inside this system is more easily driven by fanatic religious enthusiasm when making political judgements, which eventually will lead to the loss of rational calculation. Hence Islamic countries are less stable than normal ones, more difficult to be measured by reason, and more inclined to use force when dealing with international affairs.

Secondly, according to classical Islamic doctrine, the world can be divided into two parts: *dar al-Islam* (abode of peace) and *dar al-harb* (abode of war). The former refers to all the territories accepting Islamic rule, Islamic and non-Islamic societies; while the latter includes all other societies and territories. This split will not end until all the territories have been Islamized. From a legal point of view, it is impossible to reach a peace agreement between an Islamic country and a non-Islamic one. The way to convert *dar al-harb* into *dar al-Islam* is through Jihad, the Islamic Holy War. So motivated by religious emotions, Muslims have continuously to engage in wars with the West. The West cannot make peace with them, but only contain them.

Thirdly, Islam tries to promote an ideology of hyper-nationalism, which fundamentally clashes with the dominant international system of nation states originally evolved in the West. During the course of the interactions between the Islam and the West, the struggle has been centered on this question: who defines the world order? The system of Westphalia placed more emphasis on the national sovereignty, which broke the reign of the Church. Sovereignty means that every nation state is supreme internally and independent externally. But Islam has a sense of a universal mission for a global community, calling for a social order based on the monotheism. It is the fundamental incompatibility of these two systems that leads to the heterogeneity of the international system. “The conceptions of international politics maintained by these camps are founded upon two separate and irreconcilable concepts of history and society. Moreover, **these blocs have conflicting ideas on international law and politics, and the aims of conceivable future wars.** Each has a different ‘strategic culture’, **motivated by stark differences in their conceptions of self-interest and ‘rationality’**”.²

That's why these scholars think the contradictions between Islam and the West are irreconcilable. Most of these theories about Islam and world politics are put forward by western scholars, such as the theory of chain-reaction after the Iran revolution, the "Islamic threat" and "the clashes of civilizations" after the end of the Cold War. These theories have in common that all tend to treat Islamic culture as monolithic, static and absolute.

Influenced by Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, many scholars began to deconstruct the power relationship behind the dichotomy of Islam against West from the point of view of literary criticism, revealing the deep-rooted Eurocentrism tendency in orientalism. Edward Said [Sayyed] stood out among them, and his work *Orientalism* emerged as the most celebrated book in this field. Although Said put forward many useful insights against orientalism in his books, they are nonetheless not adequate. Some Islamic phenomena have been unfolding in the world arena as a vivid social reality, which are not sheer subjective imaginations and creations by the orientalists. They are not only objects present in the works of Orientalists, but also social facts. So it is not enough to point out the faults of orientalism just from a literary critic's point of view. To explain the Islamic phenomena, they must first of all be set in the international and social background in which the Islamic society is now embedded. Many phenomena which appear to be cultural, are social results imposed by the systematic structure in the first place.

The emergence of contemporary Islamic phenomena is to a large extent related to the experiences that most of the Islamic countries have been undergoing during the past century, which links closely to the social and cultural transformation of the Muslim societies as well as their interactions and practices with non-Muslim societies. New movements and trends of thinking often emerge from these interactions. In order to study the contemporary Islamic phenomena in the global age, we should not, as the essentialists would argue, start from something eternal that is abstracted from the religious texts, but rather begin with the globalized social and international network to see how Islamic culture is functioning within it.

The Functionalist Trend

Studying the Islamic phenomena, and especially the causes of Islamic revival movements, some scholars adopted a completely different methodology from the orientalists. But they went much too far, intending to take Islamic culture as a phenomenon merely affiliated to political and economical structures. These scholars situated the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the functional evolutions of social development, depicting it as the ideology of fanatic petty bourgeoisie. **They argue that for those classes that support Islamic revivalism, Islam is seen only as the carrier of political and economic demands, not as the direct force behind these demands.** The word Islam is invoked just because it is the most convenient ideological tool available. It is the utility of Islam, not anything else that makes it relevant.

But there are some dangers inherent in this approach; Roxanne L.

Euben revealed the common ground from modernization theory to structural-functionalism, from class analysis to rational actor theory, arguing that although these methodologies are diverse, they all spring out from the same source, which is the direct result of the discourse of modern rationalism.³ Euben assumes it has “a disciplinary effect on the study of fundamentalism: in treating it as instrumentally rational, rationalist analyses implicitly bracket the substance of fundamentalist political thought as irrelevant to properly scientific explanations. As primarily materialist accounts, such analyses both assume and reinforce the understanding of fundamentalism as epiphenomenal: they assume fundamentalism is a reflex reaction to certain political or socioeconomic circumstances, and in so doing they reinforce the neglect of a fundamentalist system of ideas as a substantive vision for the world.”⁴

Bobby S. Sayyid also is not satisfied with this approach, claiming that “**Pluralization is not a safeguard against** essentialism. In orientalism we encounter a reduction of the parts to the whole (local phenomena are explained by reference to the essence of Islam), while in anti-orientalism there is reduction of the whole to its constituent parts (Islam is disseminated in local events).”⁵ So “**there is no such thing as Islam, but that there are only Islams...** This dissolution of Islam as an analytical category is the hallmark of the anti-orientalist approach.”⁶

I quite agree with the critics mentioned above. As the belief system dominating contemporary Islamic society, Islamic culture cannot be simply reduced to some kind of abstract and meaningless being exterior to the political, economic and social structure of the Islamic society.

First, the Islamic culture has always been evolving in the course of changes, adapting itself to society in a specific time and space. Through long historical evolution, a whole set of unique cultural values came into being. Every culture has to develop the useful and discard the useless continuously in order to keep its dynamism and there is no exception for Islamic culture. Hence, Islamic culture today is quite different from its inception, many of its values survive the historical process while many others have been dropped. But even for those values which retain their original nominal forms, their meanings and contents may have changed greatly. Although the texts of the Koran and Hadith remain intact, none can assert that his version of interpretation is the only true one, since the Prophet Mohammed returned to Allah. Even those Islamists who want to monopolize the interpretations of the divine texts can provide only one version among many others. So what is more important then? It doesn't matter whether or not a source of authority exists, but whether or not the Muslims have strong belief in their interpretations. So it is more important to understand how Muslims in different periods and regions understand the religious texts than to seek a unified interpretation. The divine text remains one and unchanged while its significance becomes many when talking to different people in various times and locations.

Second, although the values of Islamic culture have been shaped and reshaped in an ongoing process by the practices and activities of Muslims, Islamic culture is not a sheer recipient of social changes. The relation between

culture and social transformation is not one-sided, but dialectic. Cultural changes never take place randomly or accidentally, but their development has its own logic. Under social impacts, Islamic culture internalized new values within existing ones, through which it directed the social transformation at almost the same time. As Tibi Bassam puts it, “**The concepts for reality undergo a parallel change: The adaptation of religio-cultural concepts to changing reality thus forms a central component of the cultural assimilation of change, and of the way in which change is directed, inasmuch as people do not simply react to this process of change, but also themselves direct it by means of cultural innovation.**”⁷ For a cultural change to take place, it requires conquering the inherent inertia that accumulates in the historical process. This is not so easy because the transformation of values goes through a long process of quantitative change **before qualitative change takes place, since culture is a self-fulfilling prophecy.** A cultural tradition has a strong mechanism of self-correction and is inclined to go back to the original track. So we need at the same time to recognize both the stability and **variability of cultural values.**

Last, Islamic culture is a system of cultural symbols, through which Muslims evaluate reality and develop their worldviews. These symbols convey conceptions about reality and provide programs for its interpretation. These are closely related to reality, but are not in complete accordance with it. People’s conception about reality is based not on real facts, but on the belief in an authority.⁸ To a Muslim, Islam does not refer completely to a religion or something religious; it may even have nothing to do with a religion, and may suggest the ethos of the whole society. In fact, any explanation, acceptance or denial of a specific event must be put forward in ‘Islamic’ vocabulary. The essence of the debate, however, is relevant to Islam only in its nominal part. In this sense, Islam can also be seen as a discourse. **A religion is “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating concepts of a general order of being and clothing these concepts with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”**⁹ In short, the role of Islamic culture lies in that it sets up a bridge for communication between the subjective aspects of Muslims and the objective aspects of social reality, constituting the contexts for the social practice of the Muslims. As Geertz puts it, “Religious concepts spread beyond their specifically metaphysical contexts to provide a framework of general ideas in terms of which a wide range of experience—intellectual, emotional, moral—can be given meaningful form.”¹⁰

THE VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC CULTURE AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

The Aspiration for Islamic Unity and the Pursuit of Social Justice: The Two Pillars of Islamic Values.

The aspiration for Islamic unity is considered to be at the heart of the system of Islamic values because the unity of Arabia was first accomplished

through the spread of Islam. Primitive polytheism was replaced by monotheism, and the **parochial allegiance to local tribes was replaced by the** Islamic teaching that “all Muslims are brothers”. The testimony that “There is no God but God” is one of the fundamental beliefs in Islam, so a united *umma* is indispensable to the realization of Allah’s rule on earth. Pan-Islamism thoughts were rooted deeply in the tradition of the monotheism **because the aspiration** for unity is related directly to the belief of Muslims in Allah. It is more than a political cause, for it has the greatest appeal to the Muslims, easily arousing the deepest feelings inside their hearts. The symbol of unity have been absent from the Islamic world since Mustafa Kemal abolished the caliphate in 1923, leading to the rise of a variety of Pan-Islamic movements. The fact that the ideal of Islamic unity has not yet been realized has been affecting the individual as well as collective identity of the Muslims, their attitudes towards nation states, and their beliefs and values. Although this ideal remains elusive, it continues to emerge again and again rather than to disappear completely. Contemporary Muslims accept the reality of nation states, but believe it to be but one stage on the way to the final realization of this ideal. Seeming to be beyond reach, it appears always on the farthest horizon for Muslims.

The pursuit for social justice is another pillar underpinning the system of Islamic values, which is reflected in the emphasis of Islamic society on *Sharia*. As it originated from the revealed truth of God, it is quite different from other laws. Its jurisprudence is unlimited, covering every aspect of life. Because of the sanctity of *Sharia*, it composes the aspirations of Muslims for justice and order. As one Iranian scholar pointed out, although the national interests claimed by realists were admitted in the Koran, pursuing them is not free of restraints because justice is the final goal and criterion.¹¹ In analyzing the causes of the rise of Islamic movements, one Western scholar observed that “the ‘Islamic resurgence’ **characteristic of our time cannot be explained** as simple nostalgia, or even as the result of outrage at injustice. It flows from the sense of mission that has always been a part of Islam. The imperative to command good and forbid evil, or to build a just social order on earth, forms a basis for the action and thought of a variety of contemporary Muslim groups.”¹²

Characteristics of Islamic Culture

Practicality. As the Islamic religion is oriented towards this life, it inclines to be practical. The spread of Islam was based upon the Islamic *umma* founded by the Prophet Mohammed in Medina, and thus was centrally concerned with secular affairs from the very beginning. The word “Islam” means in some sense submission, but Muslims are not fatalists, deferring only to the manipulation of the *kismet*. As one’s fortune is pre-ordained by God, it’s forbidden to predict and change this *kismet* lest the authority of God will be undermined. But this does not require that one act passively. Being God’s regent on earth, one must exert all one’s efforts to realize one’s destiny. As long as one’s efforts are in the path of God, the result will be favorable. The social

justice pursued by Islam cannot be realized without the active engagement of the Muslims. This is the true meaning of Pre-ordainment, manifested most obviously in the Islamic reformist movements, especially the Islamic fundamentalists of the modern era. They take the Prophet's missionary career as the example but orient themselves towards the secular world. Strongly inclined to activism, they believe that only by positively engaging the activities in this life can salvation be found.

Retrospectivity. All religions tend to look backward to the first golden era in history, but Islam is most salient in this respect. Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last prophet and that the Koran was the final revelation of the God, which superseded both the Old and the New Testament. Islam is then the perfect religion, and the Islamic *umma* the best society. These doctrines have been internalized into the educational system of Muslim society, preventing them from self-reflecting their own problems. Sharply criticizing this tendency, the Muslim scholar Bassam Tibi argued that the denunciation towards Eurocentrism should be developed into a general objection to ethnocentrism. The **narcissism** of Islam not only represents a psychological barrier in education, but also obstructs the Muslims from treating others as of equal value. This misconception is in deep conflict with the initiative of the Third World, which calls for an equal and plural global society. The education system of Muslim society immerses them in a sense of superiority, preventing them from correctly understanding reality that is quite different from their self-imaginings. Therefore, they are not capable of making substantial reforms to deal with these realities.¹³ Although the humiliating defeat of the Arab world in the Six-Day War in 1967 triggered a tide of heart-searching among the intellectuals for a time, this trend was not sustained, but replaced by the fundamentalisms that carried the slogan "Islam is the solution." This was the defeat, rather than the success of the Iranian Islamic revolution, that paved the way for political Islam.¹⁴

Expressivity. Islamic culture was born out of Arabic culture, bearing its deep imprints. Because the Koran was written in Arabic, Arabic also gained a touch of divinity. Language is the central concept of the artistic expression in Arabic culture. "Arab society has been characterized in this study as being inclined to spontaneity and expressiveness, reflecting deep-rooted sensitivity and a special fascination with poetry, imagery, metaphor, and symbolism."¹⁵ Two results derive from this feature of the Arabic Islamic culture. Firstly, it is relatively easy for charismatic leaders such as Ayatollah Khomeini and Gamal Abdel Nasser, who have special appeals to the mass, to emerge in this manner in the society. **The capacity of speech-giving and propaganda is an important criterion for evaluating the competence of a leader in the Muslim society.** This is the reason why the leaders pay much more attention to the words than the deeds in the domestic politics of individual Muslim countries as well as the politics among Muslim countries. Secondly, less emphasis upon rationality and dialect is largely the cost of this emphasis upon language. The Syrian

philosopher Sadiq al-‘Azm analyzed the negative effect of this tradition in the defeat in the Six-Day War, asserting that the disaster Arabs suffered in that war to a large extent can be ascribed to this cultural attitude.¹⁶

THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE ON THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

The formation of a foreign policy can be divided into two systems: input and output. These two systems also can be subdivided into three independent as well as interdependent fields: guidelines and goals, decision-making, and implementation. Realists tend to pay much attention to the analysis of the consequences of foreign policies, beginning from the output system and tracing the motives of decision-making backward. As a result, they often neglect or downgrade the importance of cultural factors. In fact, Islamic culture has a great influence on these three interrelated sectors.

First of all, the values of Islamic culture constitute the dominant belief system and ideology of the Islamic society, shaping its cognitive system, and deeply influencing the worldviews of the whole society and of the people therein. Islamic culture is the cultural prism through which the Muslims develop their views towards the outside world and make value judgements. Islamic values are to a large degree internalized in the goals and contents of the foreign policies of Islamic countries, and Iran is typical in this respect. Being an Islamic republic, Iran always takes an uncompromising stance that is even tougher than the Arab countries towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, although it had adopted flexible policies that reflected strong pragmatism in the Iran-Iraq War and previously in the Gulf War. Israel was a close ally of Iran before the revolution, and has continued to seek rapprochement with Iran since then. This policy seems to go against Iran’s national interests because improving its relations with Israel would help it break out of its isolation. But Iran has to weigh gains and losses in order to make choices only within the confines of Islamic principles. Closely related to this Islamic identity is redress of the justice in the Palestinian issue. This is the utmost national interest of Iran, excluding other realistic choices. Saudi Arabia is another example. It is an important goal to promote Islamic cooperation in the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, which leads to its duality. On the one hand, it is a conservative and moderate Muslim country, exerting its efforts to prevent the extremists home and abroad from challenging the regime. But on the other hand, the Saudi government is linked with many Islamic extremist movements and organizations reflected in the large amount of petroleum dollars it has invested. Therefore, the national interests of Saudi Arabia have been damaged, as manifested in the deterioration of Saudi-US relations after the September 11th event.

Secondly, most Islamic countries are still ‘developing’ countries. Democratic systems have not yet been fully developed and a strongman or elite group can hold the reins firmly. Hence, it becomes a common practice in the academia to investigate the decisive role that the idiosyncrasy of specific leader plays in foreign policy making. Undoubtedly, the idiosyncrasy of

a leader has great influences over foreign policy, but it is more important to analyze how the context of policy-making encourages certain leadership types and not others; how it allows certain idiosyncrasies but not others; and how a leader's idiosyncrasies may alter the context, affecting the foreign policy orientation of other leaders.¹⁷ The foreign policies of Islamic countries are made out of the social and cultural contexts constituted of Islamic culture. The ruling elite come from the Islamic society and face the Muslim masses. Their views, judgements and responses towards realities have been shaped and constrained to a large degree by the political and social values of Islamic culture inherited by the whole society. Though foreign policies are notably characterized by the leader's idiosyncrasies, these idiosyncrasies are not boundless and the Islamic values are their limits. As far as the leaders of Islamic countries are concerned, their greatest threat comes from the lack of legitimacy imposed by the current international system. On the one hand, the prime interest of every regime in the Islamic world is political survival in the international system. On the other hand, the ordinary Muslims took upon this system unfavorably, leading to the separation of the Islamic world, downgrading of Islamic countries to the periphery status within the international system and the injustices they suffer.

Great tension arises between the regimes and an Islam that is supposed to be regarded as 'the people's ideology'. In order to consolidate their rule, the governments sometimes have to adopt a number of appeasing measures and carry out some sorts of policies colored with Islam to accommodate the Islamic forces, as did Egyptian president Sadat soon after he took power. But these policies only mitigate the conflicts temporarily and help to enhance the capacity of Islamic forces inside the system in restricting the government's room for maneuver in the long run. This large gap between the governments and the people affects the relations between Islamic countries and Western countries (the United States in particular) in different ways. For those radical countries that are challenging the international order, the emotions of the Muslim masses is a great asset for them in dealing with foreign affairs. For example, the call of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for Arab unity and Islamic Jihad during the Gulf War had repercussions over all the Arab countries and even the whole Islamic world; this was not because they support him, but because Iraq's confrontation with the West provided him with an opportunity to express judgments and aspirations common to a significant number of Arabs, Muslims, and others. To summarize, and thus oversimplify these: there is a double standard in world politics. For the West and its friends, the present international order provides freedom, security, dignity. But for Arabs, Muslims, and developing nations, there is only oppression, exploitation, and dishonor. "It is time the oppressed stood up for their rights, with the Muslims bearing the standard for justice and equity against an irreligious, morally bankrupt West."¹⁸ But in the meantime, those moderate countries satisfied with the status quo are often forced into a dilemma. "It [the status quo] contributed to rigidity in policy, as insecure governments were unwilling to deviate from established approaches, particularly with regard to longstanding opponents

such as Israel and in many cases, the Western powers.”¹⁹ One of the reasons for the stumbling peace process since the Madrid peace conference lies in the absence of impetus from the Arab side. By force of internal pressures and instability, the leaders of Arabic countries were unable to make their policies sufficiently flexible. Nor do they have the same courage as former Egyptian President Sadat, who ventured to go to Jerusalem then. When the peace process is in crisis, the Palestinians have to face pressures from Israelis as well as from their fellow Arabs, who asked them not to compromise. Good initiatives put forward by some Arab countries, such as the peace plan proposed by the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, often fail to yield results due to the absence of substantial and subsequent policies.

Last but not the least, Islamic norms play a very important role in the diplomatic practices among Islamic countries, and Arab countries in particular. The spread of Islamic culture endows them with cultural homogeneity. The fact that the Arab world had been united under the banner of Islam for a long time results in the frequent interactions among the civilians, blurring borders and sovereignties. The aspiration of Muslims for unity facilitates all sorts of cultural activities and strengthens the links and identifications among Muslims. For Muslims, Islam is the symbol of identity and the source for allegiance. Within the current international system, there exists great tension between the consolidating government authorities and the hypernational Muslim society, which is intensified by the ongoing globalization. As every family in the Muslim world has been penetrated by the outside world via the highly developed modern communication technologies, so Muslims around the world all feel that their fates are closely linked together in the face of common challenges. The dissemination and popularization of Internet and satellite TV strengthen the cross-country links and identifications of Muslims, transforming local issues into regional ones. The rise of Al Jazeera of Qatar is the best example.

Studying the politics among Arab countries, many scholars single out accurately its unique characteristic of regionalism. As Michael N. Barnett claimed, “If Arab politics has any distinguishing traits, it is the dramatic relief of the supposed existence of a community and shared identity against the harsh reality of anarchy and rivalry.”²⁰ Although a united Arab world no longer exists, the system of Arab nations still behaves like a family, even without a supernational authority. “It is almost as if inter-Arab relations are not really foreign relations but part of the politics of the extended family instead. Thus, Arab leaders tend to talk directly to the citizens of other Arab states.”²¹ Once a crisis breaks out, in addition to the pressures of domestic oppositions, the leader will have to face the threats from outside the national border but within the large Arab family.

Therefore, norms are very powerful in the system of Arab nations. In the politics among Arab nations, traditional measures such as the arms race and balance of power are no longer the main tools to maintain the equilibrium of the system. The rivalry of Arab nations is centered around how to define and control the norms. Lack of legitimacy, rather than the military in-

tervention of foreign countries, is the biggest threat to Arab regimes.²² Islamic values are most salient in the normal structure that dominates the politics of Arab world. Even in the heydays of Pan-Arabism advocated by Nasser, Arab solidarity was under the shadow of Islamic unity. The values representative of Islamic culture are the sources of legitimacy for the Arab regimes, blurring the borders between domestic politics and international politics within the Arab system, and linking the domestic policies closely with the foreign policies.

CONCLUSION

In studying the influence of Islamic culture on international relation, it is important to seek the proper point of balance among different approaches. On the one hand, it is not valid to study the Islamic culture from the angel of essentialism, linking everything taking place in today's Islamic world with the culture itself. On the other hand, **caution also should be taken against the reductionist's tendency that ignores the uniqueness of Islamic culture, its ability to integrate the Muslim society, and its key role in guiding Muslims' practice.**

Culture is the product of history, and its development is restrained by social structures and historical processes. It is in a constant state of change and reform in order to accommodate the requirements of varying times and societies, and Islamic culture is no exception. The contemporary Islamic world has been involved passively in the modernization process and forced to integrate into the international system. It is in this social and international context that Islamic culture takes effect. The Islamic world is now facing problems similar to those of developing countries. Although its responses to these problems share the common traits of developing countries, they are also characterized by distinctly Islamic values. The aspiration for unity and justice as the core values in the system of Islamic culture plays the guiding role in shaping the worldviews of Muslims, and permeates their behavior. Islamic culture and contemporary world politics are in an open process of mutual penetration, mutual conditioning and mutual construction.

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NOTES

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² Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli eds., *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd, 1984, p.106.

³ Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p.20.

⁴ Euben, p.23.

⁵ Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books, 1997, p.38.

⁶ Sayyid, p.37.

⁷ See Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change*, Westview Press, 1990, pp.3-4, pp.8-9.

⁸ See Bassam Tibi, pp.3-4, pp.8-9.

⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p.90.

¹⁰ Geertz, p.123.

¹¹ See Seyed Mohammad Farid Mirbagheri, "Nationalism and Islam", *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. XII, No.4, Winter 2000-2001, pp.607-620.

¹² John Kelsay, *Islam and War: a Study in Comparative Ethics*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p.115.

¹³ Bassam Tibi, p.118.

¹⁴ Bassam Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam: a Preindustrial Culture in the Scientific-Technological Age*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988, Preface.

¹⁵ Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p.206.

¹⁶ Sadiq Jalal al-'Azm, "al-'ilm al-hadith wa al-naksa al-akhira" (Modern Science and the Recent Defeat), In *Diasat 'Arabiyya* (Beirut), vol.3, 10 (1967), pp. 34-53, particularly p.39. Quoted in Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change*, Westview Press, 1990, p.98.

¹⁷ Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, pp.5-6.

¹⁸ John Kelsay, *Islam and War: a Study in Comparative Ethics*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p.8.

¹⁹ Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, pp.42-43.

²⁰ Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.1.

²¹ Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, pp.2-3.

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Chapter X

Islam's Emerging 'Third Space' in the West

Mustafa Malik

Whether a full-blown “clash of civilization” is inevitable between Islam and the West, a culture clash in the West between Muslim and local communities has been simmering for a while. It began with the influx of large numbers of Muslim refugees in North America and Western Europe in the mid-twentieth century. And it has deepened after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on American targets, carried out by a group of Muslims riled by U.S. “hegemonic” policies in the Muslim world.

Hundreds of Muslims in the West have been interrogated, detained, kept under surveillance, thrown off aircraft and harassed in many other ways. The Muslim countries of Afghanistan and Iraq have been invaded. Governments suppressing Muslim struggles for independence, political autonomy and human rights have been co-opted into a U.S. “war on terror,” which many Muslims around the world view as a new “crusade” against Islam. This Western-Islamic clash has heightened Western Muslims’ awareness of their special role as a cultural category whose identity and loyalty straddle the civilizational divide.

In this paper I posit that Western Muslims have been carving out a unique cultural space for themselves, which is facilitated by the “crisis of liberalism” and the consequent erosion of the sovereignty of the nation-states. The new Muslim space, I argue, reflects the evolving meaning of citizenship in the modern state system.

First, I focus on the societal malaise spawned in liberal Western societies by Cartesian rationalism. Secondly, I review the evolution of traditional Islamic cultural patterns and the apparent incongruity of Muslim values and idiom in the Western societies. Finally, I examine the hybridization of new generations of Western Muslims, which appears to endow them with a social role accommodating their dual identities as citizens of Western states and members of the global Muslim community, or the *umma*.

“Islam and the West” usually point to two different value systems and worldviews that are reflected in the social and political structures of the West and the Muslim world. Freedom of the “rational” individual is the seminal value that supposedly underpins the whole liberal capitalist edifice of the West. The affirmation of the creed reverberated around the world when President George W. Bush characterized 9/11 as an attack on “our freedom” in an effort to rally America and the West behind his war against Afghanistan and Iraq.

Aristotle advised Alexander to distinguish the Greeks from the barbarians,¹ and Montesquieu attributed the glory of Rome to the Romans’ defense of their faith and, among other things, maintenance of a distinction between

the plebeians and patricians.² Maintaining racial and cultural purity has historically been a major concern of many Westerners. Today Samuel Huntington and his ilk have been arguing for the preservation of Western cultural “exceptionalism,” which has been an underlying reason Western governments have tightened their immigration laws.

Actually, though, the liberal political culture is based on what Kant called a “rotten dogmatism,” namely that rationality is the only authentic source of man’s knowledge, and hence freedom and happiness. Philosophers and thinkers have since all but demolished the rationalist argument, which was initiated by Rene Descartes. They point out that belief, intuition and experience are also vital sources of knowledge, happiness and meaning. “The abrasive [Cartesian] processes of human reason,” George McLean has put it succinctly, “omitted existence, person, freedom, culture and creativity.”³

Liberal Western societies could ignore its philosophers and sociologists as long as its sovereign states could guard its capitalist enterprises and quarantine its national cultures from alternative lifestyles and sources of meaning that belie the rationalist myth. But capitalism outgrew the Western state system, and Western business people, professionals, media operatives and everyday citizens began to traverse the globe, confronting non-Western people and lifestyles. Simultaneously, the need for economic expansion brought in non-Western culture groups – many of them Muslim – exposing the rest of Westerners to contrasting values and cultures.

As Hellenistic and Roman civilizations reached their maturity, their citizens also traveled to widely and interacted with diverse cultures. The result in each case was what Peter Berger calls “cognitive contamination” of creeds and beliefs, relativization of values and *Weltanschauung* and growth of pluralism.⁴ The Roman creed was relativized by Christianity, which in turn was transformed by its exposure to Enlightenment ideas. In the same way Enlightenment liberalism has been coming unglued from its encounter with other cultures, betraying its flaws and perniciousness.

Gone are the days when American Protestants scorned Catholics and Jews and lynched blacks, and the British treated the Irish as second class citizens and immigrants from their colonies as little better than slaves. Both the United States and Britain today flaunt “multiculturalism,” having conceded equal legal rights to citizens of non-Western racial origins.

Cross-cultural interaction is making the Westerner appreciate the humanity of the cultural “Other” as well as alternative sources of happiness, and meaningful freedom. To the rationalist, individual freedom means absence of barriers to the pursuit of one’s desires. But what does it mean for a high school dropout working two jobs to keep ends meeting, and having no kin or close friends, a condition typical of vast numbers of people in the liberal industrial societies?

The absence of barriers to the pursuit happiness gives man what anthropologists call “negative freedom,” which seldom produces true happiness. “The negative sense of freedom,” explains Richard Khuri, “is that in which we emphasize our freedom to choose, whether among trivial or serious mat-

ters, and the opportunity we are given to do so through lack of interference from authorities. The positive sense of freedom is that in which we emphasize the quality of our choice and what we do with the opportunity we are given, the transcendent root of freedom, and freedom itself as meaningful expansiveness in a boundless world.”⁵

“Positive freedom,” which brings real happiness, comes from man’s relationships with family, community and the spiritual realm. But the industrial society, created by tool-making rationality, has all but destroyed those sources of freedom.

Negative freedom is what we are used to and aspire for in modern industrial democracies. What this kind of freedom amounts to comes through to me when I see a hardworking cashier at my neighborhood Giant department store splurging her meager savings Friday nights at smoke-filled bars looking for dates, most of whom disappoint her. She does not have family or friends around.

She said to me wistfully one day that she enjoyed her Pakistani neighbors who complain of never having a “free moment” as their weekends and evenings are used up in entertaining and visiting relatives and friends and participating in events at the Laurel, Md., mosque.

The automobiles, computers and facilities for good health have failed to enrich Western life with real meaning or fulfillment, which positive freedom could bring. Western modernity, fueled by Cartesian rationalism, has corroded most of the sources of man’s fulfillment, his pursuit of “subjective” values, which, as Kierkegaard would say, enables man to realize his true self.⁶

ISLAM’S SOJOURN

Islam is the last of the three great Abrahamic faiths, and in a spirit of “reforming” the Judeo-Christian tradition, it prescribed values and norms that would provide the children of Abraham a fulfilling life.

Islam views man as God’s “vice-regent on Earth,” for whom living a good life is a main part of worship. Islam declared that man is individually and directly accountable to God for his deeds 900 years before Martin Luther put out his 95 theses echoing the same message. And it proclaimed equality among all believers regardless of their race or ethnicity 1,400 years before Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed about it on the Washington Mall. The faith preached by the Prophet Muhammad sought to liberate man from the ecclesiastical domination that was being resented in Byzantine and Zoroastrian societies.

Islam sought to diminish tribalism and ethnic strife by setting up the egalitarian social structure of the *umma*. Initially, the *umma* was conceived as a pluralist society, a confederation of Muslim and non-Muslim groups in Medina. But eventually it emerged as the colorblind, interethnic community of believers. Muhammad described the *umma* as “one body, if one part is ill, the whole body feels it.”⁷ The fundamental value that underpins the *umma* and its mission is “justice,” which in Islamic parlance means fairness and charity.

The social structure laid out by the Prophet and the values introduced by the new faith began to give way after his death, and *umma* unity was shattered by a civil war and power struggle. The dispute pitted those who believed that the community should be ruled by whomever it may chose against those who espoused the rule of Muhammad's descendents. The former account for nearly 90 percent of the world Muslim population and are known as the Sunnis. The latter are called the Shia, and they make up the majority of the populations in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. As Islam spread across the globe, it was further divided into myriad national, ethnic, doctrinal and ideological groups. The *umma* today is a quilt of countless cultural patches groups draping the globe.

Although Islam calls for the solidarity of all believers, it does recognize Muslim ethnic and cultural diversity. In fact, the Qura'n suggests that Muslims' attachment to "nations and tribes" endow them with the insight to "know one another" better.⁸ What Muslim scripture strongly forbids is inter-group feuding.

As the faith spread, its cultural pattern was modified by new social environments even though its basic doctrines and values endured. The *umma* provides an interesting study of institutional diversity. In some Muslim countries government offices and many businesses shut down during prayer times, and Friday, the Muslim sabbath, is a closed holiday. Most of these societies maintain the segregation of the sexes in public and have proscribed the consumption of alcohol, banned by Islamic scripture.

Other Muslim societies, while observing Friday as the weekly holiday, do not mandate the closing of offices or businesses for prayer. Some of these societies do not tolerate the public consumption of alcohol, others do. Some of them bar women from outdoor activities, others do not. In some other Muslim countries Sunday is observed as the weekly holiday, and consumption of alcohol in public is permitted. The Islamic dress code for men and women, too, varies from region to region.

The genius of Islam lies in its adaptability to the environment, which has enabled it to flourish through history. When the faith was born in Arabia, it adopted the Arabs' dress code, language, main shrine, and many other institutions. Some of those institutions the Arabs had borrowed from other faiths and cultures. Muslim women's head covering is a case in point.

According to one theory, the custom was introduced in Persia in the sixth century B.C. by the Achaemenian Emperor Cyrus the Great in order to protect the chastity of women. It passed on to the Byzantines from whom the Arabs copied it and eventually gave it religious sanction.⁹

As Islam began to travel, its original institutions began to change to adapt to local cultures. Again, women's head covering is a good example. Typically, a Saudi or Afghan woman would cover up her whole head (and often the entire body) to keep any hair from showing. A typical Pakistani woman would throw a thin piece of cloth known as *dupatta* over her head, which leaves the front one-third of the head exposed. A Bangladeshi Muslim would

simply draw the tail end of her *saree*, originally a Hindu costume, to cover as much of the head as the situation requires her to hide.

Baroness Pola Uddin, a Bangladeshi native who is a member of the British House of Lords, covers her head only on certain social occasions, which include visiting a mosque. "I'd cover my head," she said, "when I meet my father-in-law and my husband's older male cousins as a mark of respect."¹⁰ Many educated and working class Muslim women in many countries do not cover their heads at all. Of course Islam's cultural adaptability has sometimes proved costly. Islamic principles of intra-ethnic brotherhood, for example, gave way during the post-Prophetic succession struggle, and ethnic and national strife has bedeviled Muslim history. In many societies, especially where Muslims are minorities, many Muslims appear to be culturally assimilated to non-Muslims, and one would wonder if Islam means anything to them. Yet an Islamic worldview, fostered by the concepts of *umma* and justice, hold them together as communities and nations. Bosnian Muslims, for example, have been among the most secularized in the world. Their forebears used to be Christian Serbs and Croats. Yet in the 1990s tens of thousands of them gave their lives fighting Christian Serbs and Croats to preserve their Muslim identity. The same has been the case with Kosovar Muslims.

The movement for the independence of Bangladesh from the "Islamic republic" of Pakistan was led by a thoroughly secular Muslim elite, who enlisted the support of Hindu-majority India in their struggle against their fellow-believers in Pakistan. But soon after their independence, Bangladeshis overthrew their pro-Indian government, the country's foreign policy took on an anti-Indian stance and more and more Bangladeshis began to practice the faith or flaunt Islamic cultural symbols. They were alarmed, a well-known Bangladeshi writer told me, by the twin threat of Indian cultural infiltration and later the U.S. "hegemony" over the Muslim world and began "coming home to Islam."¹¹

The *umma* spirit and the search for justice, two of the seminal Islamic concepts, have been continually reinforced by Muslim encounters with other cultures and civilizations, especially the West. The Muslim world has not gone through the type of secularizing revolution as did the post-Enlightenment Europe, and Islam remains the main cultural resource of just about all Muslim societies, regardless of their level of modernization. Hence political and cultural clashes with the "Other" have also reinforced other Islamic values.

Whenever Muslims have faced a political challenge, they have reached for their religious roots -- i.e. Islamic symbols and ethical standards -- to reinforce their sense of dignity and identity and resist the threat. This is why Muslim anti-colonial struggles fueled Islamic revivalist movements, rejuvenated by the subsequent resistance to U.S. hegemonism in the Muslim world. The political and cultural challenge posed by the West has, to quote Ernest Gellner, "impelled [Muslim] populations in the direction of the formally (theologically) more 'correct' Islam."¹² As a result, Gellner adds, "Islam is as strong now as it was a century ago. In some ways it is probably stronger."¹³

MIGRATION SAGA

The Islamic revival has so far occurred in premodern or modernizing Muslim societies outside the West. The resurgence is also being felt among many immigrant Muslim communities in the West, nurturing versions of Islamic culture “imported” from non-Western countries. What becomes of Western Islam when Western-born generations of Muslims progressively lose the memories of their forebears’ values and norms incubated in the premodern Muslims societies?

We have noted that Islam has historically proved highly adaptable to local cultural idiom while retaining its basic beliefs and values. But the challenge of adaptation in contemporary West is qualitatively different from those that the faith encountered in the premodern societies.

In premodern or modernizing societies, religion underpins culture, and people – whatever their religious affiliation – identify with religious meanings that they believe are nobler than material goods. Muslims in those societies usually lived separate lives from other faith groups, nurturing their religious institutions and social ties sanctified by Islam.

Muslims’ lifestyles and values in premodern societies they shared with non-Muslims have been different from those of non-Muslims, and interfaith conflicts have been a feature of some such societies. But usually faith groups in those societies have respected each other’s values and customs and left one another alone. Usually, Muslims in mixed premodern societies coexisted with non-Muslims in autonomous communities in relative peace.

Living in modern liberal societies is, however, a different ballgame for most Muslims. Modernity challenges not only their social and cultural norms but their whole *Weltanschauung*. A Pakistani or Algerian Muslim immigrant to Western Europe or North America is disoriented to find not only his native Islamic attire and etiquette at odds in his host society, but his *umma* ties with the Iraqis, Palestinians and Kashmiris an aberration, and sometimes treasonous. He, too, has a hard time reconciling with the liberal Western concept of his religious praxis being treated as his personal matter, unrecognized by the state.

The West challenges their cultural identity and outlook, while non-Muslim Eastern societies require just the adaptation of some of their mores and customs. And while Islam can indeed adapt to the West as it has to the East, it is paying more dearly for its Western sojourn than it ever has for cross-cultural expansion. Muslims in the West are secularizing fast. I have written elsewhere that the percentage of Western-born Muslims attending the Friday *jumua* prayer regularly is comparable to West European Christians attending weekly church services.¹⁴

Nevertheless, unlike the earlier major waves of immigrants to Western Europe and North America, Muslims are unlikely to assimilate into the Western Judeo-Christian mainstreams. A host of factors, mostly stemming from the inherent malaise of rationalism, are cushioning them against the assimilationist pull. They include the erosion of national cultures and sovereign-

ty, the need for non-Western labor, expansion and integration of the European Union, globalization of the American political and economic interests, and so on. Assimilation of the cultural Other has, in fact, ceased to be demand of Western societies where multiculturalism and pluralism are increasingly gaining ground.

Secondly, while European and Hispanic Catholics and Ashkenazi Jews, who made up the bulk of earlier immigrants to the Western countries, have had racial and religious affinity with host societies, Muslims belong to, not only a non-Western faith, but non-white racial stocks. And historically, the pace of assimilation of non-whites into the white Western national main-streams remains by far the slowest.¹⁵

The all-important question remains: On what terms are Muslims likely to live in the West? In other words, what would the Western Muslim cultural pattern look like?

As we have noted the *umma* was born of migration, and a pluralist collectivity. The saga of migration and pluralist streak endure in the collective Muslim memory, despite the many intolerant stands of the faith. This is why Muslims have been able to adapt to the cultural patterns of all kinds of societies in which they have settled. Notable exceptions were Moorish Iberia and Ottoman Balkans, from where Islam was expunged by resurgent Christianity and nationalism. The West today is more hospitable to the faith, notwithstanding the idiosyncrasies of liberalism.

The rational methods and “cognitive contamination” from interaction with the Other, which are pluralizing Western societies, are also reinforcing pluralism among Western Muslims. Recent research, my own and that of others’, has shown that the second and third generation Western Muslims are increasingly living a “hybrid” lifestyle. Sociologists Steven Vertovec and Alisdair Rogers say “hybrid Islam is sweeping Europe” and is exemplified by young men “wearing sunglasses, baggy trousers, large trainers loosely laced, and a black T-shirt depicting the photo of the earth from space under which appear the words ‘dar al-Islam,’” or the land of Islam.¹⁶

When I read their description of the Muslim youth, I wondered if he was describing my son, Jamal! I see this “hybridized” Muslim breed in American malls, campuses and even mosques. These youths participate in the “It’s Academic” contests at schools, play on local football teams, organize seminars on Islam and join rallies protesting the Anglo-U.S. war against Iraq.

The second- and third-generation Western Muslims, notes British sociologist Tariq Modood, “define themselves in terms of multiple national attachments and are comfortable with fluid and plural identities.”¹⁷

Their hybridity claims a cultural space that differs from that of social syncretism, as characterized the lifestyles of the offspring of Judeo-Christian immigrants of earlier times. The scions of Catholic and Jewish immigrants to America and different West European countries also participated in their discreet religious and ethnic events and displayed their ancestors’ ethnic symbols. But they also joined local Christian youths at Christmas parties, church

events, Saint Patrick's Day parades and Bastille Day celebrations. This latter set of events is integral to Western national cultures, or "public religion," to borrow Robert Bellah's expression. The syncretizing offspring of Western immigrants felt at home with this national creed, which gradually cemented their bonds with the national mainstreams. Syncretism was a prelude to assimilation.

Muslim youths, while participating in many mainstream social events, keep away from those associated with the Jewish or Christian faiths, and often from the "public religion" events specific to the Western civilization. A son or daughter of a Levantine or Maghrebi Muslim immigrant to the United States, for example, would not get excited over the Columbus Day celebration as Christopher Columbus would remind him or her of Western colonization of Muslim lands. A Muslim youth of Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi descent may have little interest in a documentary or seminar on Winston Churchill or World War II. The memory of imperial Britain is painful for the offspring of Muslims (and Hindus) of the Indian subcontinent, a former British colony.

The Muslim youths in the West, while participating in Western social, political and economic life, are far from willing to assimilate into Western social mainstreams. Their hybridity signals their preference for a differentiated space in Western societies. The need for such a space is underscored by their unique status as citizens of Western nation-states who are also members of the global *umma*. Their cultural niche is identical to what Homi Bhaba calls the "third space" in which citizens share their allegiance to their nation-state with their affiliation with one or more international entities.¹⁸

Modern nation-states need a new concept of citizenship, not just because of the Muslim affiliation with the *umma*. As globalization speeds up, a whole web of economic and social relationships are increasingly linking up citizens of nation-states with myriad transnational groups, interests and issues. It all is making, according to Benedict Anderson, our passports "counterfeit." The passports of Portuguese or Bangladeshi citizens, he says, "tell us little about the loyalty or *habitus*, but they tell us a great deal about the relative likelihood of their holders being permitted to seek jobs in Milan or Copenhagen."¹⁹

The same thing can be said of the passport of the executives of American corporations such as MCI, General Electric, AT&T and IBM, whose business outlets and network of employees span the globe. And how authentic is the passport of a British, French or Dutch citizen today? How much of his loyalty stays with his nation state and how much of it has been transferred to the European Union? What does the Serbian citizenship mean to Slobodan Milosevic, who is being tried for war crimes at the European Court of Justice in The Hague? They are all a hybrid bunch, but their hybridity borders on syncretism because of their common liberal creed and Eurocentric culture.

The hybridity of Muslim youths in the West, more visible as it is because of their creedal and racial distinctiveness, reflects a new concept of citizenship that I believe is evolving from the "crisis of liberalism" in the post-Westphalian Western states.

NOTES

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³ McLean, George F., *Ways to God: Personal and Social at the Turn of the Millennium* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1999), p. 266.

⁴ Berger, Peter L., *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), pp. 38-39.

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⁶ Stumpf, Samuel Enoch, *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1975), p. 467.

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⁸ The Qura'n, XLIX: 13.

⁹ MacKey, Sandra, *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation* (New York: Dutton, 1996), p. 94.

¹⁰ Author's interview with Baroness Pola Uddin, the House of Lords, London, November 13, 2000.

¹¹ Author's interview with Professor Mahbub Ullah, Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 25, 2003.

¹² Gellner, Ernest, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 15.

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¹⁴ Malik, Mustafa, *The Umma in the West*, to be published.

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¹⁷ Modood, Tariq, "Introduction: The Politics of Multiculturalism in New Europe," in Modood, Tariq and Pnina Werbner (eds), *The Politics of Multiculturalism in New Europe: Racism, Identity and Community* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1997), p. 10.

¹⁸ Rutherford, Jonathan, "The Third Space: Interview With Homi Bhaba," in Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Laurence and Wishart, 1990), p. 211.

¹⁹ Anderson, Benedict, "Exodus," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20 (Winter 1994), pp. 323-4.

Chapter XI

Thai Theravada Buddhist Understanding of Non-attachment: The Middle Way for Culture and Hermeneutics in a Global Age

Veerachart Nimanong

Introduction

- I. The (Thai) Theravada Buddhist Understanding of Non-Attachment
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INTRODUCTION

This paper is to investigate a new alternative mode of thinking to supplement the most advanced philosophical hermeneutics, the “Fusion of Horizons”, which H.G. Gadamer developed on phenomenological and existential bases. My thesis is that the culture and civilization derived from the fusion of horizon based on an emphasis on substance may not be enough to cope with the present world problems. They likely have arisen from attachment, resulting in an unsustainable development of freedom, because, they possess elements of competition or relations with adversarial, minimal redress, with affront and confrontation, and finally with conflict. I will propose the Theravada Buddhist concept of ‘non-attachment’ (*annupadana*), based on an emphasis on non-self (*anatta*) intended to go beyond the two concepts of existence and non-existence in order to constitute an alternative mode of thinking as dialogical hermeneutics across cultures for self-realization in a globalization age. The terms ‘non-attachment’, ‘non-self’ and, ‘the middle way as the way beyond’ will be intentionally used in this mode to character-

ize the Buddhist context and to supplement, but not deny the conventional self. Non-attachment is regarded as a ‘gradual path’ (*anupubbamagga*) and ‘skillful method’ (*upayakosala*) to cultivate the conventional self and to realize the non-self. The non-self theory is a dialogue of doctrine and religious experience, which will eventually lead to, respectively, cooperation, freedom, maximal cooperation, understanding and harmony, respectively.

It is believed that the idea of non-attachment can be discovered in all religions and thus the idea of ‘non-attachment’ can serve as a necessary basis for religious pluralism or to use Gyekye’s terminology “cultural universalism” as opposed to “cultural relativism”. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a Thai Buddhist scholar monk would use the term “no religion” in order to understand religions. My objective is to investigate the Theravada Buddhist Hermeneutics of Non-Attachment in general and that of Thai Theravada Buddhism in particular and to elucidate and propose that a hermeneutics of Non-Attachment, already existent in all cultures and faiths as an alternative communication or dialogue to create mutual understanding among different cultures. At first I would talk about how Buddhists understand the concept of non-attachment (*annuppadana*).

THE (THAI) THERAVADA BUDDHIST UNDERSTANDING OF NON-ATTACHMENT

The Buddhist Understanding of Non-Attachment

What is Non-Attachment? It is possible to understand non-attachment in relation to attachment. Generally speaking, attachment to someone or something is a feeling of affection that one has for them. In other words, attachment to a particular cause or ideal is a strong feeling of belief in and loyalty to it. Particularly in Buddhism the idea of attachment means clinging to or grasping after, and is classified as of four kinds, namely (1) attachment to sensuality or sense desire, (2) to views or dogmatic opinions, (3) to mere rule and ritual or belief in the efficacy of rites and rituals, and (4) to ego-belief (D.III. 230). The last is more essential than the first three aspects. Therefore, non-attachment can be best understood under the rejection of a permanent self or the ego-belief through an analysis of the psycho-physical combination of human life. According to Buddhism, everything in this world functions under five natural laws, namely physical law (*utu-niyama*), biological law (*bija-niyama*), psychical law (*citta-niyama*), the law of cause and effect (*kamma-niyama*) and the law of cause and conditions (*dhamma-niyama*), (DA.II.432). The first four laws are essentially included in the fifth one, the dhammic law, which analytically can be both conditional and non-conditional. The conditional law is subject to change and cannot be controlled, but both conditional and non-conditional laws are non-self (A.I.285).

Buddhism does not accept the autonomous self of Hinduism or the Upanisadic thinkers, who say that the self is the inner controller of mind and body or in totality a person (Brh. Up. III, 7. 16-22). According to Buddhism,

the concept of person, when analyzed, is found to consist of five aggregates of materiality, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness, which are changing, subject to suffering and not able to be grasped as a self (S. XXII. 59). Hence the so-called person is a mere collection of the five aggregates or in short known as the psycho-physical combination. This can be explained in the following metaphorical form: “just as it is by the condition precedent of the co-existence of its various parts that the word chariot is used, just so is it that when the five aggregates are there we talk of a ‘living-being’ (*jivatman*),” (Vism. Ch.XVIII. p. 593-94). What is analyzed by Buddhists is akin to what David Hume also said: “For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure, I never can catch myself at any time without a perception. The rest of humankind are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement,” (Hume, 1975, p. 252).

For Buddhism, everything is empty of self-reality. Nothing exists in itself, for each existence is conditioned by some causes outside itself. The phenomenal world is in the state of continuous flux. All things, without exception, are nothing but chains of momentary events, instantaneous ‘bits’ of existence. “There is no Being, there is only a Becoming”, said Rhys Davids (1976, p. 56). Precisely, we can say that, the Upanisadic notion of being (*sat*), the Husserlian transcendental ego and the Sartrean conception of being-in-itself are not acceptable to the Buddhist (Mererk, 1988, p. 111). According to Buddhism, all phenomena are subject to the laws of causation.¹ There is nothing haphazard or predetermined. Every element, though appearing only for a single moment, is a dependently-originating-ceasing element because it depends for its arising and ceasing on what has gone before it. “Dependent Origination-cessation (causation) is said to have the characteristics of objectivity, necessity, invariability and conditionality,” (S.XII.20). Therefore, the doctrine of dependent origination-cessation or causation and the analysis of the five aggregates gives support to the non-self doctrine.

According to Buddhism, the idea of self is a mental construct produced by unwise attention, in which one fails to see things as they really are. The selflessness of things is difficult to detect because it is hidden by compactness. According to the Buddhist analysis of the psycho-physical combination, “the selflessness of body and mind is hidden by its compactness, likewise its impermanence is hidden by continuity and its suffering or unsatisfactory state is hidden by posture” (Vism.XXI. 640). The idea of self is considered as the manifestation of the strongest form of grasping, which is similar to what William James, the Western psychologist calls “self-love”, which is the center of all desires and actions (1950, p. 317). According to Buddhism, human beings have a tendency to cling to the five aggregates, namely matter, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness; and the five sensual pleasures, namely visible object, sound, smell, taste and touch (M.I.85). The Buddhist thinks that the grasping of the self is the main origin of suffering.

To bring suffering to an end one must get rid of its cause, i.e., the grasping of the self. It is said that the grasping man will intend to do unwholesome actions, the results of which will lead him to an unwholesome state of rebirth. According to Buddhism, man is the creator of himself through both his good and bad deeds done in the past and the present lives. The Buddhists believe in the wheel of life; man can be born as a god, an animal and a hellish creature due to his intentional actions. To rid oneself of kammic results and detect the selflessness of things and the body-mind combination, Buddhists are suggested to practice meditation. This meditation is divided into two kinds: tranquility meditation and insight meditation in order to see things as they really are, that is, as emptiness or non-self. The Buddhists can realize the emptiness of life and things through insight meditation, which is a phenomenological investigation of physical and mental phenomena (D.Sutta No. 22).

It is worth mentioning that the emptiness of the psycho-physical combination in Buddhism should not be understood as nothingness for the reason that it is what it is at the present moment, because it is part of dependent origination-cessation. The psycho-physical combination is empty because it is "empty of a self or anything belonging to a self," (S.xxxv. 85). As the most venerable Nagarjuna (150-250 AD), the founder of Madhyamika school of Mahayana Buddhism, has pointed out: "Since there is no element (*dhamma*), which comes into existence without conditions, there is no element which is not empty," (MK. xxiv.19). In this case, emptiness simply means conditional-ity or dependent origination-cessation of all phenomena.

Moreover, the Buddhist has a practical purpose in rejecting the self-theory. Like the other teachings of the Buddha, the non-self doctrine has Nibbana (Skt: Nirvana) or the cessation of sufferings as its purpose. In relation to the doctrines of kamma and Nibbana, three questions may be asked: The first question is that if there is no self as agent, what is it that performs action, accumulates and experiences the result of action? According to Buddhism, intentional consciousness performs action and also accumulates the result of action. When action produces result, it is consciousness that experiences it, but consciousness, which performs an action, is not identical with consciousness, which experiences the result. In fact they are neither the same nor different due to the law of conditionality. To say that the actor and the one who experiences the result are absolutely the same is to hold the eternalistic view, and to say that the two are entirely different is to hold the annihilationistic view (S. XII. 2. 18).

Who Realizes non-attachment? The second question is that if the mind-body combination is not self, then who realizes Nibbana? According to Buddhism, there is no self as a thinker behind the thought; it is the thought that thinks. In like manner, there is no self behind the realization of Nibbana; it is wisdom that realizes Nibbana. When wisdom, which is one of mental formations, is developed by means of "insight meditation" it sees the reality of things as impermanent, suffering and non-self. When the reality is seen, the concept of the phenomenal world is destroyed (M.III.244). Ignorance, de-

sire and attachment are eradicated and in their places arises wisdom. Then all forces that produce the series of rebirths in ignorance are calmed down and unable to generate kammic energy, because there is no more attachment and desire for existence. As such, Nibbana is regarded as the realization of things as they are: “Not constituting, not thinking out for being or for non-being, man grasps after nothing in the world; not grasping, he is not troubled; being untroubled, he himself attains Nibbana,” (M.III.244). This is the doctrine of non-attachment, which is the mode of Buddhist thinking.

Is Nibbana Annihilation? The third question may be asked: “Since Nibbana is regarded as the ‘authentic cessation of existence, Is Nibbana viewed as Annihilation or not’?” Nibbana is not self-annihilation, for there is no self to annihilate. If at all, it is the annihilation of the ignorance, desire and attachment of self. As the Buddha said: “In this respect one may rightly say of me that I teach annihilation. For certainly I do teach annihilation of greed, hatred, and delusion, as well as of the manifold evil and unwholesome things,” (A.III.12). All schools of Buddhism apparently deny the ontology of all phenomena, but they differ from each other in the aspect of the ontology of Nibbana. As Ven. Phramaha Prayoon Mererk² said, “the followers of the Buddha, however, hold different views on the ontological status of Nirvana,” (Mererk, 1988, pp. 160-163). The Sautrantika, for example, holds that Nirvana does not have a positive reality; it is nothingness. Just as space is the absence of a solid body or anything tangible, so also Nirvana is the absence of causes that are responsible for rebirth. Unlike the Sautrantika, the Yogacara maintains that Nirvana has a positive reality; it is not nothingness. The realization of Nirvana eliminates the unreality of the phenomenal world, but at the same time it is a discovery of store-consciousness (Lankavatara-Sutra, p. 62; Mererk, 1988, p.160). Yogacara’s idea of store-house is identical to the Upanisadic conception of Atman. Rejecting both different ideas, Theravada Buddhism maintains that Nibbana is not non-existence, but it is a transcendental entity, independently existent. It is an external, unchangeable state which exists by itself. Buddhaghosa of Srilanka rejects the view that Nibbana is non-existent. According to him, a mere fact that Nibbana is not apprehended by an ordinary man does not prove that Nibbana does not exist. Nibbana can be seen through the right means (the way of morality, concentration and wisdom) (Vism. XVI. 508). Nibbana is not non-existence; rather it is positive, permanent reality. To substantiate his view, Buddhaghosa quotes the Buddha’s words:

Monks, there is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an unconditioned. If that unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned were not, an escape from what is born, become, made, conditioned would not be apparent. But, since, monks, there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, therefore, the escape from what is born, become, made, conditioned is apparent. (Ud. 80-81).

Thus, Nibbana as conceived in early Buddhism is not non-existence or utter annihilation. It is the realm of being, which transcends the phenomenal world (Mererk, 1988, p. 162).

What is the meaning of Buddha's silence? This question can be understood through two discourses, concerned with the questions, and later coined as undetermined questions. In Buddhism, not only is the reality of Nibbana indescribable, but also the destiny of the liberated person (*arahant*), i.e., one who attains Nibbana. In the time of the Buddha, a Brahmin came to ask the Buddha the following four questions:

1. The liberated one exists after death?
2. The liberated one does not exist after death?
3. The liberated one exists and does not exist after death?
4. The liberated one neither exists nor does not exist after death?

(M.I.484)

The Buddha did not give a specific answer to any of these questions. One of the reasons for the 'silence' of the Buddha is that the phrases 'exists', 'does not exist', etc., are misleading, because they have a spatio-temporal connotation and hence are inapplicable to Nibbana, which is beyond space and time and cannot be located. The mystery of the liberated person lies in the fact that he is no longer identified with any of the five aggregates by which the ordinary person is known. The descriptions of his destiny in terms of the four alternatives mentioned above are out of place (Mererk, 1988, p. 163).

Another set of the undetermined questions was asked by another Brahmin: "Is the world eternal, or is it not? Is it finite, or is it not? Is life in the body, or in the soul? Do beings continue after death, or do they not? The Buddha explained that if he did not speak of them, it was because they did not come within the ambit of his primary concern. His primary concern was limited to a more urgent need for humanity. Then the Buddha narrated an example: 'Imagine that a man is going through a jungle. Halfway through he is shot by a poisoned arrow. If the poisoned arrow remains in his body, he will die. The injured man says: "I will not pull out this arrow until I know who shot it, whether he is tall or short, fat or lean, young or old, of a high caste or a low caste." The man will die before he knows the right answers,' (M.I.427). "Gautama viewed human suffering, and the liberation from it, exactly as modern psychologists and physician would look at mental or bodily patients in their clinics," (Fernando and Swidler, 1986, p. 105).

Thai Buddhist Understanding of Non-Attachment

Thailand is the land of the yellow robe, because in 2002 A.D. Thailand had 36,117 Buddhist temples and 405,476 monks and novices. Buddhism in Thailand is known as Theravada Buddhism,³ "which can be traced back to the eighteen schools of early Buddhism in the time of the Emperor Asoka, who supported the third Buddhist Council in India," (Bapat, 1987, p. 98). Thailand,

known in the past as Siam, is a small country with an area of approximately 200,000 square miles and a population of 63,000,000 million, out of which the Buddhists are 95 percent. The King, although a protector of all religions, namely Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, is a Buddhist, and he is the ultimate reference in administrative matters pertaining to the Buddhist Monastic Order. In 1956 His Majesty King Phumipol Adulyadet resided at Bovoranives temple as a monk for a period of two weeks, and by this action gave royal support to the observance of the Buddhist 2500th jubilee year (Nimanong, 2002, pp. 361-364).

At present in Thailand, there are two prominent Buddhist scholar monks, whom Thai Buddhists revere and listen to. One is Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu⁴ or in short Buddhadasa and the other monk is the most venerable Payutto Bhikkhu⁵ or Payutto only. Payutto said that the history of the Thai nation is also the history of Buddhism. The Thai nation originated over 2,300 years ago. Also in that same period Buddhism came and has played an important part in the Thai history ever since (1990, p. 11-13). Samuel P. Huntington is right in saying that a Theravada civilization does exist in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia (1997, pp. 47-48). But he might be wrong for two reasons in saying that, "Buddhism, although a major religion, has not been the basis of a major civilization," (1997, p.48). One reason is that Buddhism actually still remains in India, its birth place, especially the Madhyamika School of Buddhism, which was found by Nagarjuna (Bapat, 1909, pp. 106-108). Another reason is that if it is true that Buddhism no longer exists in India, its birthplace, and no people in India identify themselves as part of a Buddhist civilization, the truth of dependent origination-cessation as the nature of things is there (*dhammathiti*) in the nature.

Payutto sees the danger of attachment to views or dogmatic opinions (*ditthuppadana*) as the priority to escape from in this global age. According to him, ideology is based on the dogmatic opinions or wrong views. He commented: "In the preceding decades we experienced problems with ideologies. There were two major schools, which had split the world into camps. Now the contention between these ideologies has petered out, but we have not resolved the problems of nationalism, racism and sectarianism. So we come back to the problem of dogmatic opinion or ideology to find a solution," (1993, p.7). According to him, three dogmatic opinions or wrong views have controlled modern civilization. The first is the wrong perception towards nature that humankind is separated from nature and must control nature according to its desires. The second is the wrong perception denying that there are fellow human beings: to be a human being is to have desire, reason, and self-esteem (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 165). The last wrong perception concerns the objective of life, namely, that happiness is dependent on an abundance of material possessions (1993, p. 7). He said thus: "Being held under the power of these three wrong perceptions, their resulting actions become kamma on the social level," (1993, p. 8). This is the new understanding of kamma in the global age. According to Payutto, in the past decades, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities were influenced by the afore-mentioned wrong views,

therefore humankind at present is encountering many problems of nature and environment, conflicts and competition. According to him, when right view is incorporated into the mind of people and even into sciences and branches of learning, all those people's minds and branches of learning will be well-based. For example, the physical sciences, applied sciences and technology would have a relationship with nature that is characterized by a pure desire for knowledge, rather than an impure desire to exploit nature. Like Payutto, Heisenberg wrote that natural science always implies the presence of man. The object of study in natural science is not nature itself, but nature as the object of human problems (Jurate Morkuniene, 2003, p2). M. Wertheimer also said that man finds himself in the centre of the world. He is no longer considered the ruler, conqueror or master of the world (or nature), but only the main actor or worker (quoted in Jurate Morkuniene, op.cit.).

Let us turn our attention to Buddhadasa's understanding of non-attachment. According to Buddhadasa, the fundamental problem of human existence is attachment, which leads to pride, selfishness, and egoism. Since religions' basic concern is with human existence, it must aim to solve the problem of human attachment. Buddhadasa is convinced that it is necessary to dismantle the gap between the layman life and the monastic life. According to him, monkhood can be cultivated while one remains in his life as layman. Buddhadasa sees kamma, merit, rebirth, Nibbana as things of the present, as concrete not abstract. Moreover, because of his dissatisfaction with the traditional interpretation of the scripture, he developed an alternative hermeneutics or interpretative approach to the canonical scriptures, which was called by him 'everyday language- dhamma language' (*phasakhon-phasatham*). Human language is used and understood by a worldly person, but dhamma language is used and understood by a religious person. The real Buddhist is the one who can empty his mind, or in Thai "*cit-wang*." The theoretical pivot of Buddhadasa's reinterpretation or understanding of Theravada doctrine is the notion of *cit-wang*, "voided-mind" or "freed-mind" of the self-centeredness that leads to attachment, craving and suffering. *Cit-wang* denoted a state of mind, being detached or free from moral impurities and being in a state of peace and equanimity, the foundation of Nibbana. For Buddhadasa, *cit-wang* is the key to understanding the religious goal of Buddhism and is the basis of the practice to attain that goal both in individual and in social life. He wrote a dhammic poem, which is still in the minds of Thai people:

Do work of all kinds with a mind that is void,
And then to the voidness give all of the fruits,
Take food of the voidness as do Holy Saints:
And lo! You are dead to yourself from the very beginning. (*Toward the Truth*. p. 95)

In placing *cit-wang* at the centre of his presentation of Theravada doctrine Buddhadasa has in fact drawn heavily on the concept "emptiness" (*sunyata*) of Mahayana and Zen Buddhist teachings. Surprisingly, Buddhadasa

studied all schools of Buddhism as well as the major religious traditions. He wanted to unite all genuinely religious people in order to work together to help free humanity by destroying selfishness. He reminded the Buddhists that we should not think that the teaching of non-attachment is found only in Buddhism. In fact, it can be found in every religion, although many people do not notice because it is expressed in dhamma language. Its meaning is profound, difficult to see, and usually misunderstood. He further said thus:

In the Christian Bible, St. Paul advises us: ‘Let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those that buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it’ (Cor. 7:29-31). It should be understood in the same way as our basic theme of Buddhists non-attachment. That is if you have a wife, do not attach to having her; if you have a husband, do not cling to having him. If you have painful or sorrowful experiences, do not cling to them as “I” or “mine” and it will be as if they never happened. That is, do not be sad about them. Do not attach to joy, goods, and worldly dealings, either. (*No Religion*, 1979, p. 12 or *Toward the Truth*, n.d., p.97)

Thus, for Buddhadasa, the key to religious harmony is that each religion’s doctrines should be interpreted correctly according to dhamma language. According to Buddhadasa, the real enemy of any religion is not other religions, but materialism that feeds on and cultivates the human instinct of selfishness for the sake of material development. Runaway materialism is what all religions should join hands against, for it has been the most powerful force in turning people away from spiritualism of all forms. The ultimate mission in Buddhadasa’s life can be summed up in his Three Resolutions, posted at the entrance of Forest Meditation Center. They are: (1) to help everyone to realize the essence of their own religion; (2) to help develop mutual understanding between all religions; and (3) to help to lift the world out of materialism. Indeed, this is an authentic dialogue in a global age.

NON-ATTACHMENT AS THE MIDDLE WAY OF CULTURE AND HERMENEUTICS IN A GLOBAL AGE

Non-Attachment as the Middle Way beyond Existence and Non-Existence

The middle way of non-attachment is a critical thinking way or the way beyond. Let us first consider the legacy of the Buddhist middle way. The belief in either an absolute being or in absolute nothingness is considered to be an extreme view. The Buddhist’s theoretical aim in rejecting the self theory is to dissociate oneself from the two extreme views, namely, annihilationism

and eternalism, which are regarded by the Buddhist as wrong views (Kvu. 62). For the annihilationist the self is perishable, whereas for the eternalist it is imperishable. The Buddha claims thus: "All dhammas are non-self" (S.IV.1). With this statement the Buddhist rejects all substantial and non-substantial views of the world, maintaining that everything is dependently originated or becoming. In this, the Buddhist standpoint is close to process philosophy.

According to the Buddhist context, the Middle Way is dialectic of negation as propounded by Nagarjuna. It goes beyond all these four propositions, namely: "it is the existence; it is non-existence; it is both existence and non-existence; and it is neither existence nor non-existence." According to Nagarjuna, the emptiness can be stated by eight negatives, namely "there is neither origination nor cessation, neither permanence nor impermanence, neither unity nor diversity, neither coming-in nor going-out, in the law of dependent origination-and-cessation or emptiness (Bapat, 1987, p. 107). Essentially, there is only non-origination, which is equated with emptiness. Hence, emptiness, referring as it does to non-origination, is in reality the middle path, which avoids the two basic views of existence and non-existence. To negate everything or all theories is to go beyond them. Moreover, Nagarjuna takes one more step to silence. The silence is said to be emptiness of the emptiness or non-origination. By this way, Nagarjuna's dialectic of negation cannot be taken as a theory, because it also negates itself. Therefore, to be called as non-attachment according to Buddhism, it must be without the bases of all identities. It should not be attached to any concepts at all. It should be free from egocentric thought.

Like the Nagarjuna's dialectic of negation, the position adopted by Buddhadasa is middle way for the conflicting truth claims of existence and non-existence.

The ordinary, ignorant worldling is under the impression that there are many religions and that they are all different to the extent of being hostile and opposed. Thus one considers Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism as incompatible and even bitter enemies. Such is the conception of the common person who speaks according to the impressions held by common people. If, however, a person has penetrated to the fundamental nature (dhamma) of religion, he will regard all religions as essentially similar. Although he may say there is Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on, he will also say that essentially they are all the same. If he should go to a deeper understanding of dhamma until finally he realizes the absolute truth, he would discover that there is no such thing called religion, that there is no Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam. (Me and Mine, 1989, p.146)

From the above quotation, we can see that three levels of conflicting truth claims are outlined by Buddhadasa, namely: (1) conventional distinc-

tions; (2) shared essence; and (3) emptiness. The traditional Buddhist hermeneutics of non-attachment rooted deeply on non-self eliminates the conflicting truth claims by going beyond religions, as in the Buddhadasa's third point. What separates Buddhadasa from those non-dualists is the second level that Buddhadasa proposes, namely, a lower level of dhamma language that moves beyond conventional distinctions, but which is not yet at the highest level that proclaims "No Religion". The full significance of Buddhadasa's three levels of religious truth can be properly understood by applying a metaphor of water: First there are many kinds of water: rainwater, ditch water, sewer water, which ordinary people can distinguish. At another level, however, when the pollutants are removed, these waters have fundamentally the same substance. Nevertheless, there is yet a third level of perception in which water itself disappears when we divide it into hydrogen and oxygen (Sharma, 1997, p. 152). If we want to apply the theory of non-attachment as the middle way in order to understand different cultures in a global age, we have to go beyond the many and the one. We can say in other words, it is neither the many nor the one. Likewise the task of the contemporary philosophy must go beyond simplicity and complexity, static and dynamics, rationality and irrationality, determinism and dialogue with reality, closeness and openness, and objectivity and subjectivity (Morkuniene, 2003).

Thai Buddhist Culture

According to Buddhism, the Middle Way is actually taken as the foundation of Buddhist culture and values and it is taken as a sustainable path for all activities. The middle way consists of eight principles of practice called the Eightfold Noble Way (D.III.312). The eight ways or paths are numbered as right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration and right mindfulness. They can be classified into three groups, namely the group of moral conduct, the group of meditation and the group of wisdom. According to Piyasilo Bhikkhu, the middle way is expressed in contemporary language as ecoculture, autoculture and metaculture. They are explained as follows: (1) ecoculture is moral conduct, consisting of right speech, right action and right livelihood; (2) autoculture is meditation, consisting of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration; and (3) metaculture is wisdom, consisting of right understanding and right thought, (1988, p. 12). Ecoculture is to preserve the nature, autoculture is to strengthen one's mind, and metaculture is to cultivate one's wisdom and co-exist with others peacefully.

Eventually, Theravada Buddhist culture must be cultivated step by step, known as the gradual path of Buddhism. Nibbana is attainable not only in theory, but also in practice, to attain which, one has to follow the way of life conducive to the cessation of suffering. This way of life is governed by the standards of moral conducts generally regarded as Buddhist ethics. This is known as the 'Middle Way' (*Majjhima-patipada*) because it avoids two extremes: one being indulgence in sensual pleasure, the other being self-mor-

tification (S.LVI.11). Moral conduct should be perfected first, for morality is a mode of intention present in one who abstains from killing, stealing, etc., or in one who fulfils the practice of duties (Vism.1.6). Having acquired the moral habit, one is capable of practicing meditation, three factors form parts of the Buddhist method known as ‘tranquillity meditation’ (*samatha-bhavana*). After that preparation, one is capable of practicing the group of wisdom practice known as ‘insight meditation’ (*vipassana-bhavana*). Heinrich Dumoulin notes that, “the ethics of Buddhism has stressed the universal norms, which are constant and applicable to everyone. They should not conflict with human nature. The doctrine of the middle way that the Buddha proclaimed is a humanistic ethic,” (1976, p. 25).

G.F. McLean⁶ remarked: “Today the horizon is no longer particular, but universal and all encompassing, due in part to the development beyond the cold war of a unipolar and all-inclusive economy, to the emergence of a series of interlocking regional and world wide organizations such as the United Nations, to the promotion of world wide standards and cooperation in the fields of the environment, health and education. And perhaps most of all is due to the present flow of information. All of these constitute a new global whole in which the issue of culture of how to cultivate the soul becomes the basic human issue,” (2003a, p. 119). Buddhists also need to cultivate their minds to attain the final truth and live their lives peacefully with others in the global age. The Buddhist monks nowadays are working hard to cope with contemporary problems in a global age that often accompany technology and information development. Buddhist culture and education are centered on the gradual path of mental perfection through moral conduct, meditation and wisdom. This cultural aspect of Buddhism has had deep influence in the Thai arts, traditions, learning and on the character of the people, whose manner of thinking and acting it has molded. In short, it has become an integral part of Thai life. The charm that has caused Thailand to be called the Land of Smiles undoubtedly comes from the influence of Buddhism over her people (Payutto, 1990, p.11). They celebrate New Years day not only on January 1, but also on April 13 and 14. The April 14 is specially regarded as an Elders’ Day. Thai society attaches great importance to older persons. The concept of gratefulness towards elderly persons and nature is well ingrained in Thai society (http://www.thaimain.org/cgi-bin/newsdesk_perspect.cgi).

Hence the Buddhist culture is in conformity with the meaning of culture as defined by Professor McLean: “Culture is derived from values and virtues of a people that set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised towards the realization of civil society,” (2003, p.15).⁷ This term is further explained by Professor Kwame Gyekye,⁸ according to whom, “culture is an enactment of a community of people, not of an individual, created in the attempt to negotiate the problems that arise in the context of a people’s particular situation” (1999, p. 20). It is a value conducive to the well-being of humans: “all other values are reducible ultimately to the value of well-being,” (Gyekye, 1999, p. 26).

Gyekye encourages the people in any society to step beyond the wall of culture through “common human understanding,”⁹ which corresponds to the idea of ‘right understanding’ (*sammaditthi*) in Buddhism (D. II. 312). Common human understanding can be obtained through reflection upon what Gyekye called value and disvalue in the course of daily life experience. The value and disvalue experiences of human beings, which are known in Buddhism as ‘worldly conditions’ (*lokadhamma*)¹⁰ generate common human understanding or right understanding in the Buddhist context. There are two levels of common human understanding, one concerns a specific human society, and plays its role at the very base of an organized and functioning human society and culture; the other is transcultural or intercultural conversations beyond cultures.

Transcultural or intercultural conversations help human beings in different societies or followers from different religions to understand each other. At this stage the transformation of cultures or what is called by Gyekye cultural borrowing or cultural appropriation with mutual understanding is possible. Sir Isaiah Berlin states: “Intercommunication between cultures in time and space is only possible because what makes men human is common to them, and acts as a bridge between them.”¹¹ In order to attain the stage of beyond-culture, Gyekye proposed many approaches, such as a critical approach against cultural relativism, the incommensurability thesis and ethnocentrism in support of cultural universalism, the common good, cultural borrowing and real options in order to achieve humanistic morality and globalization.

William J. Klausner, born in New York City in 1929, went to Thailand in 1955 to undertake his post-graduate ethnographic research in a small village in Northeast Thailand focusing on cultural barriers to modernization. He spent more than half of his life, i.e. forty years, in this second home, where he himself immersed in a social and cultural environment of Thailand (*Thai Culture in Transition*, 1998, pp.1-15). He takes the following features proper to modernization: the dramatic development of transportation and communication networks, globalization of the economy, increased industrialization, and the growth of the service sector. To these he adds educational opportunities, increased geographical mobility, and rural electrification, coupled with the seemingly irresistible invasion of egalitarian and individualistic values, as well as Western food, music, entertainment, dress and language, all of which have influenced Thai culture. This transformation of Thai culture inevitably has brought about social, economic and political changes, some quite revolutionary in their impact. To match the economic changes in the rural areas, urban Thailand, and particularly its capital have witnessed a revision of traditional Thai corporate culture. Family control, personal favors in recruitment, and consensus building are slowly giving away to professional management, quality control, performance reviews and merit promotions, with an emphasis on creativity, initiative, and more aggressive and confrontational decision-making, in which profit is the bottom line. This cultural transformation is in line with Gyekye’s conception of cultural transformation that “cultural borrowing is a historical phenomenon; through encounters between peoples,

cultures have borrowed from one another, appropriating values, ideas, and institutions from other cultures,” (1999, p.39). Klausner further remarks: “while Eastern traditional values are undergoing dramatic change, in the West, many have increasingly come to appreciate the healing properties of non-judicial conflict resolution and consensus, communal and family solidarity, and avoidance of confrontation so often associated with the East ... a core element of Thai culture is the avoidance of confrontation. Expressions of antisocial emotions such as anger, displeasure and annoyance are to be avoided at all costs. Another core element of traditional Thai culture is emotional distance. One should not become too attached, too committed (Ibid., p.4-5). These are the Buddhist elements of Thai culture rooted in the concept of non-attachment.

These unique characteristics of Thai cultures can be traced back to cultural Buddhism, in other words, to popular Buddhism, which is different from genuine, doctrinal or intellectual Buddhism. Cultural Buddhism is usually associated with some basic moral rules, observance of rituals and participation in religious ceremonies and worship. But Buddhism of the intellectuals offers a unique system of psychology and philosophy (Payutto, 1990, p. 13). The Buddhists nowadays will have to admit mindfully the cultural aspect of Buddhism as a way leading to liberation.

Thai Buddhist Hermeneutics

As has already mentioned, there are two kinds of religion in Thailand, namely genuine or intellectual or doctrinal Buddhism and popular or cultural Buddhism. The cultural Buddhism is eventually a sort of hermeneutics for doctrinal Buddhism and vice versa. In Buddhism there are two levels of dhamma, called the dependent origination (*samsara*) and dependent cessation (*nibbana*) (S.II.1). In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, there is an interpretative principle based on advice given by the Buddha on his deathbed on how to deal with statements on the doctrine which are disputed:

Then, monks, you should study well those (disputed) paragraphs and words, and investigate whether they occur in the discourse (*sutta*), and compare them with the discipline (*vinaya*). If having investigated the *sutta* and compared with the *vinaya* they can neither (be found) in the *sutta* nor (found to be) comparable with the (teachings in the) *vinaya* then you should reach agreement on these points that they are certainly not the words of the Bhagava (the Buddha), and that the bhikkhu in question (who made the disputed statement) has incorrectly remembered (the Buddha’s teaching). You should discard those statements completely. (S.II.1)

The principle of interpretation laid down here is that disputed statements on the doctrine should be compared with the recorded words of the Buddha, the book of discourse (*sutta*), and with the ethical principles recorded

in the book of discipline (*vinaya*), to gage whether they are accurate and in accord with Buddhist ethical principles. The Buddha gave this strict and literal interpretative method at a time when Buddhism was an oral tradition. The Buddha's statement in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta is thus meant as an injunction to monks to adhere closely to the actual teachings of the Buddha, which they had committed to memory.

The tradition that there are two levels of the Buddha's discourses has been systematically expressed in the Abhidhammapitaka (the deep and profound teachings) as the Buddhist theory of two truths, namely 'conventional truth' (*sammatissacca*) and 'ultimate truth' (*paramatthasacca*). The conventional truth denotes the everyday level of knowledge, while the ultimate truth denotes a form of knowledge based directly on underlying truth or reality (AA.I.95).¹²

However, once the Buddhist scriptures were written down, the interpretative principle laid down in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta was considerably revised. One of the most important methodological texts of the literary period of traditional Theravada Buddhism is the *Netti-Pakarana*¹³ as leading to the 'right construction' of the words of the Buddha: 'These terms and phrasing (in question) must be placed beside the *sutta*, compared with the *vinaya* and patterned after the essential nature of dhamma.'¹⁴ The principle that interpretations of doctrine should 'be patterned after the essential nature of the dhamma' is more general than that put forward by the Buddha, proposing that a view or opinion should be theoretically consistent with the doctrinal basics of the religion, rather than being a literal restatement of the Buddha's words, as required by the Mahaparinibbana Sutta.

The *Nettipakarana* develops the canonical interpretative principle into a form more appropriate to a literary tradition in which the demands of simple memorization have been lifted and detailed textual analysis can be undertaken. The principle that, scriptural interpretations should be patterned after the dhamma, amounts to a recognition that in a literary tradition faithfulness to the Buddha's teaching no longer necessitates a strictly literal adherence to his actual words, but may also be based upon views, which follow the spirit of the Buddha's teachings.

The *Netti-Pakarana* teaches that the scriptures can be interpreted at two levels: at the level of understanding the literal meaning of statements and terms, and at the level of understanding how those terms and statements point towards or are suggestive of Nibbana. Bond opined that the *Nettipakarana* developed the notion of the gradual path to Nibbana and employed it as a hermeneutic strategy for explaining the Dhamma. According to Bond, the *Nettipakarana* represents the social facts of ancient India, which generated two kinds of religious traditions. One was called the "disciplines of salvation," which were applicable to the renouncer, and the other one was "religious", which were characterized by the provisions they made to meet the needs of the people living in the society (in Lopez, 1988, pp. 33-35). To delineate the structure of the gradual path, the *Nettipakarana* set forth classifications of types of persons to whom the Buddha addressed his teachings and types of

discourses that the Buddha employed to reach these persons (see appendix II.). In the *Saddasarathajalini*, two types of textual interpretation are mentioned. What is said by the Buddha has to be understood either as meaning still to be determined (indirect meaning) such as the term ‘self’ (*atta*) or as meaning already determined (direct meaning) such as the term ‘impermanence’ (*anicca*), (quoted in Khemananda, 1993, p. 97).

Thai Theravada Buddhist Hermeneutical Theory of Human Language–Dhamma Language (Phasakhon – Phasatham). Buddhadasa distinguishes two hermeneutic levels of the Buddha’s words in ‘the Buddha’s discourses’ (*Suttapitaka*), calling these two levels “human language-dhamma language”. He gives the following definitions: Everyday language is worldly language, the language of people who do not know dhamma. Dhamma language is the language spoken by people who have gained a deep insight into the truth or dhamma (1974, p. 1). On the level of what Buddhadasa calls ‘language of truth’ (*phasatham*) there are many similarities among all religious adherents. Once Buddhadasa remarks:

The problem with most people who profess to be religious is their limited degree of real understanding; hence they think and talk on the level of ‘language of people’ (*phasakhon*), which never go beyond appearances to the higher truth of faith. Christians, for example, must understand that the idea of God is a concept essentially beyond the understanding of men and, therefore, transcends our usual distinctions between good and evil, personal and impersonal. (Buddhadasa, 1967, pp. 35-37)

The human language interpretation of a term is then simply its conventional or literal meaning while the same term’s dhamma language rendering is its spiritual or symbolic sense. Buddhadasa used the distinction to argue that many of the traditional readings and interpretations of the Buddhist scriptures in Thailand remain at the literal or human language level. In his work Buddhadasa places more emphasis on the notion of dhamma language. Let us consider some examples of his interpretations of the Buddha’s teachings in the book known as human language-dhamma language as follows:

Nos.	Terms	Human Language	Dhamma Language
1	Buddha	Gotama	Truth or Dhamma
2	Dhamma	Books	Truth or The Buddha
3	Sangha	Monks	Their mental virtues
4	Religion	Temple	Dhamma
5	Work	Earning of a living	Mind training
6	Nibbana	Place, city	Extinction of defilement
7	Devil	Monster	Defilement

8	Birth	Physical birth	Mental birth
9	Death	Physical death	Mental death
10	World	Earth	Worldly mental stage
11	God	A celestial being	The natural law
12.	Man	A creature with a body of a so-called human form	Certain high mental qualities
13	Life	Anything that is not yet dead	The truly deathless state
14	Hell	A region under the earth	Anyone who burns himself with anxiety

It must be noted that Buddhadasa does not in fact completely deny the cosmological reality of heaven and hell. He says: “True enough, the heaven and hell of everyday language are realms outside – though don’t ask me where – and they are attained after death. But the heaven and hell of dhamma language are to be found in the mind and may be attained anytime depending on one’s mental make up,” (2525/1982, p.61). Taken as a whole, Buddhadasa’s dhamma-language reinterpretation represents a systematic demythologization of the Buddhist scriptures whereby cosmological realms become psychological states and deities and demons are interpreted as individuals experiencing those states. Whenever a concept or term is traditionally interpreted in a way, which is at odds with a modernist or scientific worldview then that term or concept is demythologized and subjected to a dhamma-language reinterpretation. Buddhadasa’s method of dhamma language is similar to Bultmann’s method of demythologization, the purpose of which is to recover a meaning that is covered over by the garb of a physical cosmos, in which modern man no longer believes, i.e. the three-level universe of heaven earth, and hell (Palmer, 1981, p. 468). Buddhadasa’s two kinds of interpretation can be traced back to the *Nettipakarana* and the *Saddasaratthajalini* as mention earlier.

To assist people especially the younger generation to understand dhamma language, Buddhadasa utilizes such various methods as books, painting, poetry, radio broadcasting, television and so on. We can observe that nowadays television and radio are taken as powerful and appropriate tools to communicate between religions and cultures in this global age. “Human communication is authored on one hand and interpreted on the other. Media technology links authorship with hermeneutics, often tacitly and even covertly. A certain quality of voice may be said to ‘convey authority’ and thereby enhance the credibility of a message” (Cosmos, 2003, p. 5).

Thai monks and people understand dhamma language through poems, because the poem is one of hermeneutic ways to make truth as Rosemary Winslow also said: Poetry does not operate to reproduce existing personal, social, and cultural constructs, but rather to remake them (2003, p.2). King Rama V of Thailand wrote a poem based on the non-attachment to the self thus: “Born men are we all and one; brown, black by the sun cultured; knowledge can be won alike, but the heart differs from man to man”. This poetry

creates an impression that we are all called as human by birth. The worldly knowledge can be acquired by all of us at any time irrespective of race, culture or color of skin, but not the religious virtue or pure knowledge like love, compassion and so on. We differ from each other in heart or virtue, but not in brain or worldly knowledge.

Buddhist Beyond-Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue. Actually Buddhism does manifest a pluralistic view by proposing that all religions are equal in respect of making common reference to one single ultimate truth, which the Buddha had discovered. The Buddha as the discoverer of the truth, has opened the possibility for others to discover the truth for themselves. Because the Buddha as one who discovers the truth, rather than as one who has a monopoly of the truth, is clearly a source of tolerance. This leaves open the possibility for others to discover aspects of the truth, or even the whole truth, for themselves. The Buddhist acceptance of Individual Buddhas or Pacceka Buddhas, who discover the truth by themselves, is a clear admission of this claim. Thus other religions are equal in respect of offering means to truth, liberation or salvation. This idea paves the way for religious pluralism. Peter Byrne in his book entitled “Prolegomena to Religious Pluralism: Reference and Realism in Religion” lists the standard viewpoints of religious pluralism as follows:

- (1) All major religions are equal in respect of making common reference to single transcendent,
- (2) all major religions are likewise equal in respect of offering some means to human salvation and liberation; and
- (3) all religions are to be seen as containing limited accounts of the nature of the sacred; none is certain enough in its particular dogmatic formulations to provide the norm for interpreting others. (Byrne, 1995, p. 12)

Pluralism¹⁵ is the middle way beyond exclusivism and inclusivism. Hick, the eminent pluralist, considers exclusive and inclusive ways of regarding religions as no longer practical and indeed impossible. He supports pluralism. According to him all religions accept “the Ultimate Reality”, as one, (Hick, 1990, p.115). To say this is to accept the unity in diversity. But, for the Buddhist, to see unity in diversity is not sufficient to solve the conflicting religious truth claims. To put in dhamma language theory, we have to step beyond the one and many. That is to say we have to go beyond Hick’s theory of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. To go beyond is the middle way of pluralism. This distinction between human language and dhamma language provides an interesting approach to inter-religious understanding or interfaith dialogue.

The primary objective of dialogue is to remove barriers of differences among religions and exchange ideas. Dialogue is an unending patience. The process of dialogue is that of learning how to coexist peacefully with each other. “By dialogue, each culture presents its variety and difference, on the di-

alogue, a new idea of human being's co-existence and also a new humankind culture mode are coming into being," (Shipeng, 2003, p. 5). The spirit of tolerance, charity and freedom is characteristic of the "dialogue of the Buddha" and is especially evident in the Kalama Sutta (A.I.189). The Kalama people approached the Buddha with the following issues. Different religious teachers come to our city. They speak very highly of their own theories but oppose, condemn and ridicule the theories of one another. We are now in a state of doubt as to which of these recluses speaks falsehood. Then the Buddha said:

Kalamas, you have a right to feel uncertain for you have raised a doubt in a situation in which you ought to suspend your judgement. Come now, Kalamas, do not accept anything only on the grounds of tradition or report or because it is a product reasoning or because it is true from a standpoint or because of a superficial assessment of the facts or because it conforms with one's preconceived notions or because it is authoritative or because of the prestige of your teacher. When you, Kalamas, realize for yourself that these doctrines are evil and unjustified, that they are condemned by the wise and that when they are accepted and lived by, they conduce to ill and sorrow, then you should reject them.

From Kalama Sutta, one may conclude that there were varieties of religious beliefs in the Buddha's days. People have a great opportunity to examine and verify the teachings of many religious scholars in order to find out which was suitable for them and which was the road to the ultimate truth. When the different religious beliefs clashed, dialogue is the most desirable in situation for religious pluralism, for the purpose of mutual understanding and enrichment, for dispelling suspicion and prejudices, and for harnessing moral and spiritual values and so on.

A close reading of Buddhadasa's works reveals the operation of some implicit criteria. These are sociological in that he bases judgements of the inaccuracy of traditional readings of the scriptures and of the accuracy of his dhamma language readings on the social and religious consequences of those respective interpretations. He is concerned to end social problems that hinder improvements in human well-being as fundamentally a religious matter, saying that:

The true objective of the founders of all religions with regard to the completion or perfection of what is most useful and needful for humanity is not being achieved, because the followers of the respective religions interpret the languages of dhamma wrongly, having preserved wrong interpretations and preached wrongly to such an extent that the world has been facing turmoil and problems created by the conflicts among religions.

According to Buddhadasa, the anthropomorphized concept of God in Christianity is only one rendering of ultimate reality on the level of human language. In the Dhamma language, God transcends our usual distinctions between good and evil, personal and impersonal. To know God is to know things as they really are or from the perspective of the divine (1967, p.63). In Buddhadasa's view, Jesus like the Buddha, was in favour of the middle way, he lived it and taught or persuaded his followers to live it in order to avoid the extreme of being too loose or too strict in attitude and conduct. For example, such a middle way can be seen in the Bible: "Bend your necks to my yoke, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble-hearted; and your souls will find relief. For my yoke is good to bear, my load is light," (Matthew 11/29-30 in Buddhadasa, 1967, p. 53).

The sense of non-attachment as the middle way of dialogue can be seen through the speech of Dalai Lama. Regarding the conflict between China and Tibet with reference to Tibet's independence, The Dalai Lama has made clear that he no longer seeks independence for Tibet, and that he is committed to "the Middle Way." He has also said that the concerns of the Tibetan people could be addressed within the framework of the People's Republic of China (Craig, 2003, p. A23).

DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON

Hermeneutics as a Mode of Thinking

Principally speaking, to philosophize is to argue for or to argue against any particular philosophical view one wants to defend or refute by using argument or reasoning. In contrast, as George McLean said, to use hermeneutics is "to speak of the importance of dialogue as the interchange between persons and peoples. This is not at all the same as argument. In an argument, one looks for the weakness in the position of the other in order to be able to reject it as a threat to one's own position. In contrast, in hermeneutics one looks for the element of truth in the other's position in order to be able to take account of it" (2003, p. 34). However, when we deal with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, do we mean to accomplish both argumentation and dialogue or not? To use the middle way as the dhamma language is to go beyond both, that is, carefully to practice the dialogical argumentation. Eventually, learning to listen to others' opinions is more difficult than learning to speak because "by listening to someone from another tradition one is enabled to go more deeply into the resources of one's own tradition and draw on it in new ways for new times," (McLean, 2003, p. 35). Such an idea is a great example of non-attachment.

The purpose of this study on "communication across culture" is to exchange ideas and experiences on the existential or cultural dimension of life through hermeneutics and dialogue, to seek or indeed to exercise our mutual understanding and collaboration among different people from different part of the world. That has to be appropriately accumulated through Heidegger's phi-

losophy of existentialism and Gadamer's hermeneutics of universalism. Both are key figures in ontological hermeneutics. Martin Heidegger laid out his famous analytic of Dasein, the structure of human existence. He stressed the central importance of "understanding" as the essential forward-looking of human beings (Being and Time, [tr.], 1962, pp. 183-193). His successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer has taken to the task to uncover human existence and culture through history or what he calls pre-understanding, which lived consciously with its issues of human dignity, values and cultural dialogue (1991, pp. 258-261).

Phenomenological and ontological hermeneutics are appropriate for this global age because it can preserve the essential standpoint of the new subjectivity and opens the opportunity for dialogue and understanding in a global society. Phenomenology helps one comprehend ontology as an existential life-world. The point of emergence is that the ontology of the existential life-world can be best understood through the Buddhist doctrine of "dependent origination or inter-relation". But the divergence is that while theistic religions, like Christianity employ phenomenological techniques to grasp the ontologically existential feature of life, the non-theistic religion, like Buddhism, does this so as to comprehend ontologically the non-existential element of psycho-physical combination. For Theism, failure to understand being as existence or to use Husserl's terminology 'Lebenswelt' is taken as 'a learned ignorance' to use Cusa's terminology, and on the contrary, for non-theism, failure to understand being as being-of-non being or non-existence is a 'learned ignorance'. Eventually, the 'Lebenswelt' turn (Sugiharto, 2003, p.2) is the hermeneutic turn, as said Gadamer: "Being that can be understood is language" (1991, p. 474). Hermeneutic work is based on a polarity of familiarity and strangeness of experiences in terms of a story or language or forms of life or comparatively of the text. Thus Gadamer said, "the true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between", i.e. between the traditional text's strangeness and familiarity to us, between being a historically intended, distanced object and our belonging to a tradition (1991, p. 295). The basic tenet of ontological hermeneutics is established on the amalgamations of historical consciousness and temporal distance. According to Gadamer, "to have a horizon means not being limited to what is near but being able to see beyond it. A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small. Similarly, working out the hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition," (1991, p. 302). Gadamer continued: "To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand, not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion (1991, p. 305).

Gadamer's concept of "fusion of horizons" of knowledge or experience as human understanding of life and world is comparable to the Buddhist theory of knowledge or insight meditation, which focuses on an awareness of the contact between internal organs and external objects, resulting in feeling, desire and attachment. The contact in-between internal organs and their cor-

responding external objects is the true locus of Buddhist hermeneutics to use the Gadamer's terminology. To be properly aware of the horizon, Buddhists are advised to control feelings, which can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Michael S. Drummond is right in saying that, "the texts of the Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism identify the attachment to feelings at the normally preconscious level of sense impression, as a primary link for the arising of tension (*dukkha*), while arguing therein for non-attachment. This is because they (feelings) facilitate the arising of unwholesome mental states," (2002, p. 51). Moreover, Gadamer's fusion of horizon theory is in uniformity with the Buddhist ten principles of belief in the Kalama discourse in the sense that both theories emphasize awareness in making decisions. The fusion of horizon is a sort of dialectic, which consists of the principles of the hermeneutical circle and question-answer to render their support to the dialogue of cultural experiences. Precisely speaking, according to Gadamer, the dialectic of horizons consists of three interrelated steps, namely understanding or interpretation, explanation and application.

It is worth noting that Heidegger took the model of interpreting a text as the basic model for all human understanding and experiencing. Heidegger saw human being as essentially or ontologically hermeneutical, but Gadamer saw human's understanding as hermeneutical (Stiver, 1996, p. 92). Both disagreed with Schleiermacher's "authorial intent" as a useful method to understand the text. "Not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity as well," (1991, p. 296). Hence, Understanding for Gadamer is a constructive activity. Simply to repeat a text is not to understand it; "To say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all," (Ibid., p.297). Buddhists do not contradict this idea, but would say in different way. The Buddhists, to use dhamma language theory and St. Thomas Aquinas's proportional analogy, would say, "to understand is to understand in neither the same nor different way, if we understand at all". Because the reader of the book will have to take both the author's intention and the text into consideration in order to gain the proper meaning. More precisely, the past (authorial intent, culture, history) plays one part, but is not the whole. The present cannot escape bringing its new questions and traditions have evolved since their distant. When we interpret a text we have to fuse the past tradition or horizon with the present tradition or horizon. We cannot simply leap into past meanings in themselves nor can we impose our meanings on the text. We both forward and create a freshly fused meaning. Interpreting a text is very much like a cultural festival process. In celebrating a festival some past event, we neither merely duplicate the original event as it happened, nor celebrate it subjectively, each in his own consciousness. It includes parts of both of these and something more creative. A festival fuses the past and present into a new creative moment over and above both past and present. The fusion of horizon of tradition or culture is possible through the dialectic of understanding, explanation and application as said earlier. In this way, the dialogues of life, action or multi-lateral dialogue, doctrine or academic dialogue and religious

experience or spiritual dialogue automatically become possible among different religions and cultures. Gadamer's theory of the fusion of horizon is critical in its nature, which is identical to the Buddhist middle dhamma, so it cannot be alleged categorically as subjectivism, relativism, dogmatism or relative idealism (Bilen, 2000, p.101).

The most important point to be kept in mind is that Theravada Buddhism can go hand in hand with the Existentialism of Heidegger in the light of the ontology of Ultimate Reality. Buddhism has no objection to the term 'existential', which relates to human experience. As we have already discussed, the state of Nibbana and the liberated one is not non-existence; rather it is positive, permanent reality, and here and now in human life. This is comparable to the Heidegger's Authentic Dasein. Heidegger accepts the humanization of death and defines Dasein as being-towards-death. Death reveals itself as that possibility which is most deeply one's own. Death is for Dasein the capital possibility from which all other possibilities derive their status (Heidegger, 1962, p. 277). The way Heidegger uses phenomenology to analyze Dasein and its death is similar to that of the Buddhist contemplation on death. Death is said to be the main feature of insight meditation practice. In Buddhism, it is said that one who realizes the nature of death is dead before death. The Authentic Dasein or 'conscious human life' is called Nibbana in the present life of a liberated one (*arahant*). Heidegger's philosophy of life culminates in Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy. Karl Rahner and the Second Vatican Council have articulated the religious implications of this newly sensitive philosophy (McLean, 2003, p.6).

Once Arwind Sharma put his observation thus: "While Aquinas could find a middle way between the univocal and the equivocal through the analogy, Buddhism could only find the middle way between affirmation and negation in Buddha's 'roaring silence'," (1997, p. 112). The Buddha's silence is similar to that of Wittgenstein who ends his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with this famous statement, "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," (1961, 6.54). Regarding the mystical and religious experience, Wittgenstein is silent in the *Tractatus* but he is not mute in the *Philosophical Investigations*, which makes new subjectivity possible both in the Western and Eastern thoughts as already said above. As Professor McLean notes, "it could be understood in analogy to the replacement of a tooth in childhood, the more important phenomenon is not the old tooth that is falling out, but the strength of the new tooth that is replacing it," (2003, p. 6).

The unique characteristic of Buddhist hermeneutics is known as "general hermeneutics,"¹⁶ the effort of which is to form a general and universal methodology based on a coherent and correspondent philosophy of understanding. The well-known book 'the Guide' or *Nettipakarana* serves as a set of 'canons' for interpretation.¹⁷ Buddhist hermeneutics can accommodate both Schleiermacher's theory of the author's intention and Gadamer's theory of the fusion of horizon, because the former is identical to the Theravada Buddhist theory of "gradual path" and the latter is to the Mahayana's theory of "skillful means." The Buddhist hermeneutics does not ignore the author's

intention, because the Buddha is there as a human being. At the same time, the Buddhist hermeneutics opens the opportunity for the fusion of horizon, because the non-self or emptiness is there as a process of becoming. Therefore, the Buddhist hermeneutics starts from the author's intention to emptiness (Lopez, 1988, p. 65).

Hermeneutics as Cultural Understanding

The way Gyekye divided cultures into two levels of reality corresponds to that of Buddhism. In Thailand, Buddhism is divided into two kinds, namely cultural and doctrinal Buddhism just like the Buddha's discourses or dhammas, which also are divided into two levels, as discussed above. This is comparable to the hermeneutic circle, in which knowledge of the whole depends upon knowledge of the parts, and vice versa. The relationship between morality and culture could be understood better in the hermeneutics of "Beyond Cultures": "our shared humanity would prescribe a morality that stresses responsibilities and obligations towards others, whether as members of our own local community, or as members of the extensive human family," (Gyekye, 1999, p. 57). We need to apply the ethics of shared humanity, which is a base of civilization, not only within our family, but globally. Factually speaking, this ethics of shared responsibility must prevail in every culture in the world, and notably in Arab culture as well. It appears that, "although a united Arab world no longer exist, the system of Arab nations still behaves like a family even without a supernational authority," (Qing, 2003, p.7). In supporting cultural universalism, Gyekye encourages us to challenge the theses of normative cultural relativism, cultural incommensurability, and ethnocentrism. The sense of non-attachment is intelligible in Gyekye's 'aspectual character of cultural achievement' thus, "Recognizing the limitations of human culture can be a way to overcoming ethnocentrism," (Gyekye, 1999, p. 43). The concept of mutual understanding and collaboration and all could be perceived from Gyekye's theory of aspectuality and cultural whole, (Ibid., p.46).

According to the cultural aspectuality, real options are not one-to-one. If C1 borrows or adopts a dance form from C2, it does not at all follow that C2 will also borrow some dance form from C1. It may borrow some other cultural product from C1, any of C1's cultural creations or features that it (C2) considers worthwhile for the development of its own cultural life (Ibid.). In this manner, there will not be any clash of civilization and any end of history, because everything is dependent in origination. An example of non-egological treatment according to the Buddhist principle of non-attachment is exemplified by Warayuth Sriwarakuel¹⁸: "Being a Christian does not make me in trouble with my personal and Thai identity because I adopt the Buddhist way of thinking. With the principle of non-attachment I have no attachment to identity at all because I am conscious that we are new persons every moment.... So if someone happens to ask me, "Who are you?" In terms of religion, I would say, "I am a Catholic in baptism and tradition, Protestant in spirit, and Buddhist

in the way of thinking,” (2000, p.21). Therefore, Gadamer’s hermeneutics of openness, extension of understanding, transformation into a communion is really a global philosophy.

Non-attachment is applicable to the case of Fukuyama’s *End of History* (1992) and Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). Fukuyama was understood to be saying that humankind’s ages-long global conflict was over because everyone would seek to become liberal democratic capitalists. In contrast, Huntington was understood to say that certain societies (or civilizations) would never evolve into such modern Western states (<http://www.brothersjudd.com>). In short, both thinkers tried to posit the idea of existence and non-existence behind their assumption. The end of Fukuyama’s idea of political history is the rise of Huntington’s idea of the history of civilizations. But Payutto, whose mode of thinking is grounded in “non-attachment to the dogmatic opinion theory”, would go beyond the assumption of these. He remarked that, “the collapse of communist socialism does not spell the soundness of capitalism. On the contrary, it implies that, of the two predominant forms of materialism, as the failure of one has been witnessed, that of the other can be expected” (1993, p. 24). According to Payutto, liberal democracy will be sustainable only when it no longer consists of the three wrong views mentioned earlier. Liberal democracy must be strengthened by the development of human being, nature and environment, and inner freedom; otherwise it cannot survive. Moreover, with regard to the role of the present system of democracy, Buddhadasa remarked more interestingly that actually democracy, like communism can hardly resist human defilement or desire; both could be a means of taking advantage of, and destroying, others. Eventually, both democracy and communism can be an instrument to create peace only when they consist of dhamma or morality, and not only of freedom and liberty. The ideal form of politics is according to him, *dhammic socialist democracy*, in which dictatorial means are used to expedite moral solutions to social problems (1989, p.183).

According to Payutto, for human beings to live happily there must be freedom on three levels as antidotes to the three wrong views. The first freedom is called ‘physical freedom’, which means the freedom to live with nature and the environment. Secondly, in our relationship with fellow humans we must have ‘social freedom’. To have the social freedom is to be able to live safely together without being exploited by others. The third one is ‘inner freedom’, which is freedom on personal level. This is the freedom from the internal enemies, greed, hatred and delusion; internal freedom is the foundation on which social and physical freedom can be grounded. The inner freedom of Payutto is in line with the Absolute Unity of Cusa, i.e. the One, God or Being (McLean, 2003, p. 29; Deleonardis, 1998, pp. 48-50). Payutto’s concept of inner freedom is in conformity with McLean’s “Existential Freedom as Self-Constitution and Self-Determination.” This existential sense of freedom emerges as the dynamic center of our life. It is self-affirmation towards full perfection, which is the very root of the development of values, virtues, and cultural traditions. This sets in motion positive processes of concrete peaceful

and harmonious collaboration (McLean, 2003, pp. 9-11). Existential freedom, beyond attachment and accompanied with right views, will strengthen liberal democracy and unite human civilization to the infinity.

Buddhism accepts both the social self (everyday ritual) and the social non-self (beyond everyday ritual); there are two sorts of truth in Buddhism, namely conventional truth (indirect meaning) and ultimate truth (direct meaning) with special emphasis on the latter. To say that Buddhism pays more attention to the ultimate truth or social non-self is not to mean that Buddhists ignore the social self. The social self can be understood in terms of ‘deference’, which means acknowledging the values of the other person as well as of our own selves. Deference means also supportive interchange or a situation of social interaction, such as greetings, offers of help, remedial interchange and so on (Goffman, 1959, pp. 240). This social self is known in Buddhism as a social ethic elucidated in the Buddhist text (Sn. 259-268). For example, one of 38 highest blessings is reverence, respect or appreciative action, which is grasped in the context of the social self. But in addition to the social self, the Buddha teaches social non-self, which means forgiveness or non-attachment to the social self. Whenever the social self disappoints one, then the social non-self can help release such a disappointment. The social non-self is a sense of forgiveness, love, non-attachment, which transcend any expectation of the consequences of our actions. Self-identity in the light of right understanding through self awareness or heedfulness must be cultivated in order to solve the problem of conflict occurring all over the world. McLean’s sense of Heidegger’s Dasein or Buddhism’s Heedfulness (*appamada*) is that, “Done well this can be a historic step ahead for humanity; done poorly it can produce a new round of human conflict and misery”.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The highest aim of Buddhism is peace as the Buddha said: “Not any other bliss higher than peace (*natthi santi param sukham*).” Likewise peace is the highest aim of all religions and philosophical theories, so religions and philosophies are for peace; that is the implication of “diversity in unity” (see appendix III). To present the idea of non-attachment as based on the doctrine of non-self does not mean intentionally to object the idea of detachment as based on new subjectivity, but to supplement it. Rather, both perspectives depend on and supplement one another; self is non-self and non-self is self. In the terminology of the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination-cessation, it is because of self that the non-self arises and because of the cessation of self that non-self arises and vice versa. The doctrine of dependent origination-and-cessation or interrelatedness in Buddhism is comparable to both the dialectic of horizons or the hermeneutical circle and question-and-answer in the hermeneutical philosophy of Heidegger and Gadamer, and to the dialectic of “thick and thin”, and “sacred and the profane” of Michael Walzer and Mircea Eliade respectively.

Buddhism teaches its followers to discover themselves and to cultivate unlimited wisdom, purity and compassion in order to have great respect for human beings and nature for the purpose of their harmonious and peaceful coexistence with each other. Such a friendly attitude toward others and nature is well expressed by Ven. PhraThepsophon (Prayoon Mererk), the present Rector of the Buddhist University of Thailand in his book entitled *Buddhist Propagation for World Peace* (2002, p.98) as follows. When asked, “what will you do if your cuckoo doesn’t sing?” Three men answered in different ways. The first man says, “The cuckoo doesn’t sing? All right, kill it at once.” The second man says, “The cuckoo doesn’t sing? All right, I will make it sing.” The third man says, “The cuckoo doesn’t sing? All right, I will wait till it sings.” The first man in this story is very aggressive because his mind is full of hatred, whereas the second man’s mind is full of greed or desire for mastery over nature. The third man, cultivating wisdom and purity of mind, holds respect for, and compassion towards, the bird. The third man’s position represents the Buddhist attitude towards nature and other human beings; it also suggests Heidegger’s ‘new intentionality’ and the emergence of self-awareness of the human person in time (Dasein) towards human freedom and social progress.

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NOTES

¹ This causal law can be expressed by a formula : “when this is, that is; this arising, that arises. When this is not, that is not; this ceasing, that ceases.” Its general principle can be illustrated by a series of twelve factors: “Conditioned by ignorance are mental and kammic formations.... Conditioned by birth are old age, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair.... Through the cessation of ignorance, mental and kammic formation cease.... Through the cessation birth, old age, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair cease,” (M.III.63).

² His Royal Ecclesiastic Name is PhraThepsophon (Prayoon Dhammacitto [Mererk]) and he is now appointed as the Rector of Mahachula Buddhist University, Bangkok ,Thailand, which has 14 University Branches over Thailand. He was born in 1955, became a novice at the age of 12. While being a novice he graduated with the highest degree of the Thai traditional Pali studies IX and the King sponsored his higher ordination in the Chapel Royal. He got his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Delhi University, India. He is a monk of learning and administration.

³ Buddhism originated in India in 623 B.C. The Buddha (Enlightened One), whose personal name is Siddharta Gautama, was the founder. After he discovered his dhamma and preached it for 45 years, he died peacefully at the age of 80 years. Living Buddhism is divided into 2 broad traditions:

the first one is called *Theravada* (Elders' words) Buddhism, which is also known as 'southern' Buddhism or Hinayana (small vehicle in the sense of being a conservative school) followed by over 100 million of people in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. And the second one is called *Acariyavada* (later teachers' words) Buddhism, which is known as Mahayana (great vehicle in the sense of being a liberal school) Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism is further divided into 2 lines, (1) one is known also as 'eastern' Buddhism and followed by 500 to 1,000 million of people in the East Asian tradition of China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam; and (2) the other one is known as 'northern' Buddhism and followed by over 20 million in the Tibetan tradition (Gethin, 1998, p. 1).

⁴ Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's Royal Ecclesiastical name is Dhammaghosacariya and he was born in 1906 in the Southern Province of Thailand and he went forth as a monk in 1926. He established the Forest Dhamma Center in order to practice Insight Meditation in 1932 and passed away in 1989.

⁵ Ven. Payutto Bhikkhu's Royal Ecclesiastical name at present is PhraDhammapidok (Prayudh Payutto Bhikkhu), who is now the most accepted Thai Buddhist scholar monk in Thailand. He was born in 1939 in Thailand. He became a novice at the age of 13 and while still a novice completed the highest grade of Pali examination. He wrote more than 200 books, and one of those is entitled *A Buddhist Solution for the Twenty-first Century*, which earned the 1994 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

⁶ George F. McLean is Professor Emeritus, School of Philosophy and Director, Center for the Study of Culture and Values, the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., Secretary, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), USA. Dr. McLean, as a global teacher following the footsteps of Gadamer, is concerned to help students, coming from different countries, develop the art of understanding and of contributing something meaningful for others.

⁷ On the other hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind.

⁸ Professor Kwame Gyekye is an erudite African philosopher at the University of Ghana, who belonged to Ghana Academy of Arts and Academy established nearly forty years ago on the initiative of the then Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, its first Chairman.

⁹ According to Gyekye, this is what Immanuel Kant called *sensus communis* (1999, p. 31).

¹⁰ The worldly conditions according to Buddhism are 8 factors in number, namely, gain and loss, fame and obscurity, blame and praise, and happiness and suffering (A. IV. 157).

¹¹ Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, p. 11 (quoted in Kwame Gyekye, 1999, p. 31).

¹² More terms are further elaborated in the *Abhidhamma*, such as, the *conditioned* and the *unconditioned*, *lokiya dhamma* or *cariya dhamma* for the

layperson, which promotes well-being but does not end the process of rebirth, and the *lokuttara* dhamma or *sacca* dhamma for the renunciate, which leads directly to the cessation of rebirth and to liberation from suffering (Dhs., 193, 245).

¹³ The *Netti-Pakarana* is attributed to Mahakaccayana, an immediate disciple of the Buddha. It is not regarded as canonical by the Sinhalese and is not part of the Thai Tipitaka, but is included in the Burmese canon.

¹⁴ George D. Bond, "The *Netti-Pakarana*: A Theravada Method of Interpretation," in Somaratna Balasooriya (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*, Gordon Fraser, London, 1980, p. 20, quoted by Jackson, 1988, p.103.

¹⁵ Pluralism is the view that the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality centeredness is taking place in different ways within the contexts of all the great religious traditions (Whaling, 1986, p. 153).

¹⁶ Palmer divides hermeneutics into three fairly distinct categories: regional hermeneutics, general hermeneutics, and philosophical hermeneutics (1981, pp. 461-2).

¹⁷ In the *Nettipakarana*, every discourse contains two aspects, namely, verbal content (*byanjana*) and meaning (*attha*). Of them words consist of letters, verbal content, etymology, presentation (*nidesa*) and manner (*akara*). Meaning consists of the following six: explaining (*sankasana*), displaying (*pakasana*), divulging (*vivarana*), analysing (*vibhajana*), exhibiting (*uttanikamma*), and designating (*pannatti*). These six are called threads. Modes of conveying the meaning are sixteen: Conveying teaching (*desanahara*), investigation (*vicayahara*) and so on.

¹⁸ Dr. Warayuth Sriwarakuel is at present the Dean of Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, Thailand.

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APPENDICES

I. Buddhist Technical Terms Used in The Paper

1. Abhidhamma/Abhidharma 'higher teaching'; one of the three main divisions of the ancient Buddhist canon.

2. Aggregate the five aggregates (physical form feeling, perception, mental formation, consciousness) that together constitute a living being.

3. *Anatta* 'non-self'; the Buddhist denial of a permanent and substantial self.

4. *Arhanta* an awakened Buddhist saint.

5. *Atman*/atta self; belief the permanent self opposite to *anatta*/anatman.

6. *Bhavana* 'mental/ spiritual development' Buddhist meditation.

7. *Bhikkhu* a Buddhist monk.

8. *Bodhisattva*/*bodhisatta* one on the path to Buddhahood.

9. *Brahmin* a person who believes in Hinduism; a Hindu priest.

10. Dependent Origination-Cessation (*paticcasamuppada*) the Buddhist doctrine of causality.

11. *Dhamma*/*Dharma* the underlying law of reality; the teaching of the Buddha.

12. *Dukkha* ‘pain’; the unease or unsatisfactoriness which characterizes existence.

13. *Karma/kamma* good and bad actions of body, speech, and mind whose pleasant and unpleasant results are experienced in this and subsequent lives.

14. *Madhyamaka* ‘the middle’; alongside *Yogacara*, one of the two principal schools of Mahayana Buddhism.

15. Mahayana ‘great vehicle’; a broad school of Buddhism.

16. Nagarjuna 2nd century Buddhist monk and thinker, the founder of Madhyamaka school of thought.

17. Nikaya a division of the Sutta Pitaka, section of the Buddhist canon; the school of Buddhist thought.

18. Nibbana/Nirvana the ‘bowing out’ of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion; the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice; the unconditioned.

19. *Parinibbana* the final death of a Buddha or arhant; or another term for Nibbana/Nirvana.

20. *Pacceka-Buddha* a solitary Buddha, who could discover the dhamma, but could not convey his dhamma to the people. This category of Buddha will be born only in between the present Buddha and the Next Buddha. This paccakabuddha is different from the Sammasambuddha, who discovers the dhamma and could teach people.

21. Sangha the Buddhist monastic order of monks and nuns.

22. *Samadhi* ‘concentration’ or ‘meditation’.

23. *Samsara* the Buddhist belief in round of birth or the wheel of life.

24. *Sautrantika* ‘a follower of the Sutra or Suttapitaka, which is one of the three Buddhist main scriptures or canon.

25. *Sunyata* ‘emptiness’; a Buddhist spiritual term used to characterize the ultimate nature of things.

26. Sutra/Sutta ‘discourse of the Buddha’; one of the three Buddhist main scriptures or canon.

27. *Tathagata* ‘the thus gone/ thus come’; an epithet of the Buddha.

28. *Theravadin* a follower of the Theravada or ‘teaching of the elders’; a Buddhist school, which is taken as an Early Buddhism.

29. *Tripitaka/Tipitaka* ‘three baskets’; the three basic divisions of Buddhist canon.

30. Upanisads a set of sacred Brahmanical texts included in the Veda.

31. Vipassana ‘insight’, one of two main type of Buddhist meditation, namely ‘tranquillity meditation or mental calmness’ (*samathakammatthana*), and ‘insight meditation’ (*vipassanakammatthana*).

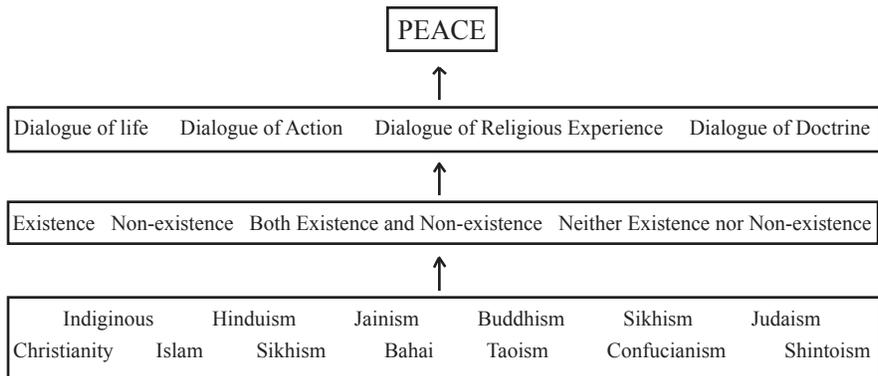
32. *Yogacara* ‘yoga practice’; alongside *Madhyamaka*; it is also known as *vijnanavada*.

II. The Gradual Path to Nibbana

<p>Nibbana</p>
<p>Fruition-Knowledge Path-Knowledge Insight-Knowledge</p>
<p>1. Right View 2. Right Thought 3. WISDOM-FACTORS III. Purification of View --- VII. Purification of Knowledge and Vision</p>
<p>6. Right Effort 7. Right Mindfulness 8. Right Concentration 2. CONCENTRATION-FACTORS II. Purification of Mind</p>
<p>3. Right Speech 4. Right Bodily Action 5. Right Livelihood 1. MORALITY FACTORS I. Purification of Morality</p>
<p>Those following and realizing the Middle Path, i.e. The Eightfold Noble Path, summarized in the Threefold Training, (namely, morality Factors, Concentration Factors and Wisdom Factors), should perpetually observe first the Morality Factors, then the Foundations of Mindfulness, which causes the Concentration Factors, followed by the Wisdom Factors, consisting of Purification and Insight Knowledge by graduation, in themselves. Finally they will attain to the Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, as well as the Extinction of all Defilements and Sufferings, that is, NIBBANA.</p>

III. Diagrams for Different Paths Leading to Peace

1. Peace as the Final Aim of All Religions



2. Hinduism and Buddhism for Peace

3 Trainings in Buddhism	4 Ways in Hinduism	4 Types of Dialogue	4 Modes of Thinking	Final Aim
Morality=Precepts	Bakti Yoga	D. of Life	Existence	Brahman
Morality=Charity	Karm Yoga	D. of Action	Non-existence	Nibbana
Concentration	Raja Yoga	D. of Rel. Expce	Both Ex. And Non-Ex.	= Peace
Wisdom	Jnana Yoga	D. of Doctrine	Neither Ex. Nor Non-Ex.	

Chapter XII

African Heritage in the Global Encounter of Cultures

Théodore Mudiji Malamba

INTRODUCTION

When we consider, on the one hand, the cultural heritage commonly called traditional and, on the other hand, the African philosophical thought which is being elaborated, we can notice that the African thought which has partially awakened in spite of it is towards an urgency and a challenge to “apprehend” a world in motion, a world which should be constructed with the participation of all human beings.

The idea “in spite of it” is important because it denotes the change of mental attitude and practice required for the actors of history,-- that African philosophy has to orient towards ‘pointing out’ from Africa. This idea is suggested by the advent of the world’s historical events that has embarked traditional Africa in the train leading our planet to the age of actual globalisation. Among those historical facts are mentioned the older religions called monotheism followed by less preponderant spiritual movements, philosophy to its asserted identity of western origin, knowledge applied as a place for the elaboration and the concretisation of moral, aesthetic and technical values.

Such an advent of events often appeared under the form of the imposition by a foreign will to which Africa has had either to resist or to participate in a forced or marginal way for prioritizing foreign interests. There was on this eventual trajectory such matters as the slave trade, colonisation, the neo-colonial phenomenon, etc.

Whether it wants it or not, contemporary Africa is embarked besides other continents, cultures and peoples of the same world, with all its history and hopes. A special moment of the cultural phenomenon, philosophy has this in peculiar: it is a critical thought. It can evaluate, from a viewpoint which is proper to it, the integral cultural phenomenon and all the preponderant aspects that are implied thereby. African philosophy as such--or better, philosophy in Africa-- ought to be an instance of awareness. Its task should be to provoke, in the African, required conditions of possibility in order to validly implicate the history, the tradition and the African potentialities within those of the world which is being built.

Consequently, it will require a fusion of horizons and an intercultural dialogue concerned with the originality of particular identities as audacious in the participation to the expectations and risks, for the advent of the cultural intercomprehension of real-life experience. It will take creative imagination to discover and to invent well-proven principles destined to help Africa to fully participate, with discernment and realism, in the movement of thought and favourable action of a globalised world that may prove better for all.

We speak of culture in order to retrace, from the cultural African heritage, the conditions of possibility of the dialogue between cultures of our globalised world. In other words, after we have attempted to fix the notion of culture in general, and with respect to the cultural African heritage, we will present the essential sectors in the horizon of their encounter in today's world, for a mutual and real care.

Culture, Its Historical Roots and African Characteristics

The history of humanity is a march and a perpetual struggle for life. In spite of its ambiguity, Benito Mussolini's sentence "Chi si ferma è perduto" (he who stops is lost) expresses as an essential an ineluctable truth. The stakes of the struggle for the individual and collective survival are varied. But if they detect and overcome their deficiencies, they build up in common a search for total liberty from unconscious instincts, historical determinism, blind forces and various constraints that block the way of final happiness.

The aspiration for happiness is natural to man. But the step to this state is chronically hindered. Man remains prisoner of illusions and myths that frequently make him wander or die. However, this first side carpeted with disappointments should not dissipate the second, on which the same person realises a fundamental and unique experience: discovery, the acquisition and the progressive constitution of a precious heritage of material, moral and spiritual values.

The health and salvation of humanity, at the end of the confrontation between constituent forces of the two sides, resides in the triumph of the culture schematically indicated by those values. Man's better future, i.e., the human being's new coexistence, should arise from the quantitative value of the human integral cultural project.

The deep and rapid transformations, as well as the historical characteristics of the humanity of the new age demands, at all levels, recourse to cultural potential to permit human beings progress in humanity and to take away the drift into obstacles. But what is culture? Culture has numerous definitions. George F. McLean, putting back culture into the classic philosophical tradition, refers to two Latin etymologies: that of *cultura* used by Latin writers such as Cicero; and that of *civis* (a word from which derive the terms: citizens, civil society and civilisations). The Latin word *cultura* has then the meaning of *paideia* (education) for Greeks and *Bildung* (formation) for German writers. And the culture of a people, according to the first meaning, denotes virtues and values that a people comes to accumulate in their past life in the search for realisation: "Together, these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised. This is called a 'culture'"¹.

The meaning to which is referred the word "*civis*" brings out the need of a person to belong to a group. The person, in his turn, gives to his fellow-members or fellow-citizens individual resources with which they will be inspired to identify themselves and understand their existence within the group.

The elements that include the group civilisation are: knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, laws, customs and all the group's attributes.²

In what consists the African culture? During the colonial period mainly, African cultural heritage was studied by social and ethnological sciences. The contents that are given support one another; make themselves clear and complete one another. They deliver a deposit of values which, considered according to the synchronic and diachronic axes, permit one to trace the definitional reference points, to bring a common idea and an essential concept of culture.

Similarly, F.M. Olbrechts understands culture as “a complex of customs and actions that allow man to lead his existence, in collaboration with other people”.³ According to C. Levi-Strauss, “Every culture can be considered as a set of symbolical systems in the first range of which are language, matrimonial rules, economic relationship, art, science, religion.”⁴

In every culture, there are elements of material nature (clothing, tools, food, housing etc) and spiritual elements (political, religious, artistic, scientific life, etc.). For R. Van Kets, the fundamental cause of a culture resigns in man's spiritual and material condition. In this global condition, the determining factor of culture is the human spirit, whereas in the elaboration of the culture, physical, material conditions of the human existence contribute to determine the progression, the structure, etc.”⁵

But more than a mere sociological phenomenon, culture is peculiar to human being and is based upon the pole of unity and of universality of the human nature. The culture which is diffused in the diversity of cultural elements is settled in a mix of objective elements inherited at the same time from the material of history and the transcendence of the spiritual in man. Considering dynamic place of limitation and liberation, of richness and of poverty, the cultural aspect is a mix of ambiguity to be constantly clarified towards every evolution and with sure reflectors.

The studies to determine the characteristic elements of culture go back in history and have concerned the societies of the entire world. Their reason of being and the results in which they end vary to the rhythm of the methods used. For Africa, the first voice was the one of the “ethno” tour. Ethnographic studies were said to be a free of charge descriptions - at least formally – and fundamentally directed towards the positive knowledge of the learned societies. Those of ethnographical nature aimed at a functional interpretation where the preoccupation of an analysis of cultural facts was to achieve other objectives, and not the declared ones.

The ethnographical approach is illustrated by the “*Manuel d'ethnographie*” of Marcel Mauss. This book is a classic of the saturated period of the eruption of cultural phenomena of the “societies without writings.”⁶ As to the ethnological approach, it covers investigations and interpretations, in a given optic, that may be of philosophical, juridical, religious, etc., nature. They are generally tinted with a more or less apparent ideology but they never lack interest. They have often been the source of fruitful critical thoughts. Among the writers who were said to be or are ranged at the ethno-

philosophical side, we can name Cyrille Van Overbergh, Tempels, Mulago, Kagame, Lufuluabo, and Mujinya. G. Devreux is renowned for a work entitled *Ethnopsychanalyse complémentariste*⁷ whereas researchers in arts of the “people without writings” like Michel Leiris, Jean Lalande, Engelbert Mveng are said to do “ethno-artistics.”

“Africanity” is the appropriate word to designate the results which this range of studies aims at or achieves. It consists of a unity constituted of a set of elements peculiar to the societies of traditional Africa. It appears in the content of social and psychological similarities; it drinks from the same roots of physical and human nature, and inherits secular internal exchanges to a continent preserved along time from external trends, but which today is forced to open itself.

The common elements that weave the vast unit, or the contents of Africanity,-- Jacques Maquet’s work, for instance--, point to cultural domains:

Techniques of production (eg., to cultivate), economy (eg., to work in groups on collective fields), political (eg., taking decisions in unanimity and not in majority), kinship (eg., solidarity), family (eg., to have many wives), religion (worship of ancestors), philosophy (conceive, under the multiplicity of livings, the unity of vital force), art (to represent, in an expressionist way, a mental image of man), etc.⁸

If it is true to assert, without any prior judgement, that it is through a similar range of ways of being and of doing that Africanity spreads as a cultural tradition, then it is there one should read what makes particular the African tradition; and these contents should be, afterwards, submitted to the criteria of a positive evolution. Their identificatory interest does not escape any person towards the stakes exposed to the confrontation and to those promised to the dialogue of cultures in the age of globalisation.

According to sociologists,--Georges Balandier, for instance--, the originality of the African culture is constituted by three typical traits:

- 1) A vitalistic philosophy based upon the choice of life, contrary to the West where the choice of drama is cultivated;
- 2) A surprising political inventiveness carried by a supreme capacity of conflict- resolution, contrary to the Western rigidity of confrontation;
- 3) An extraordinary safeguard of its own cultural identities, with another way to engage the history.⁹

In previous times, many placed the sign characteristic of Negro cultures in the animism which was said to be the religion of the African Negro or again in the negritude.¹⁰ One fact admitted by all and which should be mentioned here is the centrality of religion. According to Professor Atal, commenting on Mulago, it is at the foundation and it is the foundation, at the top

and the top of the cultural African edifice. It impregnates all the life of the African Negro: its individual, family, socio-political life. It has a psychological and social function of integration and of equilibrium. These fundamental elements should be placed in the unity of life and of participation, in the belief of growth, of decrease and of the interaction of beings: in the symbol, in an ethic deriving from Ontology, and in the ultimate end of man situated beyond himself.¹¹

CULTURAL SECTORS

By means of phenomenological reduction operating in its definitional contents, culture can be said to be constituted by what the thought and the free action of human beings produce in response to their existential problems. The major question - answers that history records through culture in connection with the African heritage - will be tackled later on, considering religion and morals, art and “management techniques,” especially the therapeutic, the political, and finally, the philosophical. These points will be discussed as to lead to a pertinent response relating to intercultural dialogue in the era of globalisation.

The Religious Dimension of Culture and Religion in Black Africa

When speaking of religion, it is better to observe from the beginning that philosophy is not itself an act of faith. But man and his environment, what philosophy attempts to understand and to throw light on, involves humanity implicated into an experience that is strongly encompassed by the religious element. “Religions,” G. Florival writes, “reveal to the individual and the group a dimension of hidden force which is the concern of an objective health or even of a protective desire towards the dramas of life and death.”¹² In fact the religious experience reveals human finitude in two aspects: one side visible to the reason and the other invisible. The ethical and spiritual reflection on anthropological reality respects, in its theological orientation, a worthwhile experience of the global human constituent. The man who is called to cultural dialogue here is not exclusively a rational human being.

Traditional African religion is centred on the mystery of life. Myths, rites and initiations, symbols and arts punctuate, narrate and celebrate that mystery of strong life or even of life-force. It is a life considered as a precious gift given by the Supreme Being, the master and the creator of the whole Universe, the Origin and the Supreme Master of life: He governs this economy by the intermediation of ancestors. Life is sacred: it requires respect, protection and promotion.

Within the African religions, what M. Eliade writes about the sacredness of the world keeps all its meaning. Taken as a whole, the cosmos is an organism: it is at the same time real, alive and sacred, in that it is manifested at the same time with the modalities of the being and of the sacred. The world as a whole is a place where “the ontophany and the hierophany meet”.¹³ The

Universe in which the religious man moves is a universe characterised by a hierarchised organisation and solidarity among all beings.

Man is situated at the intersection of the visible and invisible dimensions of the world. He is in vertical and structural relation with the invisible world: with the Supreme Being, his delegates, the ancestors and the Spirits. Horizontally, he keeps up a special relation of similarity with other men; he possesses a structural link with nature. The latter constitutes for him the environment, which permits him to give the material to his existence. Life is lived in a relation of union with the community. L.A. Opoku, quoted by Laurent Mangesa, well expresses it by this saying: "Life is when you are together, alone you are an animal"; and "every responsible human living should obey the ethical imperative to restore union when it is broken."¹⁴

But what is the actual state of traditional religion in Africa? Have they disappeared or resisted the intrusion of foreign cultures and religions? As we can notice, the African life today is characterised by a triple phenomenon: "a rush of the Africans into sects and into imported spiritualist movements of esoteric, initiative and salvific nature; the reappearance or say the 'rebirth' of ancestral religions and of traditional secret societies; and finally the proliferation of syncretic churches and sects founded by the Africans within the universal Christianity."¹⁵

Thus, the reappearance and the permanence in the African everyday life of traditional religions should be understood as the "there" of the sudden appearance of the epiphany and the captive seizure of the African identity and culture. There is, in fact, a resistance of those religions towards the old monotheist religions from the West or from the East. Mathias Gadou Dakouri speaks of three places of expression of this resistance: the actor of the resistance, the religious systems themselves, and the new monotheist religions."¹⁶

About the actor, there is always an increasing number of Africans, even in the intellectual and urban milieu, who continue to claim animism or, better, traditional African religions. This is to mean that far from disappearing from the life of the Africans, traditional religions still haunt many spirits and hearts. The diversity of neo-religious movements also rejoins this viewpoint. In fact, those movements, which borrow many facets, moving from messianism to independent churches, passing by prophetism and syncretism, try to recuperate and to perpetuate the African vision of the world and of man.

Anthropologists' classical theses read out, through those movements, a political will of resistance to the colonial order incarnated by the white man's religion. But we wonder if such an explanation is sufficient enough to give an account of the complexity and the recurrence of that phenomenon even after Independence. Two things seem essential to me in some cases. In fact there is, on the side the fact that this reading can still defend itself, considering the true reality of politico-economical independence of the African states,-- which are less a reality than a conquest, an aspiration. On the other side, the fact that those movements are said to be deeply a will of the reappropriation of the African vision of the universe as a place of deep rooted and foundational faith, or better, of African 'belief'.

In addition, traditional religions also show their vitality within monotheist religions: Christianity and Islam. For instance, to believe Mathia Gadou Dakouri, the will for the 'Africanisation' of Christianity can be seized as an attempt to reorganise the content of that religion according to a local cultural perspective. The African liturgy is an illustration. However, the example of the Congolese Mass rite is eloquent. The infatuation of the Africans for the charismatic revival is an element that corroborates that thesis. How many of these people do not go there for search of celestial favours: recovery, fecundity, work, happiness, marriage, etc!

The ethical facet deserves a particular mention. It is an indispensable level to the religious edifice. It is a school of life, which is opened by the symbolic marking of the initiation and introduced to a qualitative modality of perception, and of being. The access and the progression in the initiative existence are a melting pot of apprenticeship and of virtuous perfection. It comprises strong periods characterised by specific initiations, common or elitist, and divided according to the sexes. Those initiations transmit and irradiate a durable behaviour in the mind of the adepts and on the entire community. They are the source of a flowering of works of culture and of art.

Without going into descriptive details of particular rites of initiation, we raise some of the following general but common points. Required conditions of place and time: a reclusion and an isolation of variable duration, often during the dry season. Generally linked to the vital cycle,-- initiation intervenes, for boys, between adolescence and the entrance in the adult age; and for girls, during puberty, just before the marriage. Civic (customs, genealogies, myths of origins), professional (hunting, war, techniques), and sexual instruction is received. One is submitted to strict discipline and to hard physical and psychological confrontations. The external signs belonging to the initiation are composed of symbolic mutilations that can be circumcision for boys, excision for girls, facial incisions, the removal of a phalanx, the filing or the wrenching of the incisive teeth; the change of name, the imposition of the secret to be hidden from the 'outside',-- the semantic explanation of the initiation global symbolism at different levels of meaning. This implies a vision of the reality, which continues beyond the secular and immediate horizon.

Society offers itself to the youth as a global framework of functioning in which, initiated candidates are enrolled in a kind of melting-pot that socialises, homogenises, enables them to learn and to acquire techniques. This transformation establishes them in adulthood.

No gesture is fortuitous in the initiation's language. Physical mutilations are the raw expression of a will for the change of state in the entire human being. Sometimes in the founder myth, as in the case of circumcision with the Phende, the injury of organ is attributed to a natural cause, in the case of the cutting of a wild herb. People achieve the operation in the context of a rite and invent a set of facts and gestures which are the concerns of culture such as masks, dances, etc.

Initiation realises the function of integration, transposing the personality sphere from "to appear" to that of the "being". The point of departure

of the Negro African's initiative project is situated in the notion of person understood as a composite and an unachieved heritage, which is structured and acquired from a cosmic and social environment, which is opened to the individual self-creation and autonomy, which is integrated through the use and the intervention of that environment. Acted and acting by the symbolic of initiation, the individual humanises himself by culturalising and socialising himself. The society gives and takes his destiny. This occurs under the real and symbolic shock of confrontations, psycho-dramatic sentences and problem resolutions as well as complex tensions that define the break between the old and the new individual and social status. It denotes the real-life experience and the body. It is addressed to the imaginary and to the representation. Death and regeneration also appear as an essential tandem for the initiation's journey, carrying along the triple revelation of the sacred, death and sexuality,¹⁷ which knows, assures and integrates the initiated into a 'new personality'

The language and the techniques that are used or learnt have as main functions to "maintain and reproduce fundamental values of the village, of the clan and of the ethnicity", "as well as to set up an established order";¹⁸ to "vivify" (by means of festive joy, patiently prepared and contained on the occasion of an initiation rite), as if to imitate and substitute the self-control had by the child before his natural birth; to intensively unify, by means of feast and exchange games, the unifying meals, congratulations, wishes and benedictions which stress the communion and the group fraternity, publicly consecrating unions within and beyond family solidarity, to the village,¹⁹ and to the whole world and its beings, the invisible and those who populate it.

The successful initiation brings to the life of the individual additional meaning and a rich approach of its finality. Sentences of separation, of reclusion in a sacred field, of triumphant and reintegrating resurrection, replaced in a symbolic time-space, bring and develop it. Following the example of the community, the individual also reaches the main initiation dimensions that Louis-Vincent Thomas places "in the instructions and education which constitute social plenitude in sexual plenitude by possessing the procreative capacity, and in the ritual plenitude that makes man sacred".²⁰

This plenitude will characterise the mental attitude and the behaviours of the African who is called to an intercultural dialogue in the context of the challenges of globalisation. Which chances does the African have to find facing him a true interlocutor? And for which use will the fundamental values of a religious identity and cultural heritage be marked by the sacred character of life, the union between beings, solidarity between man and the nature, the relation with the transcendent? The answers to these questions should take into account the other announced dimensions of the African culture.

Arts and "Management Techniques"

The creation of not only useful but also beautiful works of art responds, above all, to man's fundamental need in his quality as a perfect spiritual being. The artistic community heritage is a mirror and a manifestation

of his interiority. It even represents a kind of model, a project of his existence in the course of history. The supports of such a model vary. They embrace various forms that shape the materials and seek internal and external sensitive faculties. When being elaborated in relation to the factual, “the aesthetic form constitutes art’s autonomy in the face of the fact”.²¹ By its form, the work of art transcends the sense and establishes an intra-trans-and inter-cultural communication.

An African work of art betrays its origins. It is neither impersonal nor ‘not- belonging’ to such and such a group neatly asserted by an eloquent style, by its symbols. It reflects the world’s vision, the religion, the social life, the power it summarizes. It is the whole people: Dogon, Luba, Tshokwe, Bamileke, etc., that such and such of their masks represents. The influence of Negro art upon the modern European art is well attested. A well-known example is that of Picasso. He has imitated Bafuam masks (Cameroon) in the sculpture of “Têtes des femmes” of 1909, with volunteer abstraction of the “mystery” of the inspiration mask, of its full spiritual meaning” of witnesses “of that dialogue between the dead and the livings”, according to Bouba Keita’s words.²²

Considering the totemic masks and other objects of the black world, Ph. Guimiot locates their meaning in “the reflection of the identity of the entire people, the manifestation of the regard over himself.” The writer invites his Western fellows to see “the intensive and particular life of which are charged those sculptures, the spirituality through beauty. The black man has come to capture from the world beyond and mysteriously to include in them, spirituality which amazes and attract us, especially in our today’s world where inert material accumulates and the spirit disappears.”²³ Dogon masks reveal to Marcel Griaule a well-articulated relation to the world and man’s origin; a participation in a well-elaborated mythical vision, spread out by the morphological and stylistic elements of mask.²⁴

Guimiot’s testimony says much about the way that remains in ordinary time and more again about these periods of intercultural dialogue, dominated by the concept of globalisation. The question is to know how a people, in the example of the African people, can stand with their artistico-cultural heritage at the “rendez-vous of giving and receiving”. The answer can be obtained by making a comparison between the equation of the identity of the situation and that of difference in communication.

In fact, in a universe totally in interaction and where “all is well,” identical and different subjects who come into communicational relation won’t succeed at this enterprise unless each subject ceases to regard himself as an “I” individual, identifying himself instead as existing in “a world where the ‘I’ has the power, where in spite of his dependence, he is free.”²⁵ The successful task for each in this encounter would consist of a construction of a common effort, in which the “I” subject questions, under the ontological and symbolical registers, the “you” in an indissoluble link which gives an I-you-he, or we-you-they, in the case of the group or the society. It is the real comprehension in the case of the dialogue between two persons or two instances,

which take each other in a third and new situation of progress for each and for the two others. According to Hans-Georges Gadamer, “the comprehension consists (...) in the process of fusion of those horizons that are said to be independent each from other”.²⁶ Can this be sufficient? We will come back to this question later on.

Human Techniques and Social Management

By this expression, we designate art in the sense of knowing-how:-the skilfulness and the intuition by which is practised a deep knowledge of the human whose clever behaviour brings human social equilibrium. The two cases which are taken to illustrate this are therapeutical and political management.

The re-establishment of the equilibrium in man and among men, following a significant perturbation, comes from holistic wisdom putting into relief the specific contribution of the African culture at the moment of crisis or during the conflict of institutions. For the first case, L. Apostel put in evidence what Dr. Mathias Makang ma Mbog reveals in his work *Essai de compréhension de la Dynamique des psychothérapie africaines Traditionnelles*. He writes: “The fact, only becoming evident in Western psychiatry now, is that both a sick and healthy man are living in a global system that is normally but always in equilibrium. It is composed of the person, his family, the healing powers, the spirits and the trends of his society.”²⁷ Afterwards, the author gives further details upon how the health system works when transgression breaks the equilibrium by sickness. All those forces are implicated for its quick re-establishment. The knowledge of the secrets of nature to which only specialised initiated ones accede is also taken into account.

For men’s behaviour, there are also “techniques” in terms of “managerial devices” to reduce the tensions, to smooth away the conflicts and put the citizens in the service of a cause, promoter of general and particular interests. The public space is a place of men’s fights, of their interests and of their cultures. The desire of a struggle for death by each people and each culture for the recognition of undeniable rights and the quality of man rumbles in each of them. Francis Fukuyama sets forth the state of “struggle for recognition”.²⁸ He projects a gloomy end of history. “The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one’s life for a purely abstract goal, the world-wide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands”.²⁹

In the same context and towards the potential threats of civilisations, Samuel P. Huntington insists on what is unique in the European civilisation, i.e., to be at the origin of the individual liberty, political democracy, of the principle of law, of human rights and cultural liberty. The main responsibility of western leaders, he writes, “is not to attempt to reshape other civilisations

in the image of the West, which is beyond their declining power, but to preserve, protect, and renew the unique qualities of western civilisation.”³⁰

For the occasion, African resources contain suitable tools and daily efficient applications, among which we can mention the “technique” of the “tree of discussion” or of management equitable *parole* in the sense of strong power, dignity, right, recognition etc. In African cultures, in fact, the *parole* is the ancestors’ sacred gift, granted to all the members of the community. The “tree of discussion” is that “*agora*” where popular sovereignty is still exercised in a deliberative assembly, with argumentation. And personally or by delegation, each community member presents his rights publicly. Interpersonal and inter-clanic conflicts and shocks are regulated according to the *Pende* saying “*giamona mukuta, mambo agisuga*” (“they never return to what had publicly been concluded”).³¹ Under this “tree of discussion”, as in the Athenian democracy, the problem which interests everybody is settled in the centre “*es to meson*” at the public place, at the *agora*, and at equal distance from domestic families (homes), in order to be discussed in a civilised way, with equal and reasonable means, i.e., the arguments towards admitted principles and words.

But can this deep wisdom, which was already shared by Ancient Greeks and Africa through the ages, still preside over a real fertile encounter of cultures in this period of globalisation? How is it that the threat of a “clash of civilisations” continues to weigh heavily, that violence cannot be moved away for ever, that the causes that generate hatred, anger, are not treated with success? Those questions make us think of the contribution of philosophy for an exit, by means of cultural commitment.

PHILOSOPHY, CULTURE AND HUMANITY: A COMMON FUTURE

Interrogative Thought and African Philosophy

As knowledge, philosophy differs from other scientific disciplines in that philosophy is the knowledge of foundation, an apprenticeship of wisdom and a research for truth: it inspires and mediates the cultural world. “Greek at origin,” writes Ghislaine Florival, “it has itself emancipated itself from its only western context. Its universe, actually broken up, permits it, in relation to different cultures, to measure its proper reason of being”³² by providing for the cultural transformation of city life and for the builders, landmarks for a construction in the encounter.

An authorised witness of the vitality of the African philosophy, Jean Ladrière, in his preface to Nkombe Oleko’s work,³³ said, with reason, that the discussion upon the existence or not of the African philosophy can be considered as definitely closed. The time is, however, for “Assessment and perspectives” in the turning point of the first century of the 3rd millennium. African philosophy, which is being built, has its salient moments, which give the image of the world that it tries to serve.

Also, without wanting to go back to the discussion on the concept of African philosophy, we point out Tshiamalenga Ntumba's idea that "to speak of Bantu or African philosophy is certainly a precocious generalisation. But it is the shortening of a perfectly right expression, as in the case of Greek philosophy, German or Anglo-Saxon."³⁴ The expression in all these cases does not look, according to him, for the unanimity that would attach members of those cultural groups to such a philosophy, but to identify the existence of certain more specific philosophical traditions within those groups. The cruel moment and really productive moment for the African philosophy should consist in the perfect development through the authentic problematic of philosophy.

In fact, born with the publication in 1945 of Placide Tempel's work *philosophie Bantu*, contemporary African philosophy has already been asserting itself as university discipline. A lot of historical studies of this philosophy make mention of it.³⁵ Considered as a will of the negation of the western's negation of the African humanity and thus of all capacity of reflection and of philosophy, contemporary African philosophy has developed into relation with those main questions that have agitated African conscience and which more agitate it all the more in the globalised cultural context.

About this, Ngoma Binda reveals the prejudices of a settled imperialist thought which accuses successively the African thinker of theoretical incapacity, of invalidity, of epistemological confusion, of theoreticism, of elitism and of westernism. The reaction to those accusations and prejudices has carried, in the supporters of African philosophy, a dynamism, which washes it out from the city's needs.³⁶

The epistemological stake of discussion turned around the methods in African philosophy in order to scrutinise the real, in the triple sense of the absolute, of the cosmos and of man. It is of actuality. A lot of difficulties are drawn up on the way: the rarity of systematic and synthetic books, the dispersal of supports and themes, etc. Perspectives take shape towards the adequation of a valid African thought in its authenticity, which is and fully plugged into the actuality of cultures that are often in conflict, but that should be harmonised.

Three approaches are envisaged, among which the criteriology has ridden an axis of three fundamental elements: "the kind of problem studied as it betrays precise affinities and preoccupations, the producer's geographical membership and the language into which that philosophy is produced".³⁷

Ngoma Binda sees in the African philosophy an entire philosophical reflection produced in and on Africa. Here is systematically eluded the question of geographical membership in the 'black' continent, the same as that of the African languages and material (customs, facts and problems particular to Africa).

Philosophical African production is very often classified into trends. These trends have been brought back to three: the ethno-philosophies, the ideological philosophies (nationalists or independentists), and the critical philosophies.

Although finding in this classification a successful synthesis of philosophical productions in black Africa, Dimandja qualifies it to be more restrictive and more partial, for it does not implicate the rich sectors tackled by the makers of the critical African thoughts: for instance, when they devote themselves to the studies of epistemology (questions of systems, Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms...), of Logic (referential opacity and quantification, theory of models, etc), of Metaphysics (Gabriel Marcel, Heidegger, Levinas, Michel Henri's intersubjectivity, etc.). Basing his reflection on the theoretical element and the cultural context, he proposes an alternative classification, which takes into account sectors of philosophical activities.

This approach is at the same time sectarian and regional. As sectarian, it proceeds by sectors of philosophical activities understood as a serious or better, a group of philosophical researches which are, in an organised way or not, based upon a more or less common object. The idea of philosophical activities cuts short the discussion of the existence or not of an African philosophy and makes it to be considered *de facto* according to cultural regions, this is to mean localisable and identifiable social formations as such, where are taken into account language and other cultural factors.³⁸ On such a basis could be constructed, however, from more reliable syntheses, a new philosophical African thought, always more faithful to its native sources, and better opened to the perennial of a universal thought and its world actuality.

What to say about this brief description of the philosophical activity in Africa if not, despite its youth, that thought goes to the encounter of other cultural productions with vitality and dynamism. It has taken conscience of its task to assume its time and its space, to resolutely turn to the essential preoccupations linked to the survival of Africa in the concert of nations. More again, rich with cultural religious and artistic potentialities, an African experience that is committed to the being-together 'chance' of a new and globalised humanity is understood as a chance for the inhabitants of the continent to quest for intercomprehension with all their likes wherever they are.

Today the 'risk' of being-together goes through the resolution of the enormous questions of a globalisation where cultural differences serve as the basis of a common construction of human societies in unity, justice and peace. It is there that a great problem of actuality is made more salient but which is paradoxically more and more de-humanising because of the technological consequences and the economical vision of the globalised universe.

Cultural Base and the Observation of a Difficult Living-together

Cultural awareness and the myth of supremacy. To define themselves, the individuals and the groups speak of awareness: they spontaneously have to be different from others and to constitute a particular identity. In general, the identity-awareness prevails and seems to command that of difference by the mere fact of permanent proximity of the self next to oneself. It is the clear perception of the richness constituted by the dignity of the personal being and

by the patrimony of which he is the depositor. Behind the “I” and the “we” there should always be supposed distinctive cultural traits, proper and inherited. Thanks to involuntary or methodical inattention, these same traits are, in practice, often denied to the “others” different from “I” and “we.” Those others then become the “barbarians” for the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, etc., or they are designated, in many Bantu languages, by the prefix “you” (singular “ka”) followed by their people’s name. Because of this, they are depreciated as the diminutives of men and as of inferior culture.

There is, in this oneself’s and others’ evaluation, an objective vision based upon selfishness and commanded by the myth of one’s own superiority. Practical consequences that entail the irrational vision can be summed up either in the refusal of the other and the anaemic folding up on oneself or within an expansionist will, aiming at the assimilation, the domination and the destruction of the other and his different identity.

Contexts change and history develops. The prodigious expansions of science and modern technology reduced significantly the distances and facilitated communication between peoples. The widening at the same time of the field of relationships and of an adequate and well-conserved training of historical facts lengthens the memory of the humanity and improves its image. Today we should logically take account of neatly well-educated historical awareness of distressing lessons of a past ignorant or disrespectful of the other. We should accept the other as being an end in himself, with what he is and what he has for himself and which requires a political exchange relation for the universal enrichment.

Yet, facts prove the contrary in favour of the form and the neglecting of the human dignity as can attest the conflicts, violence, exploitations and all kinds of counter-values of which our everyday world offers distressing spectacle. This is to mean that the real key of enigma always evades.

Experience and the voice of our period. There is a real progress within the universal dialogue, an improvement of treatment of notions and a fixation of strategies for the value of the cultures across the contemporary world. This is also a sign of our time. It is at the same time a fundamental aspect in favour of a cultural commitment, for this awareness mobilises energies because of culture, although practically the deliberative humanity’s effect is often slow. Valid and necessary in itself, this research on which the future order depends, makes manifest the experiences, situations and projects of which or towards which should be drawn the prospects of all people of today.

Particular and public voices educate us about this situation, of some among which there deserves to be an inventory before the consideration of the concept of cultural commitment and its operating actuality.

Two philosophers. Shaken by the horrors of the last world wars of the late century, many philosophers tried hard to indicate the voice of dialogue, of peace and of prosperity for all. So, the humanist philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, which, fastening up with the concrete subject condition, places its authentic

opening into the universal opening and into the intersubjective encounter of love with the other. Marcel recommends the relativisation of the mechanised and commercialised world for the quest of spiritual and absolute values.

Emmanuel Levinas, strongly marked by nazi persecutions, pleads for *man* in short, pleading for the culture and the ignored and despised Jews by a certain 'West'. He proposes to reconcile the peoples through the respect of the others' mystery.

For him God and Love are the only antidotes to hatred, to violence and to indifference.

The United Nations. On the international scene, there are two authorised voices, one secular and the other moral and religious: the United Nations Organisations and Pope Paul-John II. The United Nations is the institutional voice of the human and people's cultures fate. The signature of the United Nations' charter on June 26, 1945 in San Francisco, in the middle of the war, is an act of extreme importance. "Founded upon the sovereign equality of all the Pacific states and open to all great or small states", the international organisation that takes birth in such dreadful circumstances, represents an important founding stone for the definition of human rights and the rights of peoples, from a universal consensus. It is just what is materialised through the International Pact relating to civil and political rights, December 16, 1966. It was the occasion for all to admit a given hierarchy of human rights. Those rights are:

- 1) The rights which can never be violated, for instance:
 - The rights to life (a.6)
 - The right to inherent human dignity (a.10.7)
 - Fundamental equality (a. 2.26)
 - The liberty of thought, of conscience and of religion (a.17) (religious liberty and the equality of all human beings contest over 'first' place).
- 2) Inferior rights, though essential, such as:
 - Civil, political, economical, social, cultural rights for particular persons;
- 3) The rights to be considered as postulates of the ideal in the sense of common property:
 - The rights of concerned responsibility for common property.³⁹

Deep divergences subsist between those who conceive human dignity in an absolute autonomy and those who found it in the relation with God's transcendence; philosophical justification, juridical interpretation and the application of human rights in political life are far from gaining universal consensus. But to all of us, the conditions of a free and dignified human life can find roots in three fundamental principles taken together and well interpreted: "Liberty, equality, participation."⁴⁰

Unfortunately, this is not yet reflected in the reality of facts because when recently providing itself with an international Penal court, the United

Nations Organisations can confirm that: “This century has seen the worst violence of the humanity’s history. During the last fifty years, more than 250 conflicts have broken up in the world. Adding to the victims who have lost their life, more than 170 millions of persons have been deprived of their rights, of their belongings and of their dignity. Few among them have received any reparation. Those victims have merely been forgotten.”⁴¹

At the same time, we recognise in the creation of the United Nations that an important step is made by human conscience upon the “way to civilisations and Peace”: with Pope Paul VI (in 1965), we intend to stress its main meaning as creator of a planetary respectable status for a human and liberating culture. Those multiple specialised institutions testify to it. Thus the AID, World Health Organisation, World Labour Organisation, FAD, OMCI, etc., are the evident manifestations of a concerted will to forge a new future for all.

The United Nations’ Charter, even if it is still imperfectly realised, constitutes a world cultural document, destined to hasten the overtaking of narrow particularities as well as the crushing expansions, forgetful of the identity of others’ difference. The UNESCO, founded in London, on Nov 16, 1945, seems to represent a privileged office of the UN of which the mission and the activity prepared effectively the ground for the much desired future state-of-affairs.

The step marked by UNESCO is decisive, for the new definition of culture is not imposed by the egocentric side, in terms of inequality and of hierarchisation, as was the case up to then. Thus going beyond the conference of Venice (1970), the conference of Mexico (1982) on cultural policies has elaborated a more satisfactorily definition of culture which can today be considered as the set of distinctive spiritual and affective traits that characterise a society or a social group. It includes, besides arts and letters, ways of life, fundamental rights of the human beings, and systems of values.⁴²

Other important declarations of the conference that should be mentioned assert that ⁴³:

- It is culture that makes we human beings specifically human, rational, critical and ethically committed. The cultures enrich one another whatever the origin of their peoples.
- The expansion and interaction of culture, science and education should consolidate peace, respect human rights, and contribute to the elimination of colonialism, of neo-colonialism, of racism, of apartheid and all forms of aggression, of domination or of intervention. Cultural cooperation should also favour the institution of a favourable international climate to the disarmament so that the human resources and the enormous sums which are devoted to armaments can be consecrated to constructive objects such as cultural, scientific and technological development programs.

In Mexico, people also came to give a verdict on the patrimony and the cultural properties. They notably declared that cultural patrimony of a people extend over the works of its artists, of its architects, of its musicians, of its writers, of its scientists as well as to anonymous creations coming from popular heart and to the set of values that give meaning to life. It is composed of material and non-material works which express a particular people's creativity, its languages, rites, beliefs, historical places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries.

Recognising in every people the right and the duty to defend and to preserve his cultural patrimony, the conference pursues: "The restitution to their native countries of works, which have been retired illicitly, is a fundamental principle of cultural relations between peoples. For this purpose, the instruments, agreements and existing international resolutions could be reinforced to increase efficiency."⁴⁴

Pope Paul John II. Pope Paul-John II is one of the numerous voices representing moral and spiritual authority. His extreme abundance of interventions in the domain of cultures is significant. Supreme Vicar of a Universal Church, two millennium old, and whose well-known experience is founded upon a God (who became a man to reconcile and save man and all the peoples in love, peace, justice), the Pope reserves a great place to culture. A humanist and philosopher from education, his is a committing and committed cooperation with all those who, as we, in this moment, are concerned with "the unique necessary" and who are convinced, as he says himself at UNESCO, on June 2, 1980, that the human beings so threaded-together future depends on the culture.

The close and active collaboration of the Pope and Holy See with UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International and national organisms interested in culture, in education and in science is rich with eloquent lessons and gestures. The Pope has also established, on May 20, 1982, the Pontifical Council for Culture, considering just from the beginning of his Pontificate that the dialogue of the church with cultures of the present time is "a vital domain the stake of which is the world's fate at this end of the 20th Century". On that occasion, however, he declared to discover in culture that grace to which man is capable to free himself and "live a life fully human."⁴⁵

Culture and African personality. In practice, Africans have always given a wide place to culture. Their numerous works and traditional institutions give evidence. Realisations, discourses and programmes responsible for modern Africa confirm it. In the actual competitive circumstances, we notice a clear awareness of the necessity to make the inventory and to assert existing cultural values, to adopt them considering the new contribution and to affect them to the vital imperatives of the moment.

However, in front of man's tragic fate in the international community, the African and his world of values are found in an extreme situation of vulnerability. This is what illustrates, for example, the African condition in

general, wars, material poverty, insecurity in the domains of food, sanitary, education and the fate reserved to the artistic patrimony in particular.

Concerning African personality it is important to assert that there is a true development only from a just identity of oneself. It is not here to be himself uniquely in right and in *paroles*, but also and above all upon facts. Yet from the analysis of a real-life experience and from the studies of experts, it has been proved that there are still cases where the post-colonial African is the victim of a verbal authenticity in which he is in a state of liberation vis-à-vis his former home countries and his cultural predominance.

By the 60s, Nkrumah already defined his awareness as being, “in philosophical terms, the card of the arrangement of forces” which will permit the African society to digest western, Islamic and Euro-Christian elements in Africa to transform them so that they are harmonised with the African personality.”⁴⁶ When J.M. Tchaptchet examined this definition in 1985, it was also in order to arrive at the conclusion of the dependence of cultures, industries, states and global systems of Africa in a state of “limited modernisation and generator of costly importation and of debt or other things.”⁴⁷

Eden Kodjo did not come to different conclusions when he wrote: “Cut from its past, projected in a universe made from the exterior by a civilisation that limit his values, the helpless African is today the deformed reflection of the other’s image”.

For the same writer, the extroversion that reaches the cultural being of the African makes him renounce “one of the objectives of the struggle, reconciliation with oneself.” Instead of moving forward, he continually takes bad roads and regresses, he denies himself instead of asserting himself. Among the harmful consequences of this situation, the former OAU’s secretary General quoted the education and formation which are in retreat, the imposition of foreign morals, the geo-economical extroverted development as well as the generalised *mimetisme* that throws the African personality into dereliction physically, psychologically, intellectually, culturally and morally. Eden Kodjo thinks at last that the African will stop this dead end by transcending the national selfishness and serving the exclusive interests of the Africans and of Africa, and by defining himself as a new personality in the framework of a new and widened vision of the future.

But the ever agonising question which remains is to know where and when will the impulse for the launching of that intelligent and efficacious operation, which will save the long-dreamt-of unity, an Africa really free from within and from outside come.

Nelson Mandela’s dream to see the end of man’s oppression on the basis of racist criteria leaves place for the attainment by all, of the pleasure of fundamental rights, within a multiracial South African society. There is a glimmer of hope, without any doubt, in the vast obscure and darkened heaven of the Southern continent, the way by which the really significant light will pass.

The works of arts and culture of a people constitute the pedestal of permanent renewal of its identity and the lasting guarantee of its construction.

Very often, Africa presents itself in this regard in situation of double exile. It often underestimates and ignores the price of its own past or is found itself deprived by its former home countries. We are aware of the typical example of the African today who does not hesitate to decapitate the guardian post of his ancestor in order to sell its head - more convenient to carry- to the clandestine exporter of rare objects. The case of the famous head of bronze of the Olukun of Ife of which the original has mysteriously disappeared and of which today the Olukuni keeps only a copy is not an isolated case.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the conservation, the preservation and the exploitation of works remaining on the spot leaves strongly a lot to be desired whereas museums and private collections of Europe and America overflow with African pieces, unique and even which can no more be found in Africa. Political decisions, congress recommendations and resolutions, declarations of intentions do not change the state of fact. That is why the task is not easy to all those who try from within and from without to resituate the cultural patrimony of each people for its proper re-dynamisation and for the preservation of the world's culture. All happens as if knowledge and power are two things, which are practically not reconciling, in spite of some fortunate but sporadic initiatives.

Cultural Commitment and Solidarity for the Future of Man

The sense of an "observation". At the end of the above general consideration, some major conclusions are essential. The awareness of the importance of culture and its implications as determining factor for any dignified development is a highly attested fact by all the peoples. Human genius has achieved the production of a very perfected computer but it is not useful if there is no one competent to operate it.

Thus although educated by lessons of a long past in matter of values and actually having available tools of high quality to make a common and better future, modern man remains a self-destructer, sometimes more meticulous and more clever but also always more an enemy of humanity than his ancestor of prehistory was. Primary instincts continue to increase and drive him to kill, to violate, to exploit and to oppress his like as in the first age. We think to discover in cultural commitment a rich operating concept, thanks to which the whole man and each man feels himself questioned to act according to what he knows himself to be, being animated from the interior and by making appeal to cultural resources.

Theoretical status of cultural commitment. The word commitment which comes from the expression "cultural commitment" is of a recent usage in the philosophical technique vocabulary. Lalande argues that this word of current language became ordinary in philosophy a few years ago. He even speaks of vogue. If the journal "Spirit" founded in 1932 already made notion of it, Emmanuel Mounier who, in 1935 consecrates this term in "Personalist and community Revolution", well speaks of a certain content in "Christian humanism" in 1943-1944. He speaks of "Christian Validity". Of force, he

writes: "The force is at the same time virtue, solidarity and abundance of all the real. Tension of the existence, it is the space material. Patient of expectation, it is the time material. Triumph over death, it is the server of the eternal".⁴⁹

According to Lalande, however, two meanings of the word commitment are understood. The first is "retrospective and factual". The second, which interests us more, is "prospective and normative". A "committed thought",-- it is within this second meaning that is seriously drawn the moral and social consequences it implies, and where is recognised the obligation of being faithful to a project (very often collective) of which it has previously adopted the principle. In this regard, we can, Lalande renders precise, bring closer the idea of commitment to that of Loyalty.⁵⁰

It is interesting to note down in a more careful orientation, another approach. It is that in which is inscribed the "clerical movement for cultural commitment", a very active branch of Catholic intellectuals within the "Communion and Liberation" movement. The Movement held in Rome, in February 1985, a national congress on the theme "Labour and culture in the new technological era, the appeal of the future and Man's intelligence". The Congress intended to study economical, professional, cultural and political equilibrium of the society for the quality of life itself towards the hard foreseeable consequences. At that occasion, Pope Paul-John II recommended wisdom as the principle of cultural health, i.e., the truth-for-life and the total commitment for the advent of "new men, who possess in themselves ascetic quality, quality of hero and of mystic that should orient the new culture to the true welfare of humanity".⁵¹

As we can notice, the idea of commitment can be repugnant to the rationalist's conception of philosophy because of its affective charge, of feeling. But because it aims at the comprehension and the transformation of the whole man, a worthy philosophy cannot stop by limiting itself to rational explanation. It should also be concerned with the rigour of life-reason and wisdom of the lucidity of thought and of the vigour of will from the praxis level up to the last logical consequences. In total, cultural commitment is presented as the most mental and cognitive consequent attitude as well as the most revealing of the human vocation.

Cultural commitment is essentially the refusal of this world's evasion and at the same time "the refusal to confuse what we wish with what is, as would say Gabriel Marcel who insists, with reason, that the realism that admits in man's world 'a certain irrational commitment'"⁵² has for final aim the realisation and the complete happiness of man, strengthened and re-established in his fundamental rights.

The Domains and the agents of cultural commitment. The different forms of cultural commitment and practice concern every moment. They are the daily and one solemn domains of human existence.

At the psychological and mental level, appropriate awareness and knowledge of oneself should be harmonised with the acceptance and the will

of a similar identity with the other. The attention given to his interests should call for reciprocity of the better giving-and-receiving of the other. This supposes, on the part of the individuals, and analogically for the societies and groups they generate, that: “assimilating powers” (intelligence, memory and nutritive instinct) and “Creative powers” (will, imagination and sexual instinct),⁵³ should be carried and constantly maintained in mature equilibrium thanks to a dignified love, man’s sensibility and sensuality. The result is that interceptive faculties or superior faculties (intelligence, love and will), sensory faculties (memory, sensuality and imagination) and instinctual forces (nutritive instinct, sensuality and sexual instinct) will be affected by the quest of real happiness of all the human beings. Thus the mutual reciprocity of liberation and promotion of oneself, the condition of those of the others, will stop the confusion of “to give” and “impose oneself”, to receive and to alienate oneself.

What had been mentioned at the psychological and mental level received different names but is combined with the same requirements to bring out the same effects on the plans where faculties and human power generate the order and structure of the existence.

From that moment the field of the demanding transformation extends over the micro and macro systems of practical and theoretical organisations of humanity. Economic, techno-scientific material, spiritual, socio-political, religious and moral, educational organisations, etc. will place man in the centre of the preoccupations (business) and will aim at the promotion of his dignity and of his fundamental rights.

Every man, in accordance with his humanity is obliged to be involved in the realisation of this vast program of universal ‘saving’. But the global success demands that the individual efforts coincide with those of the groups and the societies, and that the perceptiveness and the efficiency support the responsibility of man, the responsibility at all the levels. The professionals of thought and that of the action are, in this connection, concerned by this. Kant writes: “we should not expect that Kings begin to philosophise, or that philosophers become Kings; it is not also desirable because to hold the power corrupts inevitably the judgement of reason”.⁵⁴ Pleading for the philosophers’ liberty of expression, Kant thinks that their contribution is essential to throw light on common affairs.

Without exempting anyone of the duty to always think justly and act efficiently, we consider that the professional thinker should be, in the perspective of cultural commitment, someone who, according to Lyautey’s motto, *knows*,-- knows to do and knows to make. He should give to the culture the soul that saves man and he should live in accordance with Rabais’ famous sentence “science without conscience, it is the ruin of the soul”.

The question of how to save concretely today’s man becomes then that of the research for ways and means to make more social justice and peace in the world. Here is, perhaps, the importance of the originality of a point of view which is still less exploited in philosophy, expressed by Pierpaolo Donati, in his contribution entitled: “Carità e solidarietà nella società post-

modern.”⁵⁵ The author draws the attention to what the terms of charity and solidarity recover in the philosophical context. He makes clear that the notion of solidarity, for instance, far from meaning philanthropy or charity, recalls the idea of a value, which produces what we could call “relational common goods”.

And for Europe to come to an authentic solidarity, he thinks, it requires the birth of a state of social autonomies working on the basis of a culture of fraternity and family. A dream, which sums up for the peoples and world’s cultures an objective which, insofar as we approach, sets down the bases of a dialogue.

In conclusion, the purpose of our work was to show that the ‘saving’ of man in moving towards his actual and future drama depends upon the fate and the quality of his culture. It is a culture where an awareness and a clear understanding of his own identity and its peculiar values, at the same time as respecting the other’s right is realised.

We devoted a long development to the evolution and the faces of culture in the space of our time. This brought us to a distressing observation: if it is theoretically true that today man knows better than yesterday, that his conditions depend on the sudden appearance of a better world of which he dreams. The same man, in reality, is far from moving away from the threat and the misdeeds of counter-values and of counter-cultures of his societies.

Cultural commitment appears as being a decisive way capable to release the situation with an interior energy, worthy of man and giving a humanising form to his systems and thoughts and action organisations. This commitment aims at the whole man and at every moment is called to promote true values, the individual’s and the community’s fundamental rights for the defence and the promotion of the dialogue by means of sharing acts and solidarity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Today a new phenomenon characterises the world’s history: the globalisation. It is characterised by a reduction of distances and a mode of perpetration, which provokes such a generalised crush within the collective space that it is practically impossible to be out of its deployment. It generates a culture towards which and in which the cultures of the world confront one another. Under the persistent threat of humanity’s destruction, the research for potential and remedial causes are closely akin to each other in the domain of culture.

We attempted to identify culture, in order to put it into communication, through its various expressions, from the viewpoint of cultural African tradition.

The different steps were:

Firstly, we defined culture in general and according to the African point of view, which led to the determination of Africanity as a specific cultural heritage. The second point concerned the details of the essential dimensions which are impli-

cated: religion and ethics, arts, techniques and the know-how to do by which the culture 'blossoms'. Their accumulation constitutes a heritage destined for the internal transformation and for competitive external commerce.

Philosophy as knowledge of foundation offers to culture a triple contribution: (1) by defining itself in its historical background by taking in charge cultural African data, and (2) engaging upon significant facts in relation with instances that carry pertinent questions (3) relating to the dialogue of cultures in a globalised world. Lastly, we dealt with the solution, i.e., elements that revolve around cultural commitment founded upon the 'will towards solidarity' between human beings,--all to be done in the name of that same humanity.

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NOTES

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³⁶ Cf. Ngoma-Binda, op.cit., p. 11.

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Chapter XIII

Orthodox Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Intercultural Communication

Elena Anikeeva

Religion is not supposed to stand far from intercultural communication because culture itself issues from religion. Among the many definitions of culture, I prefer Fr. Pavel Florensky's: "Culture is the husk of religion," in the sense that cult is the core of culture. Therefore, viewed from the other side, religion is nothing but the "justification" of culture. According to this affirmation, religion should be treated as one of the essential points within intercultural communication. As Profs. John P. Hogan and Denis J. Hynes have said, "The importance of religion for social and economic developments has been noted even within the halls of the World Bank".¹

The theoretical and metaphysical roots of intercultural and inter-religious communication may be different, but the urgent thing in a global age—upon which I agree with Professor George F. Mclean—is the "basic insight of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics that we are born and raised in a particular locale, language and symbol system, culture and civilization, through which we are enable to understand and to relate to the others. Finite beings have no privileged position to which all things are present and in which they are present to all... What we need to discover is how we can be enabled by our distinctive culture and to begin to make it work for us in interacting with others."² In connection with this, I would like to emphasize here plurality rather than unity in intercultural communication. I also ought to stress on this occasion a demand for a renewal of metaphysical thinking. I cannot help but cite another passage from the same author, that now there is "the need to return afresh to metaphysics for a new and a more humanized approach to the problem of the one and the many."³

I will write on the following two points: 1) religion is not only the essential link in intercultural communication but is perhaps non-undermined at all as a social system; 2) on the metaphysical level of inter-religious dialogue differences can be found which mark religious authenticity and show inevitable "otherness".

1) There were many attempts in a human history to root out religion, but those attempts achieved quite the opposite results. The more brutally somebody tries to transform or demolish religion (except organic inner change inside the cult), the more intensively it restores itself and grows again like a plant with long roots whose green parts have been removed.

Let us take for example the totalitarian communist ideology (like Marxism-Leninism) which tried to fight with traditional religions and was not successful. But atheism itself, on the contrary, was twisted into a pseudo-reli-

gion with its doctrine of “scientific communism”, its cult (Party Congresses, manifestations etc.), its “Church Fathers”(Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Marcuse... and others), its “Sacred Scriptures” (the works of the so-called classics of Marxism-Leninism) and so on . This is the destiny of atheism. And paradoxically, the traditional religions in Russia, first of all Orthodox Christianity, were reborn, restored and increased notwithstanding the totalitarian atheist policy. For the validity of this statement some statistics may be offered. Before the revolution 1917 in Russia there were over 300 thousand priests and 55 thousand churches (not including monasteries). After the Communist genocide in 1940 on the entire territory of the USSR there remained only 100 functioning churches.⁴ During the bloody “Red Terror” from 1918 to 1953 there were a total of more than 3 million prisoners, and among them 600 thousand people were political prisoners under Lenin and Stalin’s rule. Of them, it is supposed, approximately 200 thousand were victims namely for their faith. Now it has been discovered in archives of KGB that only 20 thousand people suffered for their religious beliefs⁵. But the process of such discovery is still continuing⁶. In 2000, the Jubilee Archbishops’ Council of Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed the glorification of *more than one thousand new martyrs* (victims of the “Red Terror”). Their glorification is a tremendous event in the life not only of the Orthodox Church but also of Christianity in general, and even of the whole world.

This phenomenon shows us that religion itself and the religious roots of culture are deeper than they seem to some secular minds. In my country (Russia) the process of religious rebirth is maturing. That is why religion, it seems, has not been exterminated in spite of the process of secularization in modern society which is not one-dimensional. Rosta G. mentions: “Some thirty years after the publication of Peter Berger’s famous book “*Sacred Canopy*” (Garden City, N.Y., 1967, 1990). he, as one of the main contributors of the theory of secularization, admitted that the basic assumption of the defenders of the theory was wrong, namely that modernization should necessarily lead to the decline of religion (Berger, Peter L. /ed./ *The desecularization of the World, Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Washington D.C. 1999.)⁷ The so-called desecularization in the contemporary world, in my opinion, is nothing but the sacralization, the revival of religious beliefs.⁸ Of course now religious life is too complicated, transformative, with its new forms of religiosity. But that is another theme. My point here is only to achieve a deeper level of intercultural communication. You should find out more about religion as that which cannot be exterminated.

2) Communication is possible if I perceive or recognize another person, another “ego” as different from me, and having his or her own richness and depth. The Russian thinker K. Leontyev spoke about religious and cultural variety as “flourishing complexity”. Religion is the thing which makes any culture flourish like a natural plant. Mass-culture as far as it is created by Heidegger’s *der Mann* is not an organic culture but uniformed and artificial sub-culture. It is well-known that in a global age many things become uni-

form, common and transformative mostly in that artificial way, first of all in economic, social and political fields. And it is not so dramatic. But it can be a tragedy if this negative aspect of globalization touches the sphere of religion.

Is it possible to construct any uniformed, totalitarian or syncretistic religion for the whole of mankind in a global age? It is my firm belief that nobody can invent any such kind of hypothetic totalitarian religion or that it can never appear. In contrast to economic or social uniformity, religious variety always survives. Differences among religions are diverse and derive from various sources. To my mind the main division is between monotheistic and polytheistic types of religions, and these two types I categorize according to what I call religious paradigms. This may be seen by the following scheme (in short):

POLYTHEISTIC PARADIGM	MONOTHEISTIC PARADIGM
<p>1. INCLUSIVISM</p> <p>Other outside and external gods and cults may be included inside of this type of religion</p>	<p>1. EXCLUSIVISM</p> <p>The possibility of other gods and cults are totally excluded from this type of religion.</p>

Sometimes confusion of different meanings of the words “exclusivism” and “inclusivism” especially in an inter-religious dialogue leads to such a result: **exclusivism seems to be bad and inclusivism seems to be good. But** this is not the way of proper understanding of inter-religious relations. I would like to clarify different meanings of those words.

Truth is one and each religious person believes that only his/her creed is exclusively true. Who can deprive a religious person of his/her belief that it is an ultimate and exclusive truth? Exclusivism is not so bad and not bad at all because it is not **a way of fighting other people but a way of ‘religious rights’**. This type can be called the exclusivism in a logical sense. Each religion is exclusive or wants to be exclusive in that sense but not each one declares its purpose frankly. Christianity does this openly but sometimes it is accused of “exclusivism, non-toleration, violence.” **etc. in the sense of politics or the attitude towards other religions.**⁹ But really it is a confusion of different senses of exclusivism and toleration: logical and political.

And there is another sense of “exclusivism” – **a metaphysical one**. In case of Christianity exclusivism is a doctrinal demand. In monotheistic religions God is one, therefore exclusive. On the contrary the inclusivism of external (for those religions) **gods and external cults is the feature of polytheistic religions**. Inclusivism as a scientific term applying to Hinduism was introduced by Paul Hacker, a German indologist.¹⁰ The word “inclusivism”

may be used to my opinion in a broader sense towards each polytheistic religion. So in two different paradigms of religious metaphysics exclusivism belongs to the monotheistic one and inclusivism refers to the polytheistic one. If somebody decides in the course of interreligious communication to force inclusiveness upon Christianity it will be a violation of its hard core and will undermine its roots. On the contrary metaphysical inclusivism is a usual thing for polytheistic religions.

So exclusivism in a logical sense is a question of religious truth and that is the thing which each religion has or intends to have though maybe in hidden form. Exclusivism in metaphysical sense is a specific feature of only monotheistic religions.

2. PANTHEISTIC COSMO-CENTRICISM

Worshipping the Cosmos, naturalistic forces, Sun, Moon, and so on; or: MOKSHA, NIRVANA-CENTRICISM (in Indian religions). The cosmos as well as moksha and nirvana are impersonal (non-personal) goals of worship and salvation. Therefore it is a pantheistic principle.

2. THEOCENRICISM

(A stronger conception than 'theism') –worshipping exclusively one personal God and never His creation: they have different essences. Pantheism is absolutely strange to this type of religion.

3. THEOCOSMOGENESIS

Genesis of the cosmos out of the essence of God (or gods); or: the Demiurge presupposes the existence of some eternal matter, e.g. in Plato's philosophy and, e.g. in the Indian Vaisheshika philosophical school where there are eternal atoms (paramanu) as a "body" of God.

3. CREATIONISM

God creates cosmos from nothing and not from His essence; no eternal matter co-exists with God.

4. COSMIC AND CULT EROTICISM; GENDER COSMOGONY.

The cosmos is the child of its parents who are God + Goddess, Heaven + Earth Light + Darkness, and so on. See: Plato's "Timeus", 50d.

4. EXCLUSION OF ANY COSMIC AND CULT EROTICISM OR GENDER COSMOGONY

Strict monotheism.

5. PANTHEISTIC AMBIVALENT STRUCTURE OF THE COSMOS

Originally includes both hell and heaven. E.g. the symbol of world tree with its roots in hell and its crown in

5. THEISTIC NON-AMBIVALENT STRUCTURE OF THE COSMOS

Primarily excludes hell, but includes heaven. No ambivalence

heaven in many myths of this type of religion.

towards God, who is absolute Good. Hell appears only after the original sin of creatures.

6. MAGIC

A usual way of operation with good spirits (white magic) and bad ones (black magic). Symbol of magic – free movement along the world tree from hell to heaven and vice versa.

6. RENOUNCING OF MAGIC

Primarily of the Gnostic tree at the beginning of the Bible and subsequently: Exodus. 20.6; 22.18; Leviticus.20.27

7. THEOMAHIA

The war of gods because of polytheism.

7. ABSENCE OF THEOMAHIA

Because of absence of many gods.

8. COSMIC AND HISTORIC CYCLICISM

That is, Nature's and gods' birth and death come together and are repeated many times as an unending cyclic process. E.g. myths about Osirus', Dionysius' birth and death; the idea of aiones in Attic philosophy and of calpas and yugas in Hinduism, that is, the periodical destruction and re-creation of cosmos. Historic cyclicism – the descending of life from the golden through the silver and bronze to the iron age and institution of this process again from golden age (in many myths from East to West in religions of this type).

8. UNIQUENESS OF THE COSMIC AND HUMAN HISTORY

Bible anthropocentrism (not cosmocentrism) within the whole of creation leads to its conception as the only beginning and the only end. Besides in the Bible there is Messianism of human history for the purpose of salvation. That means the birth of historicity itself. The historical consciousness of Christians is based on Christocentrism.

9. CONSIDERING FLESH\BODY (OR ATTRACTION TO IT) AS PRIMARILY BAD AND SINFUL; SALVATION=DISEMBODIMENT.

As a result, the ideas of transmigration of the soul and of reincarnation in Indian religions.

9. CONSIDERING FLESH\BODY AS PRIMARILY GOOD, PRINCIPLE OF RESURRECTION; THEOSIS OF THE WHOLE MAN

The human being with his soul and body together becomes god by Divine grace. The idea of reincarnation and metem-

psychosis is absolutely strange to monotheism.

10. CAUSE OF EVIL – JUST FLESH\BODY\ MATTER
E.g. in Plato’s and Plotinus’ philosophy, in Indian religious metaphysics.

10. CAUSE OF EVIL – MORAL SIN
As all descends from God as absolute Good, evil as well as hell are not eternal but are derived from original sin.

Most essential is the conception of the personal character of God:

11. ATTRIBUTIVE-FUNCTIONAL CONCEPTION OF PERSONALITY; LIMITED THEISM
The persons of gods in these religions are relative or emanative; they are faces or appearances of an impersonal Absolute - Cosmos, atman-Brahman, Nirvana, and so on. Personal gods are only functions and attributes of this Divine Impersonality.

11. SUBSTANTIAL-HYPOSTATIC CONCEPTION OF PERSONALITY; ABSOLUTE THEISM= THEOCENTRICISM
The Person of God is Hypostasis, Substance, It is the fundamental Wholeness, non-deducing and non-reducing, from or to, anything that is non-personal.

These sharp and even opposing distinctions between the two religious paradigms are not a question of a “clash of civilizations” (S. Huntington) but a matter of inevitable differences of any culture or religion. If we talk for example about intercultural and inter-religious communication in terms of absorption and inclusivism it is not the dialogue but the killing in “fraternal embracement” of one type of religion by another type of religion, not the “the fusion of horizons” but simply the abolishment of the horizon of the “other”. These laws of religious diversity on the metaphysical level cannot be neglected or ignored; otherwise we will have failed in communicating and will not hear each other. Also in the course of this dialogue the goal of deeper self-understanding cannot be overestimated. As Professor Ruben L.F. Habito remarks in his article about comparative studies on Catholicism and the Japanese Buddhist Supreme Way, “it could present itself to the Catholic not as a rival Supreme Way to be refuted but as the basis of dialogue for an enhancement of Catholic self-understanding”.¹² The importance of hearing the “other” is one of the main lessons for intercultural communication which can be borrowed from H.G. Gadamer’s hermeneutics.

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NOTES

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² Mclean George F. Introduction to: Gyeke Kwame. *Beyond Culture: Perceiving a Common Humanity*. Washington: RVP, 2003.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The Church and the Times* (Official Journal of Russian Orthodox Church). 1999, No. 8.

⁵ See data base of new martyrs, Russians of St. Tikhon Orthodox Theological Institute (STOTI) /Mutual Scientific Project of STOTI and Russian Academy of Science: www.pstbi.ccas.ru

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Rosta G., "Secularization or Desecularization in the work of Peter Berger and the Changing Religiosity of Europe" in this volume.

⁸ For example, Max Weber, M.Heidegger and M.Eliade preferred to use the word "sacral", "the Holy" even for the secular culture. The latter, following Schleiermaher and Rudolf Otto, starts his analysis from conception *homo religiosus*.

⁹ About exclusivism and religious pluralism see: Netland H. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Eerdmans, 1992. Also: Daniel B.Klendenin. *Religious Pluralism: The Problems of Christian Philosophy*. Moscow, 1994 (in Russian).

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¹¹ For Buddhism only the last statement is correct.

¹² Habito Ruben L.F. "Japanese Buddhist perspectives and Comparative Theology: Supreme Way in Intersection," *Theological Studies*. 64 (2003). pp.379-380.

Chapter XIV

Secularization or Desecularization in the Work of Peter Berger, and the Changing Religiosity of Europe

Gergely Rosta

INTRODUCTION

For several decades, the so-called secularization theory predominated in the field of the sociology of religion. Differences in the interpretations of secularization were apparent, but the main feature was common to all of them: the decline of religion is an irresistible process that started with the enlightenment and spread around the world with modernization and with the spread of rational thinking. According to this theory, religious institutions and religious ideas play less and less a role in the public life of the modern world: the influence of religion shrinks unstoppably until its eventual total disappearance. As a result of this process, more and more fields of life are set free from the dominance of religion, namely, from the power of the religious institutions (churches) and from the religious ideas: consequently these fields can develop their own institutional systems and can function based on their own logic and institutional values.

In the latest sociological works on the changing role of religion in the modern world a revision of the secularization theory is obvious. There were always certain phenomena that did not fit into the overall linear model of a modernizing and secularizing world and that required a “special explanation”. One outstanding example is the case of the USA being the most modernized society of the world and still animated by an extremely vivid religious life. But new facts prompt social scientists forward not only towards an adjustment but to a basic revision of the theory. These new facts are labelled mainly as ‘religious revival’, or its radical representations as ‘religious fundamentalism’. Signs of a resurgence under different social and denominational circumstances made a broad interpretation of secularization hard to defeat.

Some thirty years after the publication of his famous book *The Sacred Canopy* (Berger, 1967), Peter L. Berger, one of the main contributors of the theory of secularization, admitted that the basic assumption of the defenders of the theory was wrong, namely that modernization should necessarily lead to the decline of religion (Berger, 1999)¹. In this present paper I treat the changing role of religion in contemporary social thinking, and I take Berger as my example. First I will try to summarize the main outlines of the secularization theory based on *The Sacred Canopy* and his other important contribution, *The Heretical Imperative*. In the second section I attempt to draft the outlines of the desecularization (Berger, 1999) while in the last part I bring some empirical evidence from the “European Values Study” in order to provide a kind of verification for the theoretical considerations.

SECULARIZATION

Secularization as a result of Western (above all European) type of modernization was considered by a vast majority of the social scientists in the 50s and 60s as an unavoidable and irreversible process. However, there was no broad unity over the meaning of the term “secularization”, still less an elaborated and accepted theory of it. In this chapter I will make an attempt to review the main outlines of the theory based on the works of one of the most recognized authors, Peter Berger.

By ‘secularization’ Peter L. Berger means “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols”. (Berger, 1969, 1990:107). It denotes on the one hand the decline of the influence of the church. This institutional- or macro-level interpretation is fairly obvious. But for Berger (as for many other contemporary scholars), it was also quite certain that by “the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture.” (Berger, 1968:3) Consequently, the macro-level separation and decline would generate the same phenomenon on the individual- or micro-level, e.g. “the modern West has produced an increasing number of individuals who look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretations.” (Berger, 1990: 108)

In one of his later works Berger outlined the process of the secularization of the individual consciousness, which is deeply determined by the “heretical imperative” (Berger, 1980). This term, similar to Luhmann’s “privatization of decision-making” (Luhmann, 1977), interprets the end of religious monopolies and the effect of the pluralization of the views of life. Modern people have to choose from a large assortment of interpretations and answers for the ultimate questions, and as a result of this “competition”, rational explanations tend to overcome the traditional ones. This leads mainly to the fall of “irrational”, transcendental elements of the human consciousness. But even if one insists on a religious interpretation, he or she becomes necessarily heretical by choosing some elements of the faith-system transmitted by the church while rejecting others. This kind of heretical religiosity generally rejects the institutional transmission of religion, since it is in many ways in contradiction with the consistent traditional religiosity required by its institutional representation, the church. Berger finds another implication of the secularization in the restriction of religiosity to family life. Religion becomes a private manner with almost no significance for public issues, its public influence limited mainly to pastoral care and social services.

Secularization is a product of industrialization and rationalization; thus, those affected more by the industrialization process are exposed more to the secularization. Consequently – generally speaking – men become more secularized than women, young and middle-aged people become more secularized than elderly people, active working people become more secularized than the inactive groups, and – considering the relation between Protestantism and

capitalism and the special role of the former played by making God more transcendent than ever – protestants become more secularized than Catholics.

Beside rationalization, Berger – similarly to Durkheim – finds the other important factor of secularization in the special kind of Christianity, with its roots in the Jewish religion of the Old Testament, which puts emphasis on ‘legal regulation’ rather than ‘magic cult’. Compared to it, the type of Christian religion with the incarnated God and the veneration of the saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin, showed a kind of mediation on the way towards an absolute transcendent God. Uniform ethical rationality was replaced in European history by a higher quality of ascetic monastic lifestyle and on the other side a row of “back-stairs” for the ordinary laymen. However, the social partition of profane and sacred, by establishing a specific institution for the latter called ‘Church’, conveyed the germ of secularization. Accordingly, since Protestantism makes God even more transcendent and questions the justification of the church as a mediator between man and God, it can be interpreted as the revived secular potential of the Old Testament preserved by Catholicism. In terms of the early-phase Peter Berger, it is the tragic irony of the historic relation between the society and religion that from a historical point of view, Protestant Christianity with its reformist ambitions has dug its own grave (Berger, 1988: 123).

DESECULARIZATION

When reviewing the literature of the debate over secularization, we find different types of arguments against the theory. This is not the place to recall all of them², but we shall concentrate on one of these objections, possibly the most powerful one. Empirical research data and everyday experience provide evidence that instead of decline we can observe signs of religious revival in different parts of the world. The most striking example is possibly Islam, but numerous articles concentrate on the changing role of religion in the public and the individual life from China to South-America. These evidences have urged many of the former representatives of this theory towards a revision.

As has already been cited in my introduction, Peter Berger found two basic suppositions of the secularization theory falsified. His ‘turn-around’ is based mainly not on theoretical, philosophical considerations, but is rather a consequence drawn from empirical facts:

In my own thinking about the sociology of contemporary religion, the major change-of-mind has been, precisely, the abandonment of the old secularization theory – not, I would like to emphasize, because of some philosophical or theological change, but because the theory seemed less and less capable of making sense of the empirical evidence from different parts of the world.” (Berger, 2000: 445)

The two basic elements of the secularization-theory which Berger finds unverified through reality are the followings: (1) modernization does not exclusively lead to secularization, but provokes counter-secular movements as well; and secondly, (2) macro-level secularization is not necessary to the secularization of human consciousness.

Evidence for the first statement is provided first of all by the many recent successful religious movements. These movements can be grounded in religious traditions rooted in a given society (like the Islamist movements) but they can also find new ground, as Christianity has in Korea, or Pentecostal movements in South-America. They give their own answer to modernization, an answer which is generally based on a 'fundamentalist' interpretation of a religious tradition. It is not by chance that these movements are often given the summarizing appellation, "fundamentalism." Common features of the fundamentalist movements according to Berger are "great religious passion, a defiance of what the others have defined as the *Zeitgeist* and a return to traditional sources of religious authority". (Berger, 1999: 6-7)

The second statement is not underpinned by any concrete example, but it is evident for Berger that "both old and new religious beliefs and practices have nevertheless continued in the lives of individuals." (Berger, 1999: 3) Likewise, a religious institution with a relatively small group of believers can retain its great social influence.

In his further explanations Berger concentrates on the first statement, seeking the key factors of the fundamental religious upsurges. From the viewpoint of the religions, Berger defines two potential responses to the secularization he once held unstoppable: rejection or adaptation. The total rejection of modernity can be best characterized by religious revolutions (e.g. Iran) and religious subcultures (e.g. Amish community) while the best instance of adaptation is shown by the Vatican Council II of the Catholic Church. From the logic of the secularization one could conclude that the religious institutions can cope with the challenge of modernity if they can effectively realize one of these two potential responses. But according to Berger, rejecting modernity as a whole is hardly feasible, and the fact that the religious institutions could cope with the challenge of modernity to such an extent that many did not try to adapt themselves to modernity proves his earlier presuppositions falsified. The most outstanding examples we can find are the Islamic and the Evangelical resurgences.

What explanations can we give for the unexpected success of fundamentalist religiosity? Berger provides two possible reasons: first, the religions provide a 'certainty' that is taken away by modernity. Secondly, the social basis of secularization is an elite, and consequently desecularization is an anti-elite movement. The third possible explanation given by defenders of 'secularization theory' maintains that recent religious upsurges are the "last breaths" of religion before an eventual triumph of secularization. Berger regards this last explanation as simply untenable.

Considering the tendencies of desecularization, not the United States but Europe seems to be the exception that begs explanation. Berger finds the

claim that secularization of individuals, interpreted as a declining church-related behaviour or as a faith justified. This is an ongoing process along with the continuous modernization. He predicts the same development of secularization for the “West-Europeanizing” former communist countries. However, Berger doesn’t give any explanation for the differing pattern of the European development, just a potential correction of the interpretation. Many European authors question the notion of “secularization” as such, since the turn from the churches often goes along with the survival of religion. The more proper definition would be the “shift in the institutional location of religion”. (Berger, 1999: 10) It has to be noted that Berger doesn’t take a stand on this issue, but considering his interpretation as an issue of ‘declining faith’, we can anticipate his – at least partial – disagreement with this explanation.

In addition, Berger identifies another exception to this thesis: a global subculture of Western-type highly-educated intellectuals, engaged primarily in humanities or social sciences. This group is not a numerous one, but its influence is remarkable.

On the threshold of the new century, Berger’s view of the future of the religion in the new century is quite different from the “only in small sects, huddled together” previously cited. Rather, he claims “there is no reason to think the world of the twenty-first century will be any less religious than the world is today” (Berger, 1999: 12) And today’s world is anything but a totality of secularized individuals and institutions.

EUROPE – PERSISTENT SECULARIZATION?

As mentioned in the introductory part, our goal in this section is an empirical verification of the secularization and desecularization thesis of Berger on the basis of longitudinal European data. For this reason, we have to formulate operationalizable hypotheses for the examination. We are aware that a full verification of the theory is not feasible, since there are too many interpretations and religious phenomena. Our main task is to show that using the method of survey research we can demonstrate empirical evidence in favour of or contrary to the given statements. In carrying out comparative longitudinal analysis, our focus is not on interpretation of the differences among the country-data but on the search for common features or common tendencies.

For Berger, ongoing secularization is more than the state of a low level of religiosity: it is a process of ‘fall’. If he is right in his thesis of a persistent secularization, then we can experience in Western-Europe:

1. a decreasing number of people practicing church-religiosity;
2. a drop in the number of those accepting transcendental faith and interpretations, and
3. the existence of a highly-educated layer, mainly from the field of humanities or social sciences, that is typically more secularized than the society itself. (Berger does not specify if this group is a feature of non-Western societies)

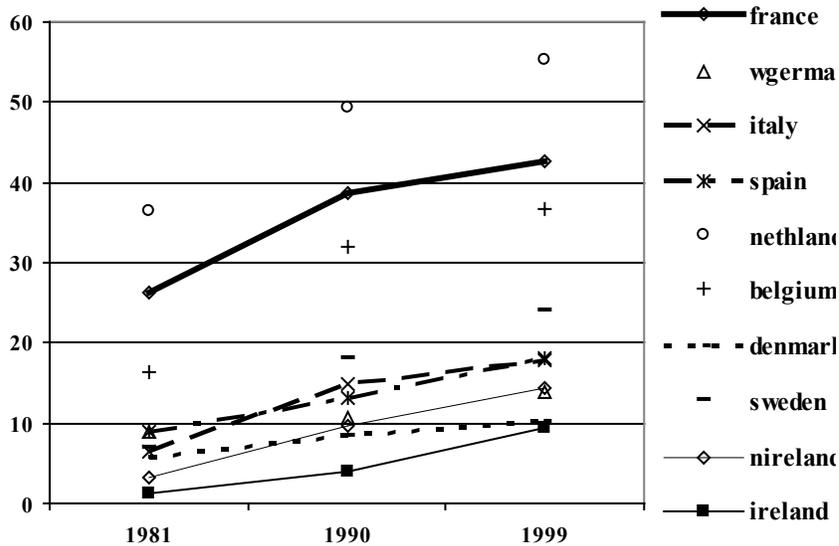
Considering his thesis of the heretical imperative, we can also suppose that:

4. secularization implies a change of religiosity toward a heretical ‘art’ of it by individuals choosing arbitrarily the elements of faith adopted by themselves while rejecting other teachings of their church.

The first statement can be best verified by denominational self-identification and church-attendance. The “European Values Survey” (EVS)³ raised the question of belonging to a religious denomination as well as the frequency of church-attendance in all of the three waves carried out in 1981, 1990 and 1999. Data from the 11 West-European countries that participated in every section of the research provide considerable support for the hypothesis that religiosity measured by these two factors shows in almost each of these countries a tendency of decline during this period of 18 years. In each but one of the states involved less people go at least once a month to a church or other place of worship (only Italy shows no change in the percentage) than eighteen years earlier, and only in three out of eleven countries do more than one third of the adult population go to religious services at least monthly.

The figures of the denominational belonging indicate an even more rapid decline. The percentage of those not belonging to any denomination rose on the average by more than 12 points, and their share of the population is, on a par, approximately two and a half times as much as it was in 1981. However, except for the Netherlands in all of these countries they are in a minority.

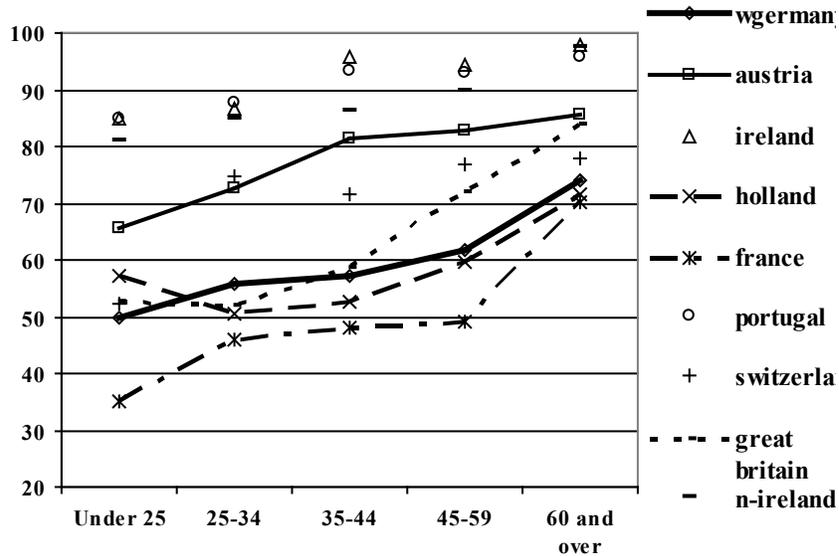
Figure 1 Percentage of those who don't belong to any denomination



(Source: European Values Study, 1981-99)

These facts provide a strong empirical evidence for the first statement of Peter Berger. But is it truly a sign of the deepening secularization of the mind in a sense that more and more people become rational in their thinking, rejecting views that are not in accordance with the results of scientific inquiry? This is the question raised by Berger in his second thesis. Defining transcendental faith by its most elemental interpretation in the Christian culture, the faith in God, we can easily find more than one evidence for a descending tendency. EVS data shows that in 9 out of 11 countries the percentage of those who believe in God dropped between 1981 and 1999 by an average of 10 points, and solely in Italy increased their proportion by some 4 points. Another transnational survey, the “International Social Survey Programme” (ISSP), provides a similar result. Since in this case we do not have the opportunity to compare data from different times, we have to “simulate” it by the comparison of different age-cohorts⁴. In all of these countries the youngest generation is less susceptible to belief in God than the elders are. The generational gap is considerable: the difference between the share of believers among those over 60 and those under 25 is on an average more than 20 points in these countries.

Figure 2. Percentage of those who believe in God



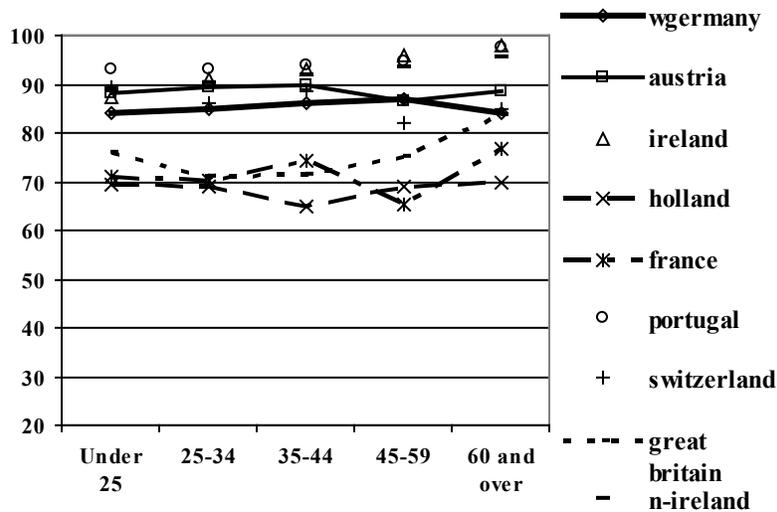
(Source: ISSP 98, for Great Britain and Northern-Ireland ISSP 91)

But there are other findings which rather contradict the thesis of a spread in rationalist thinking. Four other, mainly non-Christian sources of

transcendental or “irrational” thinking were also questioned by ISSP 98: belief that good luck charms can sometimes bring good luck, that fortune tellers can foresee future, that some faith healers have real God-given healing powers, and that horoscope affects the course of our future. In 6 out of 9 of the states in which these questions were put, members of the youngest cohort are much more disposed to consider at least one of these items as probably or definitely true than the oldest. And if we combine the traditional faith in God with these non-traditional elements, we find the generational gap has disappeared and the result shows anything but a row of European societies with a fully ‘rationalized’ population. On the contrary, in all of the samples at least two thirds of each cohort believes in God and/or regards at least one of the four other “irrational” elements as probable or definitely true. It is certainly true that belief in God is not equal to the conception that “there is something to the horoscope.” However, our focus now is on the existence of a “transcendental” or “irrational” content of the consciousness in contrast to the conception of a rationalizing European thinking rather than the nature of this irrational content itself.

The difference between the proportion of these “irrational thinkers” among the youngest and the oldest generations is on an average less than 4 percent. Considering these results, they suggest the religious changes in Western-Europe should be interpreted as an institutional shift, a declining religiosity with a traditional church-fundament and the rise of popular “semi-religious” faiths mainly without a coherent doctrine-system and transmitted by primarily non-religious institutions such like mass-media or primary and secondary groups (family, friends, colleagues).

Figure 3. Percentage of those who believe in God and/or regard probably or definitely true at least one of the four other “non-rational” items



(Source: ISSP 98, for Great Britain and Northern-Ireland ISSP 91)

Is there any indication of a changing religiosity in terms of turning towards new religious communities? The EVS-data provides the opportunity to examine the converts. Moreover, it provides two ways for doing that. The one is to define the group of those people currently member of a religious denomination differing from his or her former denomination. This group is not a numerous one, representing only about 3 percent of the population of the 11 countries involved. The highest percentage is to be found in the Netherlands. Because of the small numbers of this group we cannot carry out an analysis of the current denominational composition of the converts. For heuristic reasons however we can compare the composition of this group with the sum of the samples drawn from these countries⁵. The very interesting finding is that two types of denominational belonging are over-represented among those who are members of a denomination differing from their former denomination, compared with those who have never changed their denominational identity. These two categories are the Free Church/Non-Conformist/Evangelical Christians (21% compared to 5%) and the so called “other” category including all types of non-traditional Christian (and non-Jewish, non-Hindu, non-Muslim, non-Buddhist!) religious denominations (17% compared to 2%).

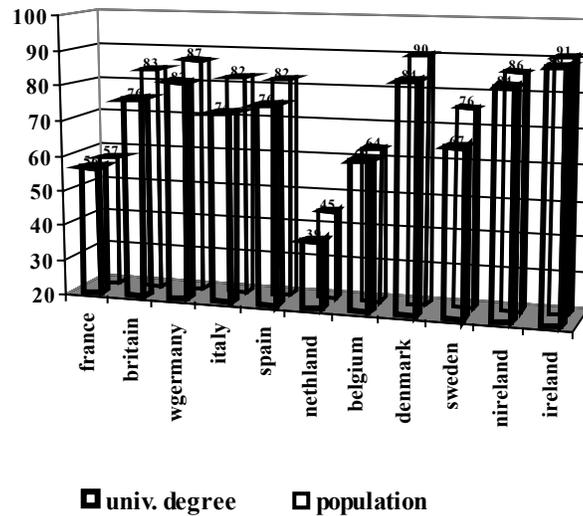
The other group of converts contains those who weren't brought up as religious but consider themselves today to be so. Since we are looking for a new type of denominational binding, it is not inappropriate to define this group by the difference between their habit of church-attendance in childhood and today. Precisely, we will consider as ‘new converts’ those who attended church less than once a month while in childhood, but today go at least once a month into the church (or other place of worship). This group is even less numerous, - it totals up to 2 percent of the whole sample. They highest percentage (5%) is in Denmark. We can once again make a comparison between the denominational composition of the “new converts” and those asserting that they have always attended religious services. The “other religious denominations” and the free evangelical churches are somewhat over-represented again, but there is one more denomination with the same feature: the Protestants (40% compared to 10%).

By a broader interpretation of the latter we can examine all those who assert they attend religious services today more often than in childhood (using this definition, we involve those who are still rather distanced from the church but to a smaller degree than earlier as well as those who were always church attendees, but they practice today even more frequently than when they were children). This group composes, on average, 7% of the national samples. One outstanding exception is Denmark, with 18% of its adult population attending church more often than in the childhood. We found only three countries where the traditionally established churches were well under-represented among these “practicing” religious people: in the Netherlands and Belgium the Roman Catholic Church, and in Great Britain the Anglican Church, drew comparatively less people belonging to this category. “Other religions” are in almost each of the states over-represented among the “practicing,” but in the Danish case the traditional Protestant church accounts for the vast majority of

this group.

The third hypothesis of Berger is hard to verify with the method using national surveys, since the group of a highly-educated layer, mainly from the field of humanities or social sciences, is a very small sub-sample insufficient for further analysis. However, we take here the opportunity to examine the alleged link between religiosity and higher education. It is often supposed that the highly-educated elite are more ‘enlightened’ and more secularized than the society itself. We tested this hypothesis on EVS99 data and found the difference of the proportion of those with a religious denominational identity between the university professionals and the whole population rather small. There are only two countries (Italy and Denmark) out of eleven where we can assert with a statistical probability of 95% or more, that the denominational belonging is to a smaller degree characteristic of the intellectual elite than of the whole population⁶. This finding does not contradict the third supposition of Berger; it suggests however his group of elite in human and social sciences to be indeed rather small.

Figure 4. Percentage of belonging to a religious denomination – comparison between those with university degree and the whole population



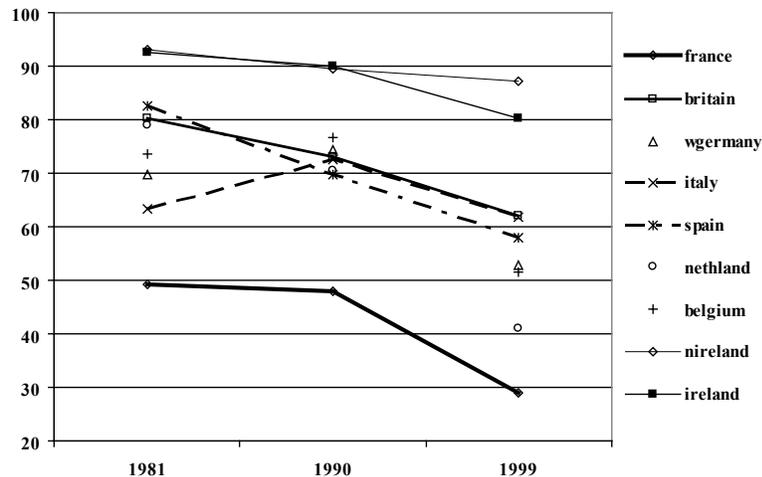
(Source: European Values Study 1999)

For the demonstration of the fourth statement, concerning ‘heretical imperative’, we chose a moral and a faith issue. The moral question allows us to examine the changing role of Church interpretation when the Church’s interpretation differs from the mainstream interpretation of the society. Opinions about abortion have changed a lot in the last decades but the Catholic Church remains by her original judgment, condemning any form of it in order to protect the life of the embryo. This strict standpoint was presumably never shared by all those who consider themselves to be Catholics. But if the ‘heretical imperative’ is valid for moral issues then we can expect a drop in the number of Catholics who reject abortion without any consideration of the circumstances.

EVS raised the question of approval or disapproval of abortion, when (1) the woman is not married, and (2) a married couple does not want to have any more children (without pointing out how many children they already have). The Catholic Church rejects abortion in both cases. However, we found only two countries where the percentage of those sharing the “official” opinion approximates 100%: Ireland and Northern-Ireland. At the beginning of the eighties, in seven countries out of nine⁷ at least 70% of the Catholics disagreed with abortion in both cases. About twenty years later only in the two above mentioned countries do more than two thirds of the Catholics agree. There is an average drop of 18 points, and in the Netherlands for instance the share of the defendants of abortion dropped down by half in the last two decades.

Our example shows, that – at least in the case of abortion – denominational self-identification allows more and more people to deviate from the moral imperatives imposed by the religious denomination.

Figure 5. Percentage of those catholics rejecting abort in both cases



(Source: European Values Study 1981-99)

SUMMARY

The term “secularization” has always been a disputed one in the sociology of religion. Peter Berger’s counter-notion of “desecularization” is another term demanding increasing discussion. Derived from the term “secularization,” it suggests (and in his explanation Berger makes this explicit) that the new religious phenomena of revival are mainly reactions to the tendency of secularization. But precisely in Europe as such, the “cradle of secularization”, we find very little empirical evidence of a religious *upsurgence*. The picture is very mixed, but the common tendencies show rather decline than incline. However, this process tends to be rather slow, and the appearance of untraditional, “irrational” contents of faith suggests the notion of “instrumental change” to be probably more appropriate than secularization and desecularization. Nevertheless, even if one calls this process “secularization,” in all of the examined countries the majority of the people still believe in God, which makes clear that it is not appropriate to speak of a secularized mind as generally valid for the majority of the people. The former prediction of Berger that religion in Europe would be reduced to small clusters of “religiosity” in the 21st century seems to be unrealistic at the beginning of this era.

NOTES

¹ “. . . [A] whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken. In my early work I contributed to this literature. I was in good company – most sociologists had similar views.” (Berger, 1999:2)

² For more about the history of the secularization theory and the debate about it see Tomka (1989) and Tomka (2002).

³ For more information about EVS see Ester et al (1993) or visit the website www.europeanvalues.nl

⁴ We have to take into consideration that by comparing different cohorts of one single research sample, we can not separate the cohort-effect and the age-effect. The theory of secularization emphasizes both by saying that religiosity is deeply rooted in the process of socialization, and everyone is affected by modernization as a historical event (however, its extent depends on the age of the members of a cohort). Therefore, the younger generations tend to appear more secularized than the elders who became socialized in more religious social circumstances and experienced modernization at a more mature age.

⁵ It shall be noted, that this group of converts is not representative on a European level, since the size of the samples does not reflect differences among the sizes of population of the countries, and not all European countries were involved.

⁶ We applied χ^2 test for testing the independence of having a university degree and belonging to a religious denomination.

⁷ The small size of sub-sample of the Catholics in Sweden and Denmark did not allow us to carry out the analysis for these countries.

⁸ See for example Varga, 1999.

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

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