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Crossing Boundaries: Challenges and Opportunities of Intercultural Dialogue

Edited by
Peter Jonkers and Fu Youde

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Introduction

Peter Jonkers

The global time has posed new challenges to humanity, and thus urges us to rethink what it means to be human. The prefix “re-” indicates that our responses start not from scratch but build on theoretical and practical achievements of previous generations. Yet, our answers to this perennial question “what it means to be human” are also novel because they are always given from a particular perspective of our unique socio-economic, political and cultural situation. On the other hand, our global times also create unprecedented opportunities, for more than ever, people from different cultures and civilizations can learn from each other through a dialogue or a conversation. This volume aims at answering the above-mentioned question through the perspective of different cultures and civilizations by way of presenting a variety of contributions which stem from several disciplines and thematically focus on this question from different socio-cultural points of view.

Quite often, intercultural dialogue does not so much yield mutual understanding but rather a Babel-like confusion, especially when differences between individual cultures are substantial. The ideal of cultural harmony, which is the underlying assumption of dialogue, often hides or even represses irreducible differences between individual cultures, and sometimes even serves as a pretext to justify the dominance of the most powerful or influential culture over others.

This volume begins with an examination of the requirements for a fruitful and respectful dialogue among civilizations. The first part critically studies the challenges and opportunities of such a dialogue. William Sweet’s paper on “Cultural Dialogue and the Place of Conscience” identifies and discusses the conditions for a dialogue of civilizations. His approach of this matter is a descriptive analysis of such a dialogue. A dialogue differs from a simple encounter or interaction as dialogue requires an (implicit) understanding or mutual agreement to exchange, a mutual acceptance of the method how to proceed in a specific type of dialogue, a mutual recognition of dialogue partners, a sense of purpose and value of dialogue and, last but not least, a minimal common ground to think about the leading ideas of dialogue. A dialogue among cultures can be about many things, but ultimately about the fundamental beliefs and values that dominate everyday activities. Sweet then examines some normative conditions for a genuine intercultural dialogue. First, to be an authentic interlocutor in such a dialogue is to take account of and respond to what one

has encountered in a different culture, so that one can seek coherence with one's own cultural identity. A genuine dialogue requires that a culture respond *with integrity* to novelty, that is, it must be true to what is occurring within itself and, hence, open to change *from within*. This kind of integrity requires a conscience. Cultural practices and institutions have to acknowledge and value the presence of different values, practices, plans of life, etc., among its own members in order to avoid presenting itself as a monolithic whole.

In "Inescapable Boundaries as a Challenges to Intercultural Dialogue" Peter Jonkers discusses the impact of increased tensions between various (sub-)cultures in many Western societies upon intercultural dialogue. He investigates two dialogue-models and how they respond to socio-cultural diversity. The first model of intercultural understanding is proposed by Charles Taylor. It is based on the idea of a fusion of horizons, which works quite well if cultural differences are not too huge and if there is a live dialogue among a limited number of persons who respect one another's cultural sensitivities. The practice of Scriptural reasoning, in which Jews, Christians and Muslims meditate and discuss each other's sacred texts, is an excellent example of this model. However, if these conditions are not met, the risk of a Babel-like confusion will loom due to the lack of a common language or a frame of reference to understand and communicate with the cultural other. The second model is an application of Paul Ricoeur's idea of linguistic hospitality in the cultural sphere. This model is more modest than Taylor's, as it accepts the dissemination of cultural horizons as part of the human condition. This means that there is always something incomprehensible in a foreign culture, just as there is always something untranslatable in a foreign language. Nevertheless, intercultural dialogue enriches our awareness of specific characteristics of ourselves and the cultural other and prevents the deadlock of cultural self-enclosure. The term "cultural hospitality" aptly expresses this attitude, since it symbolizes the respect for the otherness of the cultural other and his or her irreducible strangeness, while acknowledging the opportunities of intercultural dialogue.

In "On Norms Underlying Different Conversational Practices: Logic Reasoning and Dialogue of Cultural Traditions" Berndt Buldt discusses another aspect of the impact of language on dialogue between cultures and civilizations. As a biological species, human beings are social primates. And what sets us apart from other social primates is a set of social practices that make up complex languages we speak, as linguistic practices go far beyond anything we can see in other animals. Specific socio-linguistic practices, however, that people from traditions adopt may differ greatly from one another. To show these differences Buldt looks at three traditions in particular. The first tradition is Greek philosophy of the classical period (Plato, Aristotle) and their unbridled confidence in the

power of language and logic. The second tradition is Daoist philosophy, which assumes that language is fundamentally unsuited to mirror the true nature of the world. The third tradition is the Western Apache, which disavows any attempt to use language to convince other people to see things exactly the way as one does. Buldt argues that these traditions make it possible to have different expressions of the human condition which can occur anywhere anytime. He uses his findings about the differences in socio-linguistic practices to shed some light on the theme of this volume, the dialogue of cultures and civilizations. He argues that we can identify different norms underlying these three conversational practices, because these norms are not peculiar to a single tradition or culture but can be found elsewhere. If these normative differences go unnoticed, they may strain efforts to sustain a conversation. Hence, we should determine their proper roles among participants who come from different traditions.

In “Culture and Civilizational Progress: The Problems of Dialogue,” Joseph C.A. Agbakoba examines the nature, role and limitations of dialogue in civilizational progress and clarifies the relationship between culture, civilization and civilizational progress. Both in the strict sense of a second order reflexive activity and in the broad sense of a worldview, ideology or life-vision he points to the centrality of philosophy in culture and in the cultivation of progressive human standards and quality of life, which are central to civilization and civilizational progress. Agbakoba demonstrates in this regard the centrality of reasonability as a combination of reason (the principle of consistency) and ontological beneficence in the making of civilizational progress. He then shows the nature and the place of reasonability in dialogue, which is not only a process of argumentation between two or more parties but also requires empathy and sympathy. However, civilizations can decide to depart from the principles of dialogue and reasonability; examples of this are Machiavellianism, the application of narrow radii of reasonability, forms of revolt against reason (and reasonability), because they are either based on or related to ideological incommensurability or epistemic domain violence (e.g., deliberately abstracting emotions from reasonability in ethical dialogues). Agbakoba concludes that given these limitations, dialogue alone is not enough to ensure or sustain a civilizational progress, but rather it must be supplemented with the judicious application of state power in favor of reasonability and values, institutions and traditions that derive from such reasonability. This can be applied not only to coercive power but also to the state that fosters the education of its citizens along the lines of reasonability.

The second part of this volume discusses the implications of intercultural dialogue in terms of socio-ontological commitments of cultures and civilizations. In “Confucianism, Vedanta and Social Theorizing:

Cultivating Planetary Conversations,” Ananta Kumar Giri explores the positive outcome of intercultural dialogue in social theory. He draws inspiration from the pre-eminent philosopher Daya Krishna’s critical discussion of the one-sidedness of different ways of thinking about society, the socio-centric approach which is predominant in Western social theorizing and the Atman-centric approach of Vedanta. In Giri’s view, Krishna’s frame of thinking can help us cultivate social theorizing as processes of planetary conversations through dialogues across different philosophical, cultural and religious traditions. Specifically, the author calls for a dialogue between (Neo-)Confucianism and (Neo-)Vedanta, both of which are plural movements of thinking and practice, so that they can overcome the one-sidedness of the aforementioned approaches. Giri thereby focuses on the Confucian vision and practice of *Tian Xia* (All under heaven) and the Vedantic *Loka-Samgraha* (public and soulful gathering of people) as ways to cultivate planetary conversations. He then points to the multiple border-crossing movements that both Confucianism and Vedanta have had with Buddhism, Marxism, Post-Marxism and several contemporary movements of thought. The relationship between the idea of harmony in Confucianism and unity in Vedanta, as well as the spiritual and pragmatic dimension of these two cultures can offer new, intercultural pathways to imagine social theorizing.

In “A Comparison of Filial Piety in Ancient Judaism and Early Confucianism,” Fu Youde and Wang Qiangwei examine a transcultural aspect of ontological commitment, namely filial piety in the Jewish and Confucian traditions, both of which possess a clear overall ethical orientation. The authors show that both traditions advocate similar expressions of filial piety, such as respecting one’s parents, inheriting their legacy, properly burying and mourning them and tactful remonstrating elders. However, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism hold distinctive views regarding the extent and scope of filial piety and differ on such issues as to whom one should be filial and its status within each respective ethical system. Although Confucianism advocates a more comprehensive and nuanced version of respect for parents than Judaism, both traditions have similar kinds of filial piety, because both are based upon bonds of familial affection and gratitude. For instance, Judaism’s theocentrism and Confucianism’s humanism, which bring about different social institutions and systems of governance, create the dissimilarities in Jewish and Confucian filial piety. The authors conclude that the transcendent nature and the emphasis on individual equality inherent in Judaism can play an informative role in the revival and reestablishment of Confucian ethics.

Michal Valčo in his paper, “Crisis of Western Liberal Societies through the Lens of a Metanarrative Critical Analysis,” shows how familiarity with a traditional metanarrative of Western culture and civilization enables us to (re-)imagine a sense of narrative identity of our

present reality, which is characterized by a pervasive fragmentation about what it means to be a person and a social being. In Valčo's view, such fragmentation continues to threaten the traditional character of Western civilization, which was built on the foundation of Greek philosophy, Roman law and the Christian conviction that all created realities derive their dignity and value from the stories of their lives as parts of a great creation symphony, willed by a loving, just and powerful Creator. These three foundations of Western civilization and culture serve as metanarratives that are constitutive for moral deliberation and action. Valčo sees the rediscovery and re-appropriation of the Christian metanarrative as the most suited way to imagine authentic personal and social realities and identities in our times. Because this metanarrative is anchored in history, directed to a promised, hopeful eschaton, and told by a universal storyteller, it enables us to counter forces of dehumanization and desocialization that are predominant in Western liberal societies. However, he realizes that such a metanarrative approach to cultures and civilizations of our times may generate its own challenges and is not universally accepted. In addition, there are numerous competing metanarratives (and contextually bound local narratives) in our global world. Against this background, the aim of Valčo's paper is to offer an appraisal of the role of metanarratives in forming social imaginaries and values in current European society, and especially a plea for the Christian narrative as the most integrative and comprehensive one.

In "The Sacred Character of Free Time as an Opportunity for the Recovering of Culture," Pavol Dancák examines the importance of free time for today's societies in which the desire to maximize economic production has become so paramount that free time is often regarded as a senseless waste of time. In contrast to this trend, by sketching the historical-philosophical context of the sacred character of leisure, Dancák argues that leisure should be seen as a fundamental and even sacred way of being. Originally, *paideia* means breaking out of ordinary life, freeing oneself from one's constant occupation by other activities. The space for *paideia* is *scholè*, which means leisure time, laying aside daily personal agenda and worries. The sacred character of leisure time is to direct a person to God. This is evident in both the Hebrew tradition (the importance of the Sabbath) and in the Christian tradition (the Sunday's rest, the day of the celebration of Christ's resurrection). Regarding the role of leisure in contemporary society, Dancák's analysis is based on the work of Josef Pieper, who thinks that leisure is a condition of the soul. Through the link between leisure and silence human beings lower the concentration on their selves, so that they can not only hear, sense and understand better, but also discern transcendence from labor, effort and the need to interfere in things that are going on around them. Leisure is also connected with feasting and festivity, which implies that people accept the world and

fulfill themselves with a special spirit that is different from the ordinary existence.

Dariusz Dobrzański's paper, "Witold Gombrowicz's Notes on the Experience of Strangeness," explores another kind of ontological commitment, namely the experience of strangeness, which one may feel when encountering people from other cultures and civilizations. He approaches this experience through the work of the literary author Witold Gombrowicz, who thinks that strangeness is one of the main topics. Gombrowicz is particularly interested in mechanisms by which people are driven to embrace specific forms, styles and conventions, as well as in efforts of individuals to create their own form and their unique individual style. Through this prism Gombrowicz explores emigration, which he considers an adventure and an opportunity to become immersed in a different culture, rather than as an inconvenience. For him, emigration is a test of the universality of culture and a chance to create oneself anew. In terms of the experience of strangeness, Dobrzański uses Alfred Schütz, who argues that, if basic assumptions of social assimilation and adjustment cease to hold, then people will face a cognitive crisis that can be described as the experience of strangeness. This insight leads Dobrzański to the ethnomethodological observation that the object of sociological studies is inevitably a product of culture and has therefore already been interpreted by the participant of everyday life. The author concludes his paper by saying that the contact with a different culture and civilization confronts us with the experience of strangeness and makes us acutely aware of the need not to take our traditional cultural assumptions for granted too easily.

The final part of this volume discusses how globalization influences the crossing of cultural boundaries. Varghese Manimala's paper, "Globalization: A Boon or a Bane?," examines the impact of globalization upon traditional local cultures. The author argues that in order to have a genuine crossing of boundaries and fusion of horizons between different cultures one has to be sensitive to the freedom of the other, his/her authenticity, identity, culture, and above all to respect humanity in an equal way. From this normative perspective, Manimala shows how globalization has turned out to be a boon for a select few and a bane for the vast majority, especially for developing and poor countries. From Western perspectives, a spread of techno-economic know-how from the center to the rest of the world leads to a global triumph of this model for the third world countries. But in reality, this has complicated even more the latter's economic and socio-cultural situation. Advocates of globalization speak of an emerging global economy dominated by multinational corporations, but the result is that nation-states, national economies and cultures are dissolving or disappearing. Everything is now depending on webs, and the newest of these

global webs, the Global Cultural Bazar, uses advanced communication technologies in the production and dissemination of mass culture, which upholds the supremacy of the market and rejects those who are unable to cope with it. The homogenizing effects of the commercial global machine result in the devaluation of original cultures and the disappearance of traditional communities. In order to move ahead Manimala proposes a new form of globalization that takes peoples and nations away from selfish profit seeking but favors sharing. Dialogue is a way of communication and means of searching for agreement and solution to global problems that humanity is facing.

In “Dialectics of Followership and Leadership in Relation to Globalization: A Case of Uganda,” Robinah S. Nakabo discusses globalization from the perspective of Ugandan civilization. She argues that although globalization cannot be denied and the global imaginary is promising many opportunities, especially in trade, investment and other exchanges for sub-Saharan Africa, such opportunities are distorted or overshadowed by the dialectical relationship between followership and leadership. Followers as the majority are moving around blindly, while leaders as the minority race towards the global with no meaningful followership. In the end, opportunities promised by globalization can only benefit a few but remain elusive to the majority. This is causing tension and despair among the very poor and also widens the rift between followership and leadership. Nakabo critically examines how the relationship between followership and leadership impacts on the maximization of opportunities promised by globalization in Uganda. Her paper ventures into a comparison between the opportunities that were promised by the advent of foreigners before colonialism and those promised by globalization fifty years after the end of colonialism. She analyzes how the followership-leadership relationship influenced the turn of events then, and how the situation is presently with globalization. She also maps out lessons for a meaningful interaction of active followership with leadership in order to maximize present and future opportunities.

Asha Mukherjee highlights in her paper, “Culture and Globalization: Dialogue through Self-Giving,” the cultural aspect of globalization. She argues that globalization cannot be defined by the everyday transfer of culture of local inhabitants to the production for the global market, but rather by a deeper dialogue. To analyze this the author uses Rabindranath Tagore’s ideas and draws from the Indian tradition. In order to survive and to remain meaningful and mutually beneficial we need a deeper dialogue in the process of self-giving as dialogue is an essential part of globalization. She focuses on the existential praxis of Santiniketan Experiment initiated by Tagore as a point of cultural transformation, which may help generate a new philosophical insight in both Bengal and Visva (world) at large.

In “Non-power Ethics in an Autonomous Digital Technology,” Mikhael Dua examines the ethical consequence of human communication, which is determined by an autonomous digital technology. Dua notes that digital technology has a problematic impact on all cultures and civilizations, because the stable, physically limited place in which they traditionally operated has been replaced by a changeable virtual space. The author then provides a brief description of Jacques Ellul’s idea on the autonomy of digital technology to argue that technology, as an autonomous system, cannot be determined by other systems such as politics, economy and morality but works according to its own logic. In terms of the problem of technological bluff, Dua says that technology cannot be separated from the existence of human beings, but should become their horizon with all their aspirations, hopes and ambitions. As far as the logic of means and ends, technology can be easily exploited for the sake of market and power. Therefore, it is urgent to redefine a new ethics of technology so as to reduce technological power and to give space to life, social relations and interpersonal relationships. This is what Ellul means as non-power ethics, whose basic imperative is to set limits to the human being’s use of technique. Dua also discusses the ethical principle of maintaining human freedom through power reduction and the need of constitutional democracy in facing digital propaganda, which threatens human freedom, communication and collaboration.

In “Understanding Social Stratification and Organization: Revisiting Hegel and Nietzsche,” Astrid Vicas outlines an approach of thinking about human inequality that draws on developments in various social and biological sciences. She proposes a reinterpretation of the Hegelian notion of recognition in terms of these developments. In Vicas’s view a Hegelian conception of world history can be construed as an umbrella theory for incorporating recent contributions to the understanding of social stratification and its relation to ways of making a living, segmentary organization and war. She argues that a Nietzschean conception of inequality, although influential, does not have a comparable potential for making sense of newer developments in social and biological sciences. Vicas concludes that a Hegel-inspired account of inequality is highlighted as actionable because restrictions of access to resources are needed to make a living and to form certain kinds of segmentary social organizations.

Part I
Challenges and Opportunities of
Intercultural Dialogue

1.

Cultural Dialogue and the Place of Conscience

William Sweet

In this paper, I wish to identify and discuss some of the conditions for a dialogue of cultures and civilizations. What I present is, in part, descriptive, e.g., a description of what dialogue is and what its characteristics are. But what I present is also, in part, normative, e.g., it points to conditions that I believe need to be met for there to be a dialogue of cultures.

First, I outline some of the conditions for a dialogue of cultures – i.e., as distinct from a simple encounter or interaction of cultures. Next, I present briefly what is meant by culture, and in what sense a dialogue of cultures is possible. In a third moment, I look at some of the conditions that I believe need to be present in order for genuine dialogue to occur – both among individuals, and among cultures. Finally, I focus on one of these conditions – namely, conscience – and argue that a recognition of conscience is part of what is needed for cultures to engage in dialogue.

Dialogue

What is dialogue? As we know, the term comes from two Greek words: *διά* (*diá*, through or across) and *λόγος* (*logos*: word, speech) combining to form *διαλέγεσθαι* (meaning “to converse with”). But, in the sense in which we generally use dialogue, it is more than a conversation. While a dialogue is certainly, in part, a conversation or interaction, not every conversation or interaction is a dialogue; some interactions, even if beneficial to both parties (e.g., the migration of texts or traditions from one culture to another), lack important features of dialogue.

What, then, is ideally required for dialogue? Let me suggest the following:

- i) there is an (implicit) understanding or mutual agreement to interact and exchange; at some level, one *knows* that one is in dialogue;
- ii) the interaction and exchange occur in accord with a mutually acceptable method or procedure.

There are, of course, various models of dialogue. Consider, for example, some of the different *philosophical* texts that are dialogical:

1. Some may involve each party providing arguments. Starting from certain foundationalist assumptions, and using a particular method, one presents and defends one’s views and, using the same method, addresses

the claims of one's interlocutor (or dialogue partner). We see this model used in philosophical dialogues such as those of Boethius, Shao Yong,¹ and David Hume.

2. Others may involve a kind of wide reflective equilibrium, a notion proposed by John Rawls and Norman Daniels, where there is a working out of a position, together, by expressing and refining certain beliefs and claims through an attempt at seeking a balance among the distinctive or conflicting claims. This approach also appears in some of the Platonic dialogues.

3. Some may adopt a model akin to what is called ecumenism. It professes to try "to know, understand, and love others (e.g., members of other religious groups) as they wish to be known and understood."² It seeks, therefore, to avoid confrontation in order to "find what is shared."³

4. Some see dialogue as a process that has, as a result, a fusion of horizons (e.g., Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor) – a "working out of the hermeneutical situation."⁴

Dialogue is not simply a mutual stating or reporting of each's respective views.

Further,

iii) whichever model of dialogue one chooses or adopts, the notion of dialogue presupposes:

1. a mutual – personal – recognition of the dialogue partners, and a respect for one another;

2. having – at least implicitly – a sense of the purpose and value of dialogue – that it is about a matter that the interlocutors consider important, and not just a trivial exchange, e.g., of pleasantries. (Here, I wish to make a somewhat prescriptive remark: that dialogue often involves a seeking after a truth not yet ([fully] possessed. The parties involved may already have an understanding of the truth, but they are to be at least open to a deepening of [the interpretation of] the truth that they have.)

3. that there are certain interests, values, and ideas that are already shared; that there is some similarity, at least in principle, of what has been called the dominant ideas of the interlocutors, for example, of justice, of

¹ Shao Yong 邵雍 (1012-1077), *The Dialogue of the Fisherman and the Woodcutter* (Yuqiao wendui 漁樵問對).

² Decree 12, *Documents of the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus: The Decrees of General Congregation Thirty-Four, the Fifteenth of the Restored Society and the Accompanying Papal and Jesuit Documents* (Rome: Curia of the Superior General, 1995; Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

³ See William Sweet, "Value Inquiry, Cultural Diversity, and Ecumenism," in *The Future of Value Inquiry*, eds. Matti Häyry and Tuija Takala (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 173-183.

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. and eds. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 269.

respect, of the sacred, of truth, of the reasonable, and so on. These dominant ideas do not need to be *explicitly* stated, but there does have to be something that the interlocutors have in common beyond their willingness to engage in dialogue.

4. that participants in dialogue present themselves honestly and authentically. They must be themselves.

5. that participants have an openness to what other participants have to say and, possibly, to be open to revising or rethinking aspects of their own position.

6. that there is a willingness to take what one learns or experiences into account in one's own life.

I hold that these features are those which, ideally, are required for (genuine) dialogue to take place. This is not to say that there cannot be examples of attempted dialogue, or efforts to engage in dialogue, where some or even several of the above features are not present; these features may be, in some cases, only aspirational or heuristic. I would suggest, however, that an *unwillingness* to aspire to these features would be a sign that one was not genuinely participating in dialogue.

Culture

If the preceding conditions are necessary – or, at least desirable – for dialogue in general, then they apply not only to dialogue among individuals but to dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

Yet, one might ask, are cultures analogous to individuals? Can we, in fact, speak of a dialogue of cultures in the way that we speak of a dialogue among individuals? This requires saying a few words about what is meant by 'culture.'

The notion of culture is certainly contested. Sometimes, the understanding of culture has been narrow and normative. For example, in his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948),⁵ the British writer and poet, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), writes that culture is “first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place.”⁶ But Eliot adds that a culture “can never be wholly conscious – there is always more to it than we are conscious of”⁷ – and that an elite is necessary to “bring about a further development of the culture in organic complexity: culture at a more conscious level, but still

⁵ T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 94. See also Eliot's comment that “Culture cannot altogether be brought to consciousness, and the culture of which we are wholly conscious is never the whole of culture” (*Ibid.*, 107).

the same culture.”⁸ Thus, culture is “the *whole way of life* of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night,”⁹ but is adequately appreciated and developed only by a few. This view expresses the notion of high culture, what Matthew Arnold describes as “the best which has been thought and said in the world.”¹⁰

Sometimes, the term “culture” is not supposed to be normative at all. Thus, a fairly simple, putatively less normative definition of culture, can be found in Arnold’s contemporary, the 19th century English anthropologist, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor. In *Primitive Culture* (1871), Tylor states: “Culture [...] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”¹¹ And while, in their *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952),¹² Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn note some 164 different senses of the term,¹³ they arrive at the following definition:

Culture consists of *patterns*, explicit and implicit, of and for *behavior* acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) *ideas* and especially their attached values; culture *systems* may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.¹⁴

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co, 1869), vii.

¹¹ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1871).

¹² A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, with the assistance of Wayne Untereiner and appendices by Alfred G. Meyer (Cambridge, MA: The Museum, 1952).

¹³ For example, today the term is often used to mean something not as comprehensive; we may speak of a culture of science or a culture of health, which seems roughly equivalent to ideology. And so some take culture to be something primarily mental: “a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action” See Ruth Benedict, *An Anthropologist at Work; writings of Ruth Benedict* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1959). And “the product of learned behaviour,” “ideas in the mind,” “a system of ideas, signs, associations, and modes of behaviour and communication.” See E. Gellner, cited in Jocelyne Couture, “La valeur morale de l’appartenance culturelle,” in *Philosophy, Culture, and Pluralism*, ed. William Sweet (Aylmer, QC: Éditions du Scribe, 2002), 101-130. There are other senses besides.

¹⁴ Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture*, 35 (emphases mine).

Culture and Dialogue

For simplicity's sake, let us accept this latter, descriptive definition of culture. Is it possible for cultures – these cultural systems or (we might say) ways of life – to engage in dialogue?

Some might say “No” – that, strictly speaking *cultures* are not, and cannot be in dialogue; there is no one place where patterns or behaviors or ideas can meet. And to talk of cultures engaging in an exchange or a dialogue is, at the very least, rather vague and, most likely, rather metaphorical. Even if one can speak of cultures encountering one another – whatever this means – through exploration, or trade, or invasion, it does not seem that there are interlocutors or that a dialogue is taking place. There may be interaction and exchange between *members* of a culture, but even that exchange is often unstructured, and dialogue may occur, at best, only late in such interactions.

Nevertheless, there is a way in which we may be able to make sense of this. One can, arguably, say that individuals of one culture can encounter individuals of other cultures, can, in doing so, represent¹⁵ their respective cultures, and can engage in discussion. Let me explain this second element. It is widely acknowledged that individuals are bearers of culture. After all, individuals have their identity from their culture(s); they are embedded in culture(s), and it is from their culture (and their society) that individuals acquire a language, learn and acquire values and standards of reasonableness or appropriateness or truth, acquire a sense of what counts as a problem, etc., and even come to have a sense of self/individuality. (In some cultures, individuals may see themselves as fundamentally distinct from one another and atomistic; in other cultures, not so. Either way, though, individuals are bearers of their respective cultures.)

To the extent that the individuals (and small groups) involved are aware of their cultural systems and ways of life, and decide why and how to draw on their knowledge of their respective cultures, traditions, and values, they are equipped to undertake dialogue with individuals (and small groups) from other cultures about their respective cultures.

As encounters and interactions among members of different cultures occur, one will see, I believe, first, dialogue about how to trade, to explore, to act, to engage in work together, to express ideas, affection, and so on, but also, eventually, about fundamental ideas, assumptions, and beliefs that are implicit in but, arguably, dominate these activities.

In short, if presuppositions such as the existence of methods of mutual recognition, of shared ends or goals of activities – and of shared

¹⁵ The notion of ‘representation’ is, admittedly, a very complicated one. For a discussion in political philosophy, see Lucien Jaume, *Hobbes et l'État représentatif moderne* (Paris: PUF, 1986).

values of what is reasonable, desirable, or good, or sacred – are met, it is plausible to hold that there can be dialogue of cultures.

Participating in Dialogue

One key feature in the models of dialogue, noted in section one, above, is that participants present themselves honestly. They must be themselves, they must be authentic. A second key feature is that they must have an openness to what other participants have to say and, in principle, be open to reflecting on, rethinking, or revising their own views.

To help to see how this notion of authenticity can be understood at the level of culture, I want to draw an analogy between individuals and cultures, building on an argument presented in an earlier paper.¹⁶ The point that I want to make here is that just as individual participants in a dialogue must be honest and open but also true to who they are, so groups and, by extension, cultures must be so. As for the individuals who represent (as it were) a culture, they ideally should have a self-awareness that is open and critical not only of themselves but of their respective cultures.

An Individual as an Authentic Interlocutor in a Dialogue

What makes an individual an authentic interlocutor in a dialogue? There are a number of conditions, though these are not sufficient, and not all may be necessary. To begin with, however, one must know oneself. This means that

1. the person must have a history – i.e., a character or personality and consciousness that exists over time; a past and a present – and be aware of that history;
2. the person must have some expectations about a future;
3. the person has a conception of what is valuable and of the good – some have called these dominant ideas – and seeks to act towards realizing those values and that good;
4. all of the above features have a continuity and coherence and stability – or, at least, that the individual is capable of constructing a narrative that exhibits this – and that this continuity is an ongoing activity or project for the individual.

¹⁶ See William Sweet, “Cultural Integrity and Obligations,” in *Cultural Tradition and Social Progress*, eds. He Xirong, Yu Xuanmeng, Yu Xintian, Yu Wujing and Yang Junyi (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2011), 23-37.

To begin with, an authentic participant in a dialogue must have a clear conception of him/herself and what he/she stands for – what we normally call an identity. But this is not enough for the authenticity that is expected or required of a participant in a dialogue.

As mentioned above, in entering into dialogue, one also has to be honest about who one is – that one is ready to reveal one's self or identity to other interlocutors, and that one is willing to be open to that of others.

This is not all. As noted above, an openness to another involves being receptive to what the other person has to say. In dialogue, we are often confronted with novelty – with information (e.g., facts, values) or experience that is new or significantly different from what we know or have experienced. This information may add to what we know, and it may challenge what we (claim to, or think we) know. Thus, if we are to engage in genuine dialogue, simply accepting what others say, and nothing more, is not enough. We must *respond* to this novelty.

In other words, to be an authentic interlocutor in dialogue is not simply to hold to one's principles, presuppositions, ideas, and beliefs – i.e., to be identical with what one held when one entered into the discussion and dialogue – but to do something more. As participants in dialogue, we are called to take account of, and respond to what we have encountered by trying to understand what we have heard and why others are saying it, by reflecting on one's own beliefs and values, by offering counter positions, by revising positions, and so on – yet in a way that seeks coherence with our identity – our principles, ideas, and beliefs.

This requires knowing, in a deep sense, who we are – our principles, values, biases, preconceptions, and so on – but also having the willingness and the freedom to engage constructively with this novelty. This requires, then, a realistic openness to what is new, but also being true to who one is, and to one's principles.

A person who responds in this way is often said to have *integrity* – and this integrity is a central feature in what it means to be authentic in one's participation in dialogue.

Authentic Participation of Cultures in Cross-cultural Dialogue

Let me extend this notion of authentic individual participation in dialogue to the notion of the authentic participation of cultures in cultural dialogue.

For there to be a dialogue between or among cultures – or, at least, for (culturally-embedded) individuals to attempt to participate in cross-cultural dialogue, I would argue that such an authenticity must also be at least aspired to, if not present, not only in the individuals but also, at least in principle, in the *cultures* from which they come.

Thus, a culture (e.g., through its members) that simply asserted its cultural identity, and that rejected any possibility of reflecting on, responding to, or revising its principles, ideas, and beliefs, would very likely not be engaging in any kind of genuine dialogue. A culture would not be an authentic or genuine interlocutor, although such a culture would have a history, be conscious of that history, have some expectations about a future, have certain dominant ideas, including a conception of what is valuable and of the good, and could construct a narrative that exhibits this, if it was not open to new ideas, values, practices, had no willingness to add to what it knows, etc., and was not prepared to adapt or adjust or re-examine some of its practices, ideas, and values. Such a culture, therefore, in which it was generally held that there was little or nothing of value to learn from the engagement with other cultures – say, cultures that were ethnically homogeneous and isolationist – would scarcely be able to be said to be capable of engaging in dialogue. It would simply be expressing its views. It would have identity, but there would be no opportunity for the expression.

Integrity and Conscience

On the model that I have been sketching, how, then, can cultures come to have the integrity necessary for cultural dialogue? On the one hand, I have suggested that culture – at least through its individuals who seek to engage in dialogue with individuals from other cultures – must be open to change from the outside – i.e., from other cultures. But I would add that it also must be open to change *from within*. In other words, a culture needs not just to be authentic in terms of expressing to another, truly, what it is, where it stands, its conception of the good, and so on. It needs to be authentic or true to itself – to what is occurring within it.

To explain this, let me return to the notion of integrity in the individual person. For an individual to respond, *with integrity*, to novelty, the individual must also have had *a priori* (and must have an ongoing) opportunity to think, reflect, and act. This is not simply a matter of having and of being able to express one's thoughts or opinions or personal preferences, but to determine and articulate *for oneself* these principles and values – i.e., what Charles Taylor calls one's core convictions, those convictions around which one centers one's life and which are important or central to the meaning of one's life – *and* to act on these convictions.¹⁷ In other words, one has to have had the opportunity to form one's *con-*

¹⁷ Charles Taylor and Jocelyn Maclure, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 96.

science. Having the ability to form one's conscience is essential to integrity.¹⁸

In a similar way, I would argue that, for a culture to respond *with integrity* to novelty, and to engage in dialogue with other cultures, it must not only be open to that novelty, it must also be true to itself, and this requires a *prior* activity of determining the principles and values that mark that culture. Now, one may say that it is unclear how a culture can do this. Let me offer a suggestion, however, again drawing on the analogy with an individual.

It is not an easy matter for an individual to form his or her (subjective) conscience. One's conscience is not simply an expression of opinion or of one's thinking. It requires a reflection on one's beliefs and principles as well as on the relevant information, and on one's duties – and, arguably, a practice of discernment – in order to act.

It may be rather idealistic to expect this kind of activity explicitly within a culture, but one can imagine that social practices and institutions might provide ways of implicitly accomplishing something like this. It is, I think, obvious that, no culture is monolithic and static, that there are ambiguities and tensions (e.g., conceptions of the good, of value, and of individual conceptions of being true to oneself and of conscience) within every culture, and that these need to be acknowledged. This activity within a culture would involve cultural practices and institutions being aware, at least implicitly, of the presence of different conceptions of the good, different values, practices, plans of life, and so on, of its members, acknowledging that these conceptions and practices have value. Being a collective sense, these cultural institutions are to seek to bring these different conceptions into some coherence. It is in such a way that a culture can be true to itself.

For a culture and its institutions and practices to acknowledge these differences, however, it is necessary that that culture allows *individuals* to develop *their* conscience – their core convictions – and, thereby, their identities and integrity. Thus, for a dialogue of cultures, the cultures themselves must have a dynamic, perhaps evolving, sense of who or what they are. And this means allowing the development of, and acknowledging the consciences of their members.

¹⁸ This idea of conscience, required if one is to be true to oneself, is not just a Western idea. It is suggested, for example, in the text attributed to Confucius called *The Analects*: “What is called a great minister is one who serves his prince according to what is right, and when he finds he cannot do so, retires.” Confucius, *The Analects*, Book XI, Hsien Tsin, Chap. XXIII.

Conclusion

The dialogue of cultures and civilizations is not merely a conversation or interaction with other cultures. It requires that the cultures involved, through those who represent them, have an openness to one another, a willingness to engage with one another critically, but also a willingness to reflect on and perhaps integrate some of what they encounter.

There is something more. In general, to engage in dialogue is not simply to engage in certain external relations with another. It also requires a prior and ongoing activity within oneself – in the continuous working out of what I have called being true to oneself – and this applies as much to cultures as it does to the persons who are part of them. In the case of cultures, it is by ensuring room for individuals to form their consciences (i.e., to be true to themselves) within that culture, that that culture can be true and, thereby, engage authentically in dialogue with other cultures.

This is not to say that there cannot be examples of attempted dialogue, or efforts to engage in dialogue, where some or even many of the above conditions are not present; such efforts are aspirational or heuristic, though, and will fall short. Still, this would be a starting point. I would insist, however, that an *unwillingness* to aspire to meet these conditions would be a sign that one was not genuinely attempting to participate in dialogue.

If we understand dialogue, culture, and the dialogue of cultures in the way in which I have described them above, we do not know, of course, where such a dialogue may lead. But we will, at least, be more conscious of what we, as interlocutors from and of our respective cultures, ought to bring to encounters with other cultures, if a genuine dialogue is to be possible.

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2.

Inescapable Boundaries as a Challenge to Intercultural Dialogue

Peter Jonkers

Introduction

This paper aims at examining the challenges of intercultural dialogue against the background of ongoing tensions, sometimes labelled as culture wars, between cultures and civilizations in many Western societies. Although these tensions by themselves are nothing new, what has made them more acute than before is that the common ground or the shared language needed for a dialogue between participants seems to have evaporated due to the increased socio-cultural diversity. In turn, this growing diversity makes the need to understand the culture of the other all the more acute. Otherwise, people may fence themselves off from or become intolerant or violent against foreign cultures because they find foreign ideas about cultural essentials and practical consequences intolerable.¹

A first explanation of the current situation acknowledges the persistent importance of cultural values and practices to which we are strongly attached, since they define our socio-cultural identity, our basic sense of belonging. However, it seems that the contact with foreign cultures, their values and practices has made our own familiar values more fragile. This has posed a threat of losing our own cultural identity. What makes the current situation difficult to interpret is that the lasting importance of local, regional or national cultural values has largely been neglected by the modernization theory, which has served as the dominant framework for the interpretation of societal evolutions since the Second World War, and determined the implementation of social policies in many Western societies. According to this theory, local, regional and national socio-cultural values and their mutual differences would gradually lose their relevance, and expressions of and attachments to cultural identity would lose their political meaning and eventually become a matter of folklore. In the light of these predictions, it also claims that tensions over socio-cultural issues would be unlikely to arise, as all modern societies would evolve towards liberal democracies based on a universalist and procedural ethics. Globalization and migration could enhance this develop-

¹ See Peter Jonkers, "Tolerance as an Individual and Collective Virtue" (forthcoming).

ment, which finally would result in a truly global world. In reality, the growing attention to identity-questions in politics and society at large shows that socio-cultural identity matters greatly to many people, because it defines who we are so as personal traits that determine our personal identity. In this sense, socio-cultural identity should not be ignored neither politically nor in the research devoted to it.

However, socio-cultural identity has lost its self-evidence and stability for many people as a consequence of eroding effects of modernization on the life-world.² Due to the technological innovation (e.g., the internet), economic developments (e.g., globalization), secularization, individualization and geographic mobility modern societies not only have a much greater internal diversity than before, but also experience their differences with respect to other societies (external diversity). Moreover, the internal diversity is a phenomenon that is no longer confined to the big cities but can be observed in provincial towns and the countryside too. Against this background, people have problems to define their socio-cultural identity unambiguously so as to find difficulties to answer the question: “What does it mean to remain the same through time and space?” A problematic, yet understandable response to this predicament consists “in the sliding or diverting that leads the flexibility native to the upholding of oneself in the promise to slip into the inflexible rigidity of character.”³ In other words, people tend to ignore the inevitable temporal and spatial changes of their socio-cultural identity but define it in a rigid and exclusive way.

Illustrations of this paradoxical situation abound. One comes from the existing segregation along socio-cultural lines. Different societal groups have only little contact with each other due to linguistic, geographic, educational, religious boundaries. Obviously, this situation strengthens their attachment to their own socio-cultural identity. An empirical confirmation of this fact is offered by the attitude of some migrants from non-Western countries: when asked about socio-cultural values, they respond that they are much prouder of those of their country of origin than their host country and identify themselves much more with the former than with the latter. It goes without saying that stronger and more diverging socio-cultural identifications strengthen the opposition between “us” and “them,” which makes cultural diversity more conflictual and hampers

² See Peter Jonkers, “Introduction: the Multiple Relations between Philosophy and the Life-World,” in *Philosophy and the Life-world*, eds. He Xirong, Peter Jonkers and Shi Yongze (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2017), 3-5.

³ Paul Ricoeur, “Fragile Identity: Respect for the Other and Cultural Identity,” in *Philosophy and the Return of Violence. Studies from this Widening Gyre*, eds. Nathan Eckstrand and Christopher Yates (London: Continuum, 2011), 83.

intercultural dialogue.⁴ Another example is the attachment to one's native language. Precisely because it has become more fragile and fluid as a result of globalization, people's attachment to their native language becomes significant, especially for those who have little proficiency in speaking or understanding foreign languages. Languages are spontaneously not hospitable to each other. This explains why native speakers are so often opposed to a foreign language.⁵ A final example is differences in cultural views and practices concerning the position of women in the public sphere, for instance wearing a veil, shaking hands with men, co-education in schools, etc. Because the self-evidence of socio-cultural identity has come under pressure, people often react to it in a defensive way, particularly by defining their identity in a narrow and even exclusive way. Consequently, they perceive the other as a menace, precisely because she/he is an "other."

There is an intriguing paradox to be noted here. Although most people are convinced that cultural traditions and values are but the results of contingent social constructions and that it is pointless to make a fuss about their intrinsic value, they nevertheless are deeply attached to them in their everyday lives, not so much because these traditions and values would be better than others, but simply because they are familiar to them, that is, because they are part of their socio-cultural identity.

Another factor of the importance of socio-cultural identity is that people express it more explicitly and individually than before and strive for the public recognition of its various aspects. For example, the claim to the recognition of local languages and dialects, the right to express one's sexual proclivity or religious conviction in public. On a theoretical level, the growing importance of expressing one's socio-cultural identity can be explained as a result of the culture of expressive individualism, which has emerged since the second half of the 19th century and has become a dominant social reality since the 1960s of last century. As Charles Taylor states, a new moral ideal has come up, according to which each of us has her/his own way of realizing one's humanity and to live it out, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, either by society, or by the previous generation, or a religious or political authority.⁶ As a consequence of this ethics of authenticity, people strive for an intimate contact with their deeper (emotional) selves, and prefer listening to this inner voice to rational arguments. This explains why the universality of reason is no longer generally accepted, although it has

⁴ For a summary and discussion of recent empirical studies of this evolution see Peter Jonkers, "How to Respond to Conflicts over Value Pluralism?," *Journal of Nationalism, Memory and Language Politics* 13, no. 2 (2019): 1-22.

⁵ Ricoeur, "Fragile Identity," 85.

⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 475.

served since the Enlightenment as the common ground to settle all kinds of issues over socio-cultural matters, such as religion, language, values, etc.

Hence, identity not only matters on a personal level but is also of crucial importance for us as socio-cultural beings. We see this in our shared stories, legends and histories, in our festivals with celebrations and rituals. One could even reverse the above proposition by stating that personal identity is to a largely extent a social product. One of the clearest examples of this dialectic is that we express the most intimate elements of our personal identity in a common language; our earliest personal memories are bound up in lives of others, in our family, school, or city.⁷ People's attachment to their socio-cultural identity is an important factor in the fabric of today's societies, which consists of a plurality of identity-markers, religious, ethnic, linguistic and political. Admittedly, some of them have become less important (e.g., religion), but other ones remain as strong as ever (e.g., education, language, ethnicity). These identities are culture-specific as well as plural.

Because all (Western) societies are becoming more diverse or at least perceive the pressure of socio-cultural diversity more acutely, the importance of dialogue between cultures is increasing too, while the challenges to this sort of dialogue are also mounting. Sometimes cultures may even become separated by inescapable boundaries, thus ethnocentrism seems the only viable option.⁸ How strong these challenges are depends on various contingent elements, such as whether different groups in society share a common history and language or split up along linguistic, religious or political lines; whether they have a longstanding tradition of harmonious and peaceful or conflictual and oppositional co-existence, etc. In this paper, two models of intercultural dialogue will be discussed, and how each of them responds to the problem of increasing socio-cultural heterogeneity. The first is Taylor's approach of intercultural dialogue, based on Hans-Georg Gadamer's idea of a fusion of horizons; and the second is Ricoeur's far more modest idea of cultural hospitality, an attitude of welcoming openness toward the cultural other.

Intercultural Dialogue and the Fusion of Horizons

Taylor describes the current challenges to intercultural dialogue as follows: "The days are long gone when European and other Westerners could consider their experience and culture as the norm toward which the whole of humanity was headed, so that the other could be understood as

⁷ Ricoeur, "Fragile Identity," 81f.

⁸ Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23.

an earlier stage on the same road that they had trodden.”⁹ Hence, a necessary condition for any intercultural dialogue is that one tries to understand the cultural other as much as possible on her/his own terms, in order to withstand the temptation of ethnocentrism or cultural imperialism. This condition can only be met if we allow “into our ontology something like alternative horizons or conceptual schemes.”¹⁰ The expression “our ontology” highlights that what is at stake in an intercultural dialogue is the core of our socio-cultural identity. This challenge also shows how vulnerable we are when it comes to our socio-cultural identity; we feel deeply humiliated when our substantial traditions, values, religious convictions and practices and our native language are misunderstood, let alone ridiculed by other people. Methodologically, Taylor aims at responding to this challenge of an unbiased intercultural dialogue by applying Gadamer’s hermeneutics, especially his idea of a fusion of horizons so as to understand different cultures and civilizations.

It is first of all a bilateral process to understand the cultural other in her/his own right. It is to understand what spontaneously takes place against the background of our own cultural outlook and inherent prejudices. In order to be fair, the understanding of the cultural other has to take place in dialogue. Since we are often not aware of our cultural prejudices, we need the challenges and interpellations of the cultural other to identify and explicate the essentials of our implicit outlook step by step. This results in a shift of our cultural self-understanding and our understanding of the cultural other, which makes it easier for us to understand it in its own right. In other words, only then “we will see our own peculiarity for the first time, as a formulated fact about us and not simply a taken-for-granted feature of the human condition as such; and at the same time, we will perceive the corresponding feature of their life-form undistorted.”¹¹ Because of the complexity of understanding a different culture and the persistency of our prejudices, this shift is not an one-off event but an ongoing process. My understanding of the cultural other is party-dependent in a double way: it varies not only with the object studied (i.e., the cultural other) but also with myself as the culturally embedded subject who studies it. To avoid the negative consequences of these party-dependencies it is necessary to have a shift in our self-understanding and our understanding of the other as well as a willingness to accept the challenge and interpellation of the cultural other.

⁹ Charles Taylor, “Understanding the Other: A Gadamerian View on Conceptual Schemes,” in Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections. Selected Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Despite all these precautions, the language in which I understand the cultural other will inevitably differ from words with which it describes itself, and which will be different from the language in which a third party understands it. Thus, to prevent the co-existence of these languages from a cacophony of voices that would make every intercultural dialogue a priori impossible, different speakers have to make a shift towards a language that bridges those of the knower and the known. To explain this process, Taylor applies Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" to the field of intercultural dialogue: "The 'horizons' here are at first distinct, they are the way that each has of understanding the human condition in their non-identity. The 'fusion' comes about when one (or both) undergo a shift; the horizon is extended so as to make room for the object that before did not fit within it."¹² What is needed for intercultural dialogue is a "richer language" in which all parties involved can agree to talk undistortively of each other. The criterion of "undistortiveness" is essential in this respect, since it allows us to have a critique of all kinds of ethnocentric understandings of the cultural other and also enables us to avoid degenerating intercultural dialogue into a juxtaposition of multiple cultural horizons, to which all claim validity from their limited perspectives, and thus leading to cultural relativism. The ideal way to understand the cultural other on its own terms consists in giving the most comprehensive account that allows as many alternative horizons or conceptual schemes as possible to enter into our ontology so that as many human beings as possible can understand each other and come to undistorted understandings. To realize this, we need to change our self-understanding and make an identity shift in ourselves. The crucial moment in this dialogical process is that we allow ourselves, especially our socio-cultural identity, to be interpellated by the other, and to refrain from categorizing "difference" as an "error," a fault or a lesser, undeveloped version. Therefore, our task is to take the stance of a fundamental openness towards the cultural other, even if she/he cannot be integrated into but challenges our identity. Although Taylor recognizes that these changes imply a painful "identity cost" and that the cultural other confronts us with disconcerting ways of being human, he is convinced that we are also enriched by knowing what other possibilities there are in our world.¹³

In my view, the idea of a fusion of horizons as the epistemological foundation for the undistorted character of intercultural dialogue is feasible only under the following conditions: the socio-cultural distance between dialogue partners should not be too large, dialogue should take place between a limited number of real persons who know each other well and in good faith and are familiar with each other's cultural sensitivities,

¹² Ibid., 30.

¹³ Ibid., 36f.

and willing to respect them. Only then, participants will feel secure enough to let their cultural identity be interpellated by the cultural other. Actually, these conditions are only met in a dialogue between partners in a family or between close friends.

The practice of “scriptural reasoning” is a concrete and successful example of such an approach in the sphere of interreligious dialogue that bears a lot of similarities with intercultural dialogue. Christian, Jewish and Muslim faithful come together in order to meditate and discuss each other’s sacred texts. One acknowledges the *sacredness* of the others’ scriptures, but not the *authority* for oneself. Moreover, participants also recognize that they do not exclusively own their scriptures, i.e., they are not the only experts on its final meaning. This makes possible a real dialogue and interpellation about the meaning of a sacred text by the religious other. Sacred scriptures contain long chains of reasoning, argumentation and conclusions, through which religious identities are expressed at a profound level. Scriptural reasoning contributes to mutual understanding between different faiths by bringing together the interpretation of sacred scriptures, while practices of philosophical and theological reasoning and “public issue” questions thereby show how insights and practices of a religious tradition concerning all kinds of topical issues are related to (a reasonable interpretation of) its sacred scriptures. The result is a polyphonic and non-exclusivist dialogue between people of different faiths, which prepares a shared space. This shared space is not so much aimed at consensus but friendship, i.e., the recognition of the sacred nature of each other’s scriptures and a shared desire to study them.¹⁴

However, scriptural reasoning is valuable only in itself, for its specific characteristics show that it cannot be extended to all kinds of intercultural dialogue. Only when the above-mentioned aspects of communality between those who involve in intercultural dialogue are realized, the fusion of my and others’ horizons of understanding is possible and potentially enriching. Because I am enabled to see myself and the cultural other in a different way, although this may have an identity cost. A moral obligation also urges us to see the world and the behavior of others from a broader perspective, as the first formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative indicates. In other words, the pain of my identity loss is compensated by the gain of an intellectually and morally appropriate view of the cultural other. The conditions of communality can be fulfilled for scriptural reasoning, because all three confessions are monotheistic religions of the book. As mentioned above, scriptural reasoning is a dialogue between a limited number of participants who know each other personally and have

¹⁴ For a description of the practice of scriptural reasoning see David Ford, *Christian Wisdom. Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 275-278.

an attitude of mutual respect. However, when religious or cultural schemes differ too much or when dialogue becomes anonymous, as is the case in the public debate, our capacity to understand the cultural other in its own right arrives at an impasse. Thus, the cultural other would not challenge or interpellate my cultural identity, since there is no shared language to understand its interpellation, nor a personal acquaintanceship. Rather the cultural other appears to me as an alien, whose cultural practices I find strange or even repulsive. Therefore, Taylor's appeal to change our self-understanding in order to realize a fusion of cultural horizons might become a vacuous demand in cases that need most dialogue between cultures which have substantial cultural differences, and when dialogue becomes anonymous or abstract which may be the case if this model is extended to a dialogue among entire cultures.

As we know, the idea of a fusion of horizons stems from Gadamer's work on the interpretation of classic texts or works of art in different spatio-temporal contexts. These works can be interpreted from different perspectives which complement and interpellate each other and thus enrich our understanding. At the same time, the text or the work of art itself serves as the primary, concrete and stable point of reference for every interpretation. This combination of a concrete focal point and a multiplicity of perspectives not only makes a fusion of interpretational horizons possible and avoids their indefinite dissemination, but also enables the reader to distinguish, in principle, a fair interpretation from a distorted or biased one. In this sense, the idea of a fusion of horizons rests on the belief that the universe of textual interpretation and understanding is homogeneous and refers to a given (body of) text(s), which enables different interpretations to be seen as complementing and interpellating each other. Although hermeneutics has enormous merits as an underlying theory of interpretation of (classic) texts and works of art, its application to the understanding of other cultures causes insurmountable problems, because there is no such thing as a stable, cultural point of reference that could serve as a criterion for the undistorted interpretation of cultures. This is especially so the cultural landscape has become so diverse that there is rather dissemination and deferral of meaning than complementary understanding and fusion of horizons.

By assuming that a fusion of horizons can be reached a dialogue between cultures we run the risk of ignoring the gap between different cultural horizons, which can be too big to bridge and thus a critical interpellation by the cultural other is unnoticed. This, in turn, can result in inadvertently understanding the cultural other from one's own perspective and failing to see it on its own terms. Here, the basic problem is that, if there is no minimal communality between the interpretational horizons of two different cultures, I cannot know whether my understanding of the cultural other is not a distorted appropriation in disguise. The possibly

appropriative character of my understanding of the other can only be corrected if the other has a minimal understanding of my interpretation of its culture, and reversely the other's critical feedback on my interpretation only makes sense if I understand what the other is talking about at all.

Another problem arises when we try to make the shift from a dialogue between concrete individuals to an encounter with a different culture as a whole. As mentioned above, scriptural reasoning refers to a situation, in which participants meet on a regular basis and have a direct and personal dialogue about each other's sacred scriptures. In such a dialogical situation, it seems reasonable to rely on the critical interpellations and challenges by the religious other to correct my distorted understanding of the other, as well as on my intellectual and moral capacities to see things from a broader perspective. However, when the debate about cultural differences takes place in the wide public sphere, the dialogical model falls short of expectations, because the exchange between different cultures is only occasional, indirect and impersonal. In such situations, one cannot invoke the direct, dialogical interpellation of the concrete cultural other to correct distorted judgements about the other's culture. The risk of stereotyping is much larger in interpreting a different culture than in dialoguing directly with a concrete cultural other. Examples given in the introductory section of this paper provide us with an ample evidence that contemporary Western societies find it difficult to start a fair public debate between different cultures, let alone to pursue a dialogue of fair interpellations and challenges.

In sum, the traditional model of intercultural dialogue only works in a situation in which there is a regular, direct and personal exchange between people belonging to different cultures, and if it takes place in a homogeneous universe of discourse with common, stable and identifiable points of reference. In other words, a fusion of horizons as the ideal result of a dialogue between cultures is only possible between friends or close relatives. An excellent illustration of the crucial importance of friendship for a fusion of horizons are Plato's dialogues. Because most of the characters in these dialogues are friends or at least acquaintances of each other, it is no surprise that they often come to a conclusion shared by all of them. In today's global society which is marked by a pervasive heterogeneity and a considerable degree of cultural segregation, it cannot be taken for granted that these presuppositions are fulfilled. This makes us hesitant about extending the ideal of a fusion of horizons to dialogue between different cultures.

Dialogue between Cultures and Cultural Hospitality¹⁵

In contrast to Taylor's proposal, Ricoeur presents an alternative model of dialogue between cultures which is far more modest. His starting-point is the acknowledgement that there is an unbridgeable gap between different (cultural) horizons of understanding, because the universe of discourse in which I dialogue with the cultural other is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Similar to Taylor, Ricoeur stresses that dialogue between cultures offers invaluable opportunities and can avoid cultural isolation and ethnocentrism. To understand Ricoeur's ideas about this matter it is necessary to look at his theory about translation from one language into another and to apply it to the understanding of the cultural other.¹⁶ My reason for this approach is that there are some close analogies between, on the one hand, native language and translation, and on the other, cultural identity and dialogue between cultures. A native language is an essential part of the socio-cultural identity of a person or society, and dialogue between cultures can be seen as a translation from one culture into the other. Hence, an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of translation can help us to have a better insight about those of dialogue between cultures. Moreover, language and culture are both characterized by an irreducible heterogeneity: there are only individual languages, not a universal language that could serve as a mother tongue for everyone. Similarly, there are only individual cultures, not a universal culture, in which all individual cultures would only be its manifestations. Cultures and languages are fundamentally heterogeneous symbolic systems. They are not only a matter of individual users but also systemic realities, for they enable us to be aware of important differences between the individual and the collective level, between the personal level of dialoguing with the linguistic and cultural other and the collective level of languages and cultures as relatively independent realities.¹⁷ A conversation between people who speak different languages or belong to dif-

¹⁵ I discussed Ricoeur's ideas about cultural hospitality in more detail in Peter Jonkers, "The Boundaries of Intercultural Dialogue in a World 'After Babel'," *Universitas* 10 (2018): 12-18.

¹⁶ See Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006). For an excellent introduction to Ricoeur's philosophy of translation see Richard Kearney, "Paul Ricoeur and the Hermeneutics of Translation," *Research in Phenomenology* 37 (2007): 147-159.

¹⁷ In this context, it is relevant to refer to the famous distinction of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure between speech (French: parole) and language (French: langue). See a.o. Paul Ricoeur, "What is a text? Explanation and understanding," in Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 146.

ferent cultures offers similar opportunities, although everyone is aware of the challenges in communicating with the linguistic and the cultural other.

To make communication possible in a context of linguistic heterogeneity, in other words in a world “after Babel,” translation is crucial since we have no immediate access to the linguistic other. This is true not only for translation in a narrow sense, i.e., translating a different language into my native language or vice versa, but also for translation in a broad sense, i.e., when we want to understand the other. We have no immediate access to the cultural other, even if the other speaks the same language as we do. In a world “after Babel,” “to understand is to translate.”¹⁸ Despite these substantial challenges, the opportunities of translation are much greater and far beyond an obvious utility in all kinds of everyday circumstances. Translation enables us to avoid the bitter fate of self-enclosure in a monologue and solipsism, hence translation is necessary for the understanding not only of the other, but also ourselves as what is our own must be learned just as much as what is foreign.¹⁹ Therefore, in order to understand our own language and ourselves we have to take the detour of (the language) of the other.

Ricoeur gives numerous examples of opportunities that translation offers. Every language has a specific way of carving things up phonetically, based on its phonological system, conceptually, based on its lexical system, and syntactically, based on its specific grammar. In a similar vein, within the same linguistic community, each word is marked by polysemy, i.e., has more than one meaning. In order to find the right meaning, we have to take into account the meaning that a word takes on in a sentence as well as in the wider context of a discourse, both patent and hidden, intellectual and emotional. A sentence introduces a further degree of polysemy that is related to the world as the referent of the sentence. Polysemy also occurs on the level of the narrative, referring to the fact that it is always possible to say the same thing in a different way. I can only become aware of this linguistic and interpretational richness through the (linguistic) other. Ricoeur summarizes these opportunities of translation with the catchword “linguistic hospitality,” which carries the double duty “to expropriate oneself from oneself as one appropriates the other to oneself.”²⁰ By fulfilling this duty, linguistic hospitality offers a pragmatic way out of the ruinous alternative of complete untranslatability or incommensurability versus perfect translatability or homogeneity. However, replacing this alternative by the complex dialectic of expropriation and appropriation also implies that translation is always a risky business since one has to serve two masters: one’s own mother tongue and the foreign

¹⁸ Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10; see also Kearney, “Paul Ricoeur,” 150f.

language. Being bound by conflicting loyalties inevitably means that translation is situated somewhere between faithfulness and betrayal.²¹

When translating, people try to salvage meaning. This practice is a work of *remembering*: remembering a world “before Babel,” prior to the multiplicity of languages and translations, characterized by imagining an immediate access to an original language. What drives translation is the attempt to retrieve a completely transparent language. This explains why people feel a kind of resistance when they permit foreign languages to access the symbolic world of their native language. In situations like these, they spontaneously experience what is strange to them as a threat to the ideal of self-sufficiency and transparency. From this perspective, all translations are inevitably poor ones, by definition as it were. Nevertheless, there *is* translation: people have always translated, since it is a “remedy for plurality in a world of dispersion and confusion.”²² Hence, engaging in translation is not only a work of remembering but also of *mourning* over what is irrevocably lost, such as the self-sufficiency of one’s native language, the feeling of linguistic omnipotence, a perfect translation which would rest on a perfect homology between our own concepts and the world. All these mean that one has to accept the loss of a perfect translation and a univocal meaning so that “we can only aim at a supposed equivalence, not founded on a demonstrable identity of meaning.”²³ This equivalence without identity calls for multiple translations and retranslations which can be compared with each other and also for acknowledging that there will always be something untranslatable. Since the heterogeneity of languages is irreducible, translation cannot result in a fusion of languages in a hypothetically universal language.

By accepting translations of our native language, we expropriate ourselves from ourselves, i.e., we give up our longing for linguistic self-sufficiency and the illusion of a perfect translation and a fusion of linguistic horizons. Besides mourning over this loss, translation also offers an opportunity: by appropriating the foreign language to ourselves, we become aware of specific expressive possibilities and idiosyncrasies of our native language as well as those of the foreign language. This multifaceted learning process explains why there is a desire to translate, which goes beyond constraint and utility. Against this background, Ricoeur’s call for linguistic hospitality can be understood, “where the pleasure of dwelling in the other’s language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one’s own welcoming house.”²⁴

²¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Reflections on The Just* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26.

²² Ricoeur, *Reflections*, 28.

²³ Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10; see also 26-9.

What, then, can we learn from Ricoeur's theory of translation for the understanding of and the dialogue between cultures? He has indicated that the dissemination of cultural horizons is part of the human condition, just like linguistic dissemination. Our deeply embedded longing for self-sufficiency explains our resistance against this dissemination, and our opposition against the expropriation that dialogue between cultures inevitably implies. This longing also explains our spontaneous inclination to regard the (cultural) other as a threat to our own socio-cultural identity. However, this longing for an undisturbed, fixated identity is just as illusionary as the longing for an absolute, pre-babylonian linguistic homogeneity. What we have to accept is that cultural heterogeneity is just as fundamental as linguistic heterogeneity. There will always be something incomprehensible in a foreign culture, as there will always be something untranslatable. Paradoxically, the same holds true for the understanding of our own language and culture.

When differences between cultures are substantial, the only thing that can be achieved through a dialogue between cultures is an equivalence of various understandings of other cultures rather than a demonstrable identity of meaning. We have to keep in mind that there is no fixed standard against which we could measure the correctness of our understanding of the cultural other. The cultural other's challenges and criticisms of my understanding of this other are certainly vital to minimize the risk of distortion. If a fusion of cultural horizons is impossible in these situations, then I will not know whether our understanding of the other is unbiased. In other words, the hypothesis of a universal language that could serve as a standard for a perfect translation does not hold, and for the same reason there is no perfect understanding of the cultural other that would a priori protect us against distortion. These problems increase if this dialogue takes place between whole cultures because such a dialogue offers less possibilities to correct distortions in understanding due to the lack of direct, personal contact with each other.

However, as the loss of linguistic self-sufficiency can be compensated by the awareness of possibilities and idiosyncrasies of our own language through our acquaintance with the linguistic other, so can the dialogue between cultures enrich our awareness of the specific characteristics of our own and foreign cultures, thus preventing the deadlock of cultural self-enclosure. It is vital for us to expand our cultural horizon, because we can only discover our own culture through that of the other. The term cultural hospitality aptly expresses this attitude. It is a pragmatic way out of the ruinous alternative of total incommunicability versus perfect transparency of the foreign culture. Cultural hospitality symbolizes the respect for the otherness of the other culture, its irreducible strangeness to me, while acknowledging the opportunities that dialoguing with a foreign culture offers to understand that culture as well of my own.

There is a desire for a dialogue between cultures to understand other cultures and to explain our own culture to them as well as to ourselves.

Conclusion

The above analysis of two models of intercultural dialogue shows that understanding another culture is a risky practice, for it is always in danger of assimilating the other, which cannot and should not be assimilated, into our own world. There is no guarantee that our understanding of a foreign culture is complete and unbiased because there is no objective criterion for the undistorted character of dialogue between cultures. Therefore, we have to realize that there is always something in the foreign culture that eludes our understanding. This is due to the irreducible heterogeneity of cultural horizons, which prevents us from accepting the fusion of horizons as the standard model for intercultural dialogue. What we can aim at is a supposed equivalence, not founded on a demonstrable identity of meaning. This equivalence can be concretized by the practice of a dialogue between cultures that consists primarily in comparing understandings of each other. Thus, “we can understand differently, without hope of filling the gap between equivalence and adequacy,” which is a perfect correspondence between the original and its interpretation.²⁵ This offers us a realistic way to live with the double bind of faithfulness and betrayal, and also points to the pleasures of cultural hospitality. An imperfect dialogue between cultures is preferable to no dialogue at all. Only by accepting the test of the foreign, or thanks to cultural hospitality, we become sensitive to the specific characteristics of another culture and will be able to learn from it. Cultural hospitality also enables us to get a better understanding of our own culture through the usage of the culture of the other. By staying in the cultural space with which we are familiar and in which we feel at home, we think we will not be challenged by the foreign culture. However, such an attitude inevitably leads to self-sufficiency and self-enclosure. Dialogue between cultures can bring forth a creative encounter between different cultural worlds and make meaning flexible. It can also develop new cultural resonances and surprising new possibilities.

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²⁵ Idem, 10. Please note that the translation of the French ‘adéquation’ by adequacy is misleading; a better translation in this case is correspondence.

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3.

On Norms Underlying Different Conversational Practices: Logic Reasoning and Dialogue of Cultural Traditions¹

Bernd Buldt

Introduction

The considerations below grew out my experience of teaching logic at a public comprehensive university in the United States; more specifically, teaching an introductory logic class at the undergraduate level designed to feed into the university-wide general education curriculum. In this context, three issues came up that made me re-think what I had been doing for many years without much reflection. The first issue was the challenge to make an introductory logic class a meaningful contribution to a student's general education. In order to do so, I felt I had to explain where logic comes from. If we cannot assume logic as an unexplained given (as we often do in more specialized or upper division classes), nor as a faculty exercised by an immortal soul, then where does it come from? The answer I give in class is rooted in anthropology: as a biological species we are social primates. And what sets us apart from other social primates is a quite extraordinary set of social practices that make up the complex languages we speak: linguistic practices that go far beyond anything we can see in other primates. On this account, logic reflects specific socio-linguistic practices or games we play (Wittgenstein) according to certain scoring rules (Lewis). The second issue cropped up when, as a department chairperson, I met with students who felt that some faculty would abuse their superior argumentative or logic skills to dominate the class and student opinion. If it is correct that logic is best conceived of as a socio-linguistic game we play, then we have to concede that some players will be better at it than others. And those who are better skilled at the game can potentially abuse their greater proficiency for their

¹ I greatly benefitted from colleagues who were generous enough to read a draft version of the paper. I am grateful to Jc Beall and Graham Priest for words of encouragement (and some pointers) when confidence was low. Robert Eno, Brendan Larvor, and Palle Yourgrau were frank in their criticism which was extremely helpful; I thank them for that. I added their initials in square brackets [XY] where I include or respond directly to their input. And while I tried to be a good boy and accommodate all their feedback, I was stubborn enough not to heed every piece of advice; in short, I am to blame for any remaining infelicities and blunders. Last but not least I thank the editors of this volume.

own advantage. This is because the social practices we call logic do not allow for a provision like a handicap score in golf, odds in chess, or *komi* in Go. Seen in this light, what students pointed out is that we have no provisions in the game of logic that would help offset differentials in the skill level. The third issue came with the realization how much cultural arrogance is woven into the very fabric of mainstream English-speaking philosophy. In an attempt to de-colonize my teaching and to include non-European voices, I started to compare our own socio-linguistic practices with traditions informed by different norms and hence different practices. This made sense in particular for a general education class that is meant, among others, to prepare students for navigating a globalized world in the spirit of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. (And for those now wondering what students get out of my logic class: they still get the full equivalent of Hodges' *Logic*.) The remarks below on Daoism, however, are taken from my introductory philosophy class.

Thus, what follows is not an ambitious theoretical framework, nor a firework of brilliant ideas, nor any deep philosophy; what I offer is a selection of class room marginalia triggered by demands made on my teaching (sections 1-3) which are here organized so as to make a contribution to the topic of this volume (sections 4-6). The context we added to frame these remarks touches on a number of fairly big topics but without discussing any of them in appropriate breadth or depth. I hope the reader will grant us some clemency.

One last clarification before we begin. In order to align our considerations with the sciences, in our case anthropology, we not only assume humans to be social primates but also to be the co-evolutionary product of nature and nurture (i.e., culture). Both nature and culture express themselves across a wide spectrum of possibilities; but as there is no right or wrong for the bodily expression of our genes (e.g., shape of one's nose), so are cultural expressions different without being right or wrong (e.g., language). We belabor the obvious to make very clear that our initial set of three case studies is not meant to pinpoint features that are characteristic for a certain culture, thereby re-enforcing stereotypes such as the logical Greek or the lone-wolf warriors who share companionable silence.²

² I find it somewhat troubling to realize that it is less than a generation ago that even leading scholars spoke of Western rationality (in contrast to Classical Chinese Philosophy) as a matter of course; see e.g., Angus C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao. Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1991), ix: "Much attention will be given to the analysis of modes of thinking at the *opposite extreme from Western rationality*, to the aphorisms of *Lao-tzu*, the correlations of Yin-Yang cosmology and the divinatory system of the *Yi*" (emphasis added). What does it say about oneself when even the giants erred? A similar observation applies to Harbsmeier (see note 21) who is anxious to prove that the Chinese can live up to the

Rather, we understand our case studies to illustrate cultural options people have; thus being examples of the wide spectrum on which the human condition expresses itself but with no implications whatsoever as to right and wrong, superior and inferior, or tying a particular expression to a certain region or a culture like the West or Hindu. In words probably familiar to many readers, we attempt to isolate certain Weberian ideal types.³ We could have used fictional examples instead and talked about First Officer Spock or Captain Picard's encounter with the Tamarians.⁴ But since the problems we address towards the end are real-world problems, we decided to go with real, not fictional examples so that our discussion feels less abstract but more concrete, more tangible if you will.

The Greek Tradition (and Some of Its Repercussions)

We believe that Aristotle was the founder of logic as a discipline; and we believe this because he said so himself, and not one of his contemporaries contested his claim. But logic was not his brain child alone. Aristotle built on work done by his predecessors, and two developments in particular blazed a trail for him. First, an early recognition of the power of logic; second, Plato's spadework on language.

The Power of Logic

Consider a simple non-constructive proof. For example, suppose we want to prove that there are two irrational numbers x and y such that x^y is rational.

Claim. There are two irrational numbers x and y such that x^y is rational.

Proof. Let $x = y = \sqrt{2}$. Then, by classical logic, either x^y (i.e., $\sqrt{2}^{\sqrt{2}}$) is rational, or it is not. If x^y is rational, we are done. If x^y is not rational, keep $y = \sqrt{2}$ but let $x = \sqrt{2}^{\sqrt{2}}$. A little algebra then yields:

$$x^y = (\sqrt{2}^{\sqrt{2}})^{\sqrt{2}} = (\sqrt{2})^{(\sqrt{2} \cdot \sqrt{2})} = (\sqrt{2})^2 = 2,$$

which is a rational number. This proves the claim, for either the pair of numbers $x = \sqrt{2}$ and $y = \sqrt{2}$, or the pair: $x = \sqrt{2}^{\sqrt{2}}$ and $y = \sqrt{2}$ are two irrational numbers that fit the bill.

gold standard of logic as defined by the Greek; suppose they could not, I fail to see what difference it would make.

³ See Max Weber, "The 'objectivity' of knowledge in social science and social policy," in *Max Weber. Collected Methodological Writings*, eds. and trans. Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 100-138 (= ch. 3).

⁴ See *Star Trek: The New Generation*; Season 5 (1991-92), Episode 2: "Darmok." [BL, PY]

What this example demonstrates is the power of logic. Using a few uncontroversial assumptions about numbers, we can prove that certain objects with quite specific properties must exist out of logical necessity, due to the sheer power of logic. The classical Greeks got a taste of that power when Zeno produced his famous paradoxes, when Pythagoreans saw their doctrines shattered by the existence of incommensurable numbers, and when mathematicians turned geometry from a haphazard collection of individual results into a rigorous science based on first principles (axioms).

Confidence in Language

Plato argued against certain views on language that he considered a threat to the public discourse on which the Athenian *polis* rested. Among those were the extreme positions of one of his teachers, Cratylus, who, according to legend, stopped speaking and just pointed at things, while Antisthenes, like Plato a student of Socrates, limited himself to uttering tautologies such as “man is man” or “good is good” since non-trivial sentences such as “man is good” were beyond the limits of what could be justified. The reason for each position were arguments advanced by earlier philosophers such as Heraclitus or Parmenides. Heraclitus had argued that reality, driven by contradictions, is in constant flux; a doctrine that undermines any efforts to assign language a working semantics: linguistic expressions do not refer since the world is a moving target. For related reasons Parmenides had argued that knowledge, which is stable by definition, cannot be about the unstable, empirical world; so, when we use words that refer to it, we can only justify statements that amount to vacuous truisms. Sophists, like Plato’s Protagoras and his *homo mensura* principle, could therefore challenge the idea that there is a clear distinction between truth and falsity and thereby undermine public discourse.⁵ And they could argue for their positions because previous philosophers such as Heraclitus or Parmenides had cast doubt on the idea that language refers to the world in any useful or reliable way. Thus, in order to defeat sophistic doctrines and restore the foundations of public discourse, Plato had to show that and how we can make language speak about the world (e.g., by careful dihairetic distinctions) and that therefore notions of truth and falsity can be established for well-formed sentences. He thus laid the foundations for a theory of syntax (grammar), a theory of meaning (semantics), and a theory of truth.

⁵ For it was Protagoras’ promise that a skilled orator can make their audience believe whatever he or she wants them to believe. But if there is no truth, and if our reasoning is no longer guided by the idea that our inferential steps preserve truth, then the whole idea of citizens making reasoned decisions informed by facts is out of the window.

Aristotle

Aristotle combined the power of logical argument (as explored by his predecessors) with the confidence in language and its (denotational) semantics (as established by Plato) to devise his own system of logic. Due to the great influence his philosophy exerted – when, for instance, during the medieval ages a scholar wrote *philosophus dixit* (the philosopher said) it was clear to every reader without ever mentioning a name that Aristotle was meant – his two decisions on logic and language dominated Christian and Islamic thought for the next two thousand years (well, roughly). One consequence was that scholars thought it possible to prove, like we did above for numbers, the existence of other abstract objects with specific properties (e.g., god) just based on language and logic (e.g., the proof devised by Anselm of Canterbury).

Exchange as Contest

Another social practice that Europe inherited from the Greeks is to frame a public exchange among people as a competition where participants fight for coming in first. It is not an athletic but an intellectual contest. And while Plato's own achievements as a wrestler are uncertain, he used athletic metaphors a lot.⁶ And like in any such competition, contestants are entitled to exploit any weakness their opponents show. There is no room for compensatory or mutual efforts. So, what may happen is that those who are more skilled in battle, or who are simply more powerful, will embezzle the following two points. The first critical point is that a deductive argument can be valid but unsound.⁷ The ability to judge the

⁶ For a collection of the known evidence, see Steven G. Miller, *The Berkeley Plato. From Neglected Relic to Ancient Treasure* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2009); see page 46 for Plato's wrestling career and pages 49f. for references in Plato's dialogues. [BL]

⁷ A *deductive argument* consists of a set of premises P and a conclusion c , which we write as: $P, \text{ therefore } c$; and it is valid if there is no situation in which the premises are all true but the conclusion is not. A situation in which the premises are true but not the conclusion is called a counterexample for that argument. In other words, an argument is valid if there is no counterexample. In what follows, we make explicit reference only to deductive arguments; thus, argument (in the logic sense of the word) always means deductive argument. The inclusion of non-deductive arguments (in which the conclusion is more or less likely to be true given the premises are) would require a different paper.

Valid and sound are here used as technical terms. Valid (as defined before) can be linked to the argument having a proper logical form, while unsound means that one or more of its premises are not true in the world we live in. For instance, the argument: All A are B , all B are C ; therefore, all A are C , is valid due to its form which prevents it from suffering a counterexample. But it becomes unsound when we substitute apes

soundness of an argument is strictly correlated to the range of one's knowledge; the more we know, the easier we can spot a false premise. The second critical point is that the notion of validity is non-constructive: one's inability to find a counterexample does not entail that none exists and that the argument is therefore valid. (Well, unless we have a rigorous proof that counterexamples do not exist, say, by giving a formal proof; but outside mathematics these are rare instances indeed.) If two parties involved in a dispute use logic to resolve an issue, but there is a significant differential in logic skills between those two parties, then the more skilled party can abuse the inability of the less knowledgeable party to detect false premises or the inability of less skilled participants to produce counterexamples as a license to conclude that the argument advanced by the dominating party is indefeasible (instead of saying, correctly, that it has not yet been defeated, or, that it is currently undefeated). There were long periods of time, during which logic and rhetoric were not properly kept separate, and where participants felt entitled to take advantage of any differentials in skill level as just described. To wit, Plato's *Euthydemus*: "Rest assured, Socrates, I tell you this in advance, no matter what this young man will reply, he will be destroyed;" or the Renaissance scholar Lorenzo Valla: "to the logician victory is more valuable than proof."⁸

Contests Turned Bad

The rhetorical abuse of skill differentials became worse when Greek ideas and practices mixed with the missionary zeal of Abrahamic religions. While Plato and Aristotle were very clear that philosophy, even when aided by careful linguistic analyses and logic, remains an ever unfinished business, Abrahamic religions begged to differ. Their followers believed in the possibility and reality of definitive answers based on revealed divine truths. Confidence in the denotational function of language and the power of logic thus became weapons to force non-believers into surrendering to the truth. This move added a potentially violent trait to the exercise of logic: instead of using physical force one can use intellectual force to the same effect. And it did not stay in the religious sphere. If two monks trained in the art of dialectical dispute battle for victory, not much harm will be done beyond duped vanity. But if an agent of the Holy Inquisition interrogates the uneducated peasant, the potentially violent nature of logical reasoning becomes very clear. Similar observations can

for *A*, bonobos for *B*, and chimps for *C*, for the premise "all apes are bonobos" is false in the world we live in.

⁸ See Plato, *Euthydemus*, 275e: "καὶ μὴν, ἔφη σοί, ὃ Σώκρατες, προλέγω ὅτι ὁπότερ ἂν ἀποκρίνηται τὸ μειράκιον, ἐξελεγχθήσεται;" and Lorenzo Valla, *Repastinatio dialecticae et philosophiae*, ed. Gianni Zippel (Padua: Antenore, 1982), vol. 1, 175f.: "Dialecticus [...] victoriam plus valent quam ipsa probatio."

be adduced for the colonial mindset even among scholars of the Enlightenment. It is what Herder called the “fictitious tale of lop-sided and disdainful lies that mocks at and thereby mars the customs of all (other) nations and times”⁹ and what made him the vociferous and staunch opponent of Voltaire or his former teacher Kant, among others.

The potentially violent nature inherent in the exercise of logical reasoning that results from the abuse of an uneven distribution of skills is this: one party (e.g., the inquisitor, the scholar, the colonial officer) is well-educated and highly skilled in dialectical and logical reasoning, while the other party (e.g., the alleged heretic, the alleged fool, the indigenous spokesperson) is more often than not neither, not knowledgeable nor skilled in that particular game of logic.¹⁰ Thus, there is no fair competition going on between the two parties and no obligation for the more skilled player to help out the less skilled one, for instance, by admitting the critical difference between undefeated and infeasible. Consequently, one side is doomed to lose and pay with their life or loss of their culture. While this might sound extreme (and probably is), we can find the pattern everywhere: parents who dominate their children; teachers who discipline their students; legal scholars who lure suspects into legal traps. They all use a playing field that is uneven in terms of knowledge and skill for their own advantage and with potentially harsh consequences for the losing party.

Norms

We will now recast the observations made above in terms of norms that underlay widespread conversational practices in Europe, where Europeans settled in the Americas, and the Islamic world – people we refer collectively to as heirs of the Greek.

⁹ Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Erziehung der Menschheit. Beytrag zu vielen Beyträgen des Jahrhunderts* (1774), repr. in Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vols. 1-33, ed. Bernhard Suphan a.o. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877-1913), vol. 3, 555: “Warum endlich trägt man den ‘Roman einseitiger Hohnlüge’ denn in alle Jahrhunderte, verspottet und verunziert damit die Sitten aller Völker und Zeitläufte.”

¹⁰ A well-known counter-example is Joan of Arc; despite being an illiterate peasant, she still frustrated her judges on occasion by avoiding their carefully laid out traps; see Régine Pernoud and Marie-Véronique Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999), 112 (“stupefied”). Eventually, though, she got caught in distinctions she didn’t understand nor were explained to her on request; see *Ibid.*, 121f. (“Church Militant”) and 130 (signing the cedula). [PY]

Norm G1: As heirs of the Greek, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Language, and in particular its referential or denotational function, can normally be trusted.*

Likewise, most will agree that an argument is valid if you cannot poke a hole in it. This is a norm for the quality of arguments and is based on the social practice of refuting arguments by counterexamples. Since Tarski, this has become the gold standard embraced by logicians worldwide.

Norm G2: As heirs of the Greek, we agree on and operate under the condition that *An argument is valid if it does not suffer counterexamples.*

Note that without a basic confidence in language and its capability to deliver statements that are clearly true or false, we cannot have a notion of validity for arguments. For the notion of counterexample – as a situation, in which the premises are true but not the conclusion – requires a notion of truth established beforehand. In short, no norm like G2 (i.e., no argument or logic) without norm G1. Moreover, we think it is a notable consequence of norm G2 that validity guarantees consensus among those who embrace it as a norm once they have agreed on common ground, that is, on sets of shared premises. In other words, if you accord with other people on the premises, you must accord on what logically follows from them.

Norm G3: As heirs of the Greek, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Consensus among people can always be achieved once an agreement on shared premises has been reached.*

We see G3 first implemented in the practice of Greek mathematics, which, under programmatic names such as *sola ratione* (Anselm of Canterbury, Berengar of Tours), *more geometrico* (Renaissance writers; Leibniz: *mos geometricus*), or Euclidean method wielded an enormous influence throughout the intellectual history of Europe and the Islamic world.

In light of observations we made above, G3 has an evil twin, though. It emerges when we see an argument-based exchange as resembling an athletic contest where we expect to see a clear winner and loser and logic can be used to force an opponent into submission.

Norm G4: As heirs of the Greek, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Logic may be used to force an opponent into logical submission, that is, to force them to accept (our) conclusions.*

In this context, many will tolerate the above-mentioned practice that one party in the exchange will misconstrue not-yet-been-defeated as indefeasible or deploy other expedient rhetorical dodges.

Norm G5: As heirs of the Greek, many agree on and operate under the condition that *Disputants may consider their argument to be indefeasible if their opponents fail to spot false premises (although they may exist), fail to produce a counterexample (although they may exist), or fail to call out illicit rhetorical moves.*

In order to support our discussion below, we use the following mnemonic abbreviations:

G1 (LingCon) as short for G1: *linguistic confidence*, i.e., confidence in the denotational capacity of language;

G2 (NCE) as short for G2: *no counter-example* is what renders a deductive argument valid;

G3 (Euclid) as short for G3: the *Euclidean* method, i.e., achieving consensus by applying logic to shared assumptions (or common ground);

G4 (Contest) as short for G4: logical argument as a *contest* in which losers are forced into submission;

G5 (Illicit) as short for G5: logical argument as contest whose participants may win by using *illicit* means.

Countermeasures

While G5 (Illicit) underlies a widely accepted social practice (which is still being honed in debating societies at high-schools or colleges and continues to drive female students out of philosophy classes) and was in effect even for scholarly debates, it does not support the pursuit of truth. Scientists and scholars, who are committed to the pursuit of truth, will strongly object to the conflation of not yet undefeated with indefeasible and have therefore (well, for other reasons too) implemented two countermeasures.

First, the obligation to make honest and sustained efforts to poke holes into one's own argument and to advance it in a public discourse only if one's own attempts of refuting it have failed. From what we can tell, this approach is a social practice among scientists and scholars, but to varying degrees. It is true in mathematics, where the modern (i.e., post-1900) style of writing mathematics can be seen as a highly effective way to discipline one's own reasoning and thus to prevent errors from sneaking in, and it is true in case of high-stake claims in the sciences (e.g., the discovery of the Higgs boson or of gravitational waves, instances where researchers deliberately delayed their publications until the time that all

efforts to explain their findings as misinterpretations of the data had failed). But we know that it is not necessarily followed in the social sciences (recent catchwords are *p*-hacking and reproducibility crisis) and difficult to implement in the humanities where creativity may rank higher than rigor.

Second, the obligation to criticize arguments made by others only in their strongest possible form. That is, if we find someone else's argument to be defective, we first try to patch it and make it as unassailable as possible; and it is only this amended version that we may subject to our criticism (provided it still applies). This approach follows from the hermeneutic principle we call the principle of charity. It requires us to regard fellow human beings as rational and to amicably fill in the gaps in what seems to be imperfect expressions of their rationality. While this is what I have been taught as a student and what I teach my own students, I am not sure how widely accepted this approach is as a social practice among scientists and scholars. For it runs counter to the competitive nature of research and its fight over resources that continue to grow scarce; some researchers seem therefore willing to adopt practices similar to the norms G4 (Contest) and G5 (Illicit) instead of embracing a communal, cooperative approach. But even highly competitive tech giants like Facebook or Google understand the value of a cooperative approach and therefore have their researchers freely share their results instead of locking them away as trade secrets. In this case, our thinking should not be too far off.¹¹ We can wrap the two countermeasures just mentioned into a new norm governing (what we think is) proper scientific conduct.

Norm S1 (Pursuit of Truth): As scientists and scholars, we agree on and operate under the condition that *An argument may be (a) advanced only after one's own sustained attempts to refute it have failed; (b) be criticized only after it has been amended and brought into its strongest possible form.*

We see the norm S1 as an antidote to the venom in norm G5 (Illicit) (and, by extension, also in G4 (Contest)). For its first part mandates the more skilled player to actively provide a handicap to the lesser skilled player by exposing their own weaknesses, while its second part requires them to make the opponent as strong as possible instead putting victory above all. The net result is that the common goal, the pursuit of truth, will be easier to achieve. Note that this does not contradict the observation that the competition of ideas is the lifeblood of the sciences, which we believe

¹¹ This still leaves us with the task of justifying our use of the principle of charity. Are we in fact rational (*de re*) or only to be held as such (*de jure*) until proven otherwise? [PY] We turn to this question below.

it is; S1 just keeps the playing field level and checks on cheaters and unbridled egomania.

Clearly, none of these norms are exclusive to the Greek tradition and its heirs. We could point out, for example, similar norms in scholarly traditions in India, especially in those that adhered to the Vedanta and its exegesis (similar needs result in similar norms) or, when it comes more specifically to logic, the Nyāya school in Hinduism or the Buddhist literature on *yukti* (युक्ति, reasoning). Moreover, there are more norms implicit in what we described; for example, assumptions about equality or egalitarian access. But we can also find major differences; for example, the role of consensus within a community of scholars (*ijmā*, إجماع) has never been formalized in the Christian tradition the way the Islamic legal tradition did. Our aim, however, is not to conduct a comprehensive study; the norms we highlighted above are what we need for the comparison below, so we close their list at six.

A Daoist Tradition

We now turn to a first alternative; it shows that Plato's decision to have faith in language is not inevitable and that holding skeptical views about the power of language may be more advisable. We can find this skepticism expressed in texts that were later considered founding documents of Daoism, like the *Laozi* 老子 (the *Daodejing*) or the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. This skepticism, which we call the Daoist naming prohibition, is familiar from the famous opening line of the *Laozi* (tr. Eno):

A dao that may be spoken is not the enduring Dao 道可道非常道,
A name that may be named is not an enduring name 名可名非常名.

But before we do turn to our topic, we believe it necessary to first hedge our observations since speaking about Daoism has become somewhat of a mined territory. And although for our purposes it does not matter whether what follows is pigeonholed as philosophy, or religion, or both, or neither, the remarks that follow provide some general context, hence we include them anyway. But doing so causes quite some scholarly dead-weight we felt appropriate to suppress in all the other sections; readers not interested in the finer details are therefore invited to ignore footnotes throughout the present section and to skip the next subsection in its entirety.¹²

¹² All Chinese quotations are taken from the online database at <https://ctext.org>, except for Wáng Bì whom we quote according to the *Collected Explanations and Annotations of Wang Bi* (2 vols.), ed. Lóu Yǔliè, 王弼集校釋 *Wang Bi jí jiàoshì* (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1980). And while we could use either text, below we only

Hedging Remarks

The traditional distinction between a Daoist philosophy, *dào jiā* 道家, and Daoism as a religion, *dào jiào* 道教, still taken for granted by Fényng Yǒulán 馮友蘭 in his *History* and vigorously reinforced by Creel, has seen recent criticism.¹³ Rightly so, we believe, for it is not even clear what exactly a good descriptive terminology should accomplish in this case.¹⁴

Use of the label *dào jiā* for a Daoist school of thought originated with the court astronomer and historian Sīmǎ Tán 司馬談 in the second century

reference the *Laozi* but not the *Zhuangzi*. Not only is the *Laozi* a much more familiar name, but, and this is the main reason for our preference, we can put its interpretation on more solid grounds by calling on a later author, Wáng Bì, as our main witness. In comparison, Zhuāng Zhōu does not argue explicitly for the Daoist naming prohibition 無名, *wú míng*, and the closest the inner chapters come is to state that the Dao remains undesigned 道不稱, *dào bù chēng*, and to hint at the insufficiency of words/speech 言, *yán* (ch. 2). More is found in the outer chapters 13, 18, and 22 as well as the miscellaneous chapters 25, 27, and 32, but they are no longer considered to be the master's voice. For the *Zhuangzi*, see Angus C. Graham, "Chuang-tzu's Essay on Seeing Things as Equal," *History of Religions* 9, 2-3 (Nov 1969-Feb 1970): 137-159, and Idem, *Chuang-tzu. The Inner Chapters* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), esp. chs I. 3 and 7. I consider the more recent article by Yang, while helpful, less authoritative due to the author's decision to treat the entire *Zhuangzi* as a single, monolithic work; cf. Guorong Yang, "Names and Words in the Philosophy of *Zhuangzi*" (trans. Xiao Mo), *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 3, no. 1 (Mar 2008): 1-26.

¹³ See Fényng Yǒulán, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: Free Press, 1948); Herlee G. Creel, "What Is Taoism?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76, no. 3 (Jul-Sep 1956): 139-152. The *locus classicus* for the critique is Nathan Sivin, "On the word Taoism as a Source of Perplexity. With Special Reference to the Relations of Science and Religion in Traditional China," *History of Religions* 17, no. 3/4 (Feb-May, 1978): 303-330; for a more recent summary see Russell Kirkland: "Explaining Daoism: Realities, Cultural Constructs and Emerging Perspectives," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), xi-xviii.

¹⁴ In what follows we are particularly indebted to Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and the Invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' 'et cetera'," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 1 (Feb 2003): 129-156; Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions Through Exemplary Figures in Early China," *T'oung Pao*, sec. ser. 89, no. 1/3 (2003): 59-99; Andrew Meyer, "The Altars of the Soil and Grain are Closer than Kin 社稷威於親: The Qi 齊 Model of Intellectual Participation and the Jixia 稷下 Patronage Community," *Early China* 33/34 (2010-2011): 37-99; Martin Kern, "The 'Masters' in the 'Shiji'," *T'oung Pao*, sec. ser. 101, no. 4/5 (2015): 335-362. As far as religious Daoism is concerned, we consulted *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Kohn.

BCE,¹⁵ while Daoism as an organized religion, *dào jiào*, became a visible and permanent player in Chinese society since Zhāng (Dào) Líng 張(道)陵 founded a religious community at Mount Heming 鶴鳴山 about 250 years later in the second century CE.¹⁶ The temporal distance, however, does not mean that both movements were independent from one another; rather on the contrary, they as well as their origins seem to have been connected in ways we still need to understand better. Likewise, the fact that Sīmǎ Tán invoked *jiā* does not entail that there were, in pre-Han China, firmly established school traditions with card-carrying members; except, maybe, for pockets of Confucian or Mohist scholars. Rather on the contrary, there seems to have been considerable cross-fertilization of ideas – “all the pre-Han and early Western Han thinkers seem to have been, in essence, ‘eclectics’”¹⁷ – while the compilers of the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* were probably not even aware of one another. Nor can we assume that when scholars did refer to another text that is the received text that came down on us.¹⁸

Then again, we see no reason to reject Sīmǎ Tán’s proposal altogether and to dismiss it as artificial or a modern fiction (Kirkland), for the two Sīmǎ’s – among others, we should note – saw a certain family resemblance of ideas that justified speaking of schools to a certain extent.¹⁹

¹⁵ Sīmǎ Tán used *jiā* 家, lit. house/home, to signify philosophical schools in his essay *Discussion of the Main Points of the Six Schools*, or, for short, the *Yàozhǐ* 要指 (*Main Points*). It is probably closer to his intentions to speak of skill sets or arts 術, *shù*, and people who possess those, instead of schools (of ideas). The *Yàozhǐ* was published posthumously by his son Qiān 遷 as part of his father’s biography which accounts for the last chapter (ch. 130) of their co-authored *Shǐjì* 史記, the *Records of the Grand Historian*. (A translation of the *Yàozhǐ* can be found in Burton Watson: *Ssu-ma Chi’en, Grand Historian of China* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1958], 43-48.) And while Tán didn’t mention individual names, Qiān did and put Lǎo Zǐ and Zhuāng Zǐ in the same camp by writing, in his biographical memoirs, that, despite his independence, Zhuāng Zǐ’s basic assumptions went back to the words of Lǎo Zǐ (要本歸於老子之言) and that in his writings he made clear the art of Lǎo Zǐ while slandering the followers of Confucius (詆訛孔子之徒, 以明老子之術) (*Shǐjì*, ch. 63.2143f.; English trans. *The Grand Scribe’s Records*, vol. 7: *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, ed. William H. Nienhauser, Jr. [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994], 23).

¹⁶ See Barbara Hendrichske, “Early Daoist Movements,” in *Daoism Handbook*, 134-164 (= ch. 6).

¹⁷ Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan, “Constructing Lineages,” 61.

¹⁸ Kern, “The ‘Masters’ in the ‘Shǐjì,’” 336; cf. the respective entries in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, CA: Society for the Study of Early China/Institute of East Asian Studies, 2007², 1993).

¹⁹ Kirkland stresses that the roots of Daoism aren’t found in ideas but in *practices* (emphasis his); see Russell Kirkland, “The History of Taoism. A New Outline (Research Note),” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002): 177. But I cannot see how

From among the ideas Sīmǎ Tán saw as characteristic of the Daoist school we mention (for later use) three: (1) to align oneself 順, *shùn*, with the rhythm of nature 因陰陽 and remain flexible under change 與時遷移; (2) inaction 無為, *wú wèi*; (3) the nameless 無名, *wú míng*. What we assume, then, is that the expression Daoist philosophy is not empty but refers to a certain family of ideas without supposing, however, coherent or well-demarcated school doctrines. Modifying a remark by Graham,²⁰ as we can speak of existentialism without tarring Kierkegaard and Nietzsche with the same brush so we can speak of Daoism.²¹

While the number and volume of primary sources for pre-Chin Philosophy seems favorable compared to pre-Socratic Philosophy, we take their interpretation to be similarly uncertain. This uncertainty is partly due to the fact that many primary sources are lost and that we know next to nothing about the original authors or compilers. This means we lack essential contextual information that would otherwise allow us to pinpoint meanings more accurately; already Han-commentators felt forced to discuss obsolete language. Furthermore, the uncertainty is partly due also to the poetic, often enigmatic way of expressing oneself. We do not know whether this is because of our sheer ignorance, whether it is the result of a deliberate decision to protect one's knowledge by speaking in riddles to outsiders (a known practice for many sects), or whether it is due to a general characteristic of all Chinese art as Féng opined.²²

A final concern we should address is the temporal distance of half of a millennium from the time the *Laozi* was assembled – the earliest manuscript extant dates from circa 300 BC (bamboo strips found at the Guodian 郭店 site) – to Wáng Bì 王弼 (226–249) who will be our main witness.²³

people engage in various practices (e.g., meditative, dietary, sexual) without holding certain beliefs about their efficacy (i.e., without ideas). So when I keep speaking about ideas, this includes practices.

²⁰ Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 172.

²¹ It has also been contested to call these texts philosophy; we should consider indigenous labels such as “various masters and hundred schools” 諸子百家, *zhūzi bǎijiā* (see, e.g., *Shiji*, ch. 84.2491; English trans. in *The Grand Scribe's Records*, 302); cf. Wiebke Denecke, *The Dynamics of Masters Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 1-89. We believe that a more inclusive understanding of what philosophy is suffices to alleviate these concerns (without denying that philosophy may get expressed in wildly different cultural idioms).

²² See Féng, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, 12. According to Harbsmeier, being explicit was tantamount to being vulgar; see Joseph Needham and Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 7: *Logic and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97, 144.

²³ Our argument will basically be a gloss of his commentary on the *Laozi*. Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue. A New Translation of the Tao-Te Ching of Laozi as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). Wang Bi's introductory essay, the *Lǎozǐ wēizhǐ liliè* 老子微旨例略 (in Lynn,

So much had happened, actually, that Wáng Bì is credited, among others, with ushering in a new philosophy that some call Neo-Daoism; others prefer to call it by its Chinese name: *Xuánxué* 玄學 (Studies of the Profound). But our goal is not to ascertain what the original convictions were held by the people who composed or compiled the *Laozi*; this may very well be beyond our reach forever. For our purposes (i.e., outlining the contours of how the human condition may express itself) it is entirely sufficient to identify a tradition that passes as Daoist. And Wáng Bì does not only qualify, his texts also offer us also much more solid ground to stand on (as compared to pre-Chin texts) in terms of textual integrity, length, and context. Finally, dealing with the views of a single author has the additional benefit of making other concerns, such as dealing with layers of an accretion text, superfluous.

Daoist Ontology

When we speak of Daoism, we do this within the limitations just mentioned. Furthermore, we assume a certain background; here is a brief reminder.

We assume a worldview that was informed by the *Yijing* 易經, the *Classic of Changes*, and the cosmology of the Great Ultimate 太極, *tài jí*, whose internal dynamics is that of *yīn-yáng* 陰陽. The ontological meaning of *dào* 道 we have in mind is when the *dào* – or the Great 大, *dà*, or the Great *Dào* 大道 (*Laozi*, chs. 18, 34, 53, 67), or the Great Image 大象, *dà xiàng* (*ibid.*, ch. 35) – is characterized as the mother of all things 天下母, *tiān xià mǔ* (*ibid.*, chs. 25, 40) that is continuously changing 逝, *shì* (*ibid.*, ch. 25) and does so by reversal 反, *fǎn* (*ibid.*, chs. 25, 40, 78; cf. ch. 77: the bow).²⁴ It is by reversal that it emulates the self so 自然, *zì rán*, of all things (*ibid.*, ch. 25; Eno translates spontaneity, Legge it's law; we prefer (built-in) propensity to act or behave). This characterization of the *dào* aligns very well with how we can understand the Great Ultimate of the *Yijing* and its dynamic.²⁵

The Classic of the Way, 30-41) was translated, commented, and given what we consider a helpful structured rendition in Rudolf G. Wagner, "Wang Bi: 'The Structure of the Laozi's Pointers' ('Laozi weizhi lilüe'): A Philological Study and Translation," *T'oung Pao*, sec. ser. 72, no. 1/3 (1986): 92-129. Wagner extended his interlocking-parallel-style analysis to a translation of the entire text of Wáng Bì's *Laozi* in Idem, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing. Wang Bi's Commentary on the Laozi with Critical Text and Translation* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003).

²⁴ Our numbering of chapters in the *Laozi* follows the received order of the two parts: *dào-dé*.

²⁵ We should qualify this by saying that this dynamic is part of later commentaries like the *Shíyì* 十翼, *Ten Wings*, but not part of the core text, the *Zhouyi* 周易. It draws

While the actual details of this cosmo-ontology do not matter much, to understand it as a rational response will play a certain role. Here is our take on it.²⁶

First socio-economic tangent. We can take all this to be informed by the life experience of an agrarian society whose livelihood was at the mercy of an untamed nature. A nature whose expression of constant change (seasons) was not just a sequence of changing states or alternating properties as we experience it (light-dark, dry-wet, hot-cold, etc.), but a nature whose changes were experienced as natural forces that controlled, and often threatened, peoples' lives. When, for instance, in ancient times, a granary was empty, not full, then this emptiness was not a mere property of a space but was experienced as a life-threatening force. When we, by contrast, who tamed nature, look into an empty fridge, it is not life-threatening but simply means the inconvenience of grocery shopping. Likewise, when a room was dark, not light(ed), then this was not something people could fix by flipping a light switch but, again, a natural condition that forced itself upon them as a potential threat since they wouldn't know what danger might lurk in the dark. Thus, the best survival strategy in the old days was to learn to read nature's signs and then to align one's own plans and actions accordingly. In short: if you can't beat them, join them. Moreover, if you cannot command nature to have it your way, if you cannot go against the grain of things (i.e., their *zì ràn*), then you have to align and go with their flow. The best way to act, then, is non-action 無為, *wú wèi* (*Laozi*, ch. 63 (Eno): act by not acting 為無為, *wèi wú wèi*, do by not doing 事無事, *shì wú shì*); that is, more specifically, act by not acting against the grain of things but by aligning oneself with their built-in propensity (i.e., their *zì ràn*).

The cosmo-ontology of Great Ultimate 太極, *tài jí*, whose internal dynamics is that of *yīn-yáng* 陰陽, had gained widespread currency during the Han; to wit:

on cosmological ideas that matured only during the Han; see, e.g., Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "Han Cosmology and Mantric Practices," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Kohn, 53-73 (= ch. 3).

²⁶ The tangent was initially triggered by remarks on the significance of agriculture for understanding pre-republican China; see, e.g., Féng, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ch. 2, and Fei Xiantong: *From the Soil. The Foundations of Chinese Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992). Kristopher Schipper finds the paramount significance of agriculture still captured in the Mandarin word for society 社會, *shèhuì*, which originally meant those who gather around 社, *shè*, the altar of the god of soil. And it was to this altar of grain and soil 社, and not to the state 國, *guó*, that, at least according to the *Guanzi*, scholars pledged their allegiance; see Meyer, "The Altars of the Soil," 46-49. For a book-length study along lines similar to what we propose cf. Sarah Allen, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997).

This new synthesis of beliefs prevalent among Han thinkers drew on every contemporary current of thought, weaving them together so inextricably that from the first century B.C. (in mid-Western Han) it makes no sense to speak of Taoists, Legalists, or even Yin/yang Five Phases cosmologists as distinct groups. Han orthodoxy saw a single underlying pattern governing orderly change in Nature, in the realm of social and political relationships, and in individual experience.²⁷

Thus, while the cosmology was not the sole property of Daoists, it was also Daoist (which is sufficient for our purposes). Moreover, Wáng Bì blazed a trail when he used it for a radically new metaphysical interpretation of the *Yijing* 易經, the *Classic of Changes*, and thereby turning a shared background into an exciting new philosophy.²⁸

Doubts about Language

If, ontologically speaking, the Dao is modeled upon the Great Ultimate, then it harbors not only the beginning and end of all things (as the mother and the receiving ocean; *Laozi*, chs. 25, 32) but harbors also all properties of all things. This includes their most extreme expressions in the natural world – the Dao is it all: light and dark, dry and wet, cold and hot – as well as in the world of humans: the Dao is great and humble, strong and weak, etc. But it is not possible to put these opposites in language. Our first argument is based on this observation but not what we find in Wáng Bì; rather, it is what he might have written after having spent a year at an English-speaking university as an exchange student.²⁹

Let us assume that the default function of a name 名, *míng*, is to serve as a rigid designator. Here we understand rigidity not in its Kripkean, metaphysical sense as a designation that remains stable across worlds, but as a designation that is stable across time within one (i.e., our) world. If you were named Mǐn 敏 as a child, then you are Mǐn across your entire life span (ignoring sinic complications such as courtesy names), despite the fact that the object which the name Mǐn designates is clearly a different object as a toddler, as a teen, as an adolescent, [...], as the village elder. That is, names suggest an identity throughout time that is not war-

²⁷ Michael Nylan, *The Canon of Supreme Mystery by Yang Hsiung* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 8.

²⁸ See Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2008), esp. chs 3-4.

²⁹ We could have patch-worked our argument from various pre-Chin sources; but, while Daoist in spirit, it is not something we can find as such in any primary source (we know of).

ranted by the witness of our eyes nor by the generalized witness of a constantly changing nature as codified in the *Yijing*. Hence, names cannot serve as rigid designators. Now in the case of human beings we may get away with the excuse that the name refers not to their outer shell 形, *xíng*, but to a person's core 性, *xìng*. But even if this were true, we see no such excuse in case the referent is the Dao whose core or essence, if it has one, is change 易, *yì*. This is why the Dao cannot be named (*Laozi*, chs. 1, 25); why the true Dao must remain nameless 無名, *wú míng* (*ibid.*, ch. 32); and why the sage, who knows, follows suit and does not speak (*ibid.*, ch. 56). Suppose, contrary to what we just said, that we could make names work as rigid designators. We would still face the problem that, in light of constant and ubiquitous change which is what the senses report to us, utterances that deploy names must be assigned conflicting truth values. This is our first argument for the Daoist naming prohibition.³⁰

Second socio-economic tangent. What we here propose is to understand the Daoist naming prohibition as a reflection of their lifeworld and not some irrational mysticism. And as such, it stands for more, namely, it represents the realities of a non-urban life shared by many communities around the globe (and which still informed, as we have seen above, Pre-Socratic thinking among the ancient Greek). The point we are making is, more specifically, that if your livelihood depends on the acute and close observation of nature, as it is the case when one lives in a society of hunter and gatherer or in a low-tech non-urban farming community, then this comes with stricter standards for recording your observations. You simply cannot call some *x* the same, when this contradicts the clear witness of your senses. For when food and safety may depend on recognizing each natural object (rock, plant, animal) as the unique object it is, abstract concepts that gloss over exactly those individuating features are potentially harmful.³¹ The particular and individual maintain therefore their priority over the abstract and the general. In short, words (names) may do, concepts rather won't.³² We can make a similar observation when it comes to knowledge. When your livelihood depends on the acute and close observation of nature, you call something knowledge only if you yourself have directly observed it; second-hand information based on testimony or

³⁰ For present purposes, the question whether conflicting truth values is a different problem or the flip side of the same coin (naming prohibition) must not be resolved. Note that we do not claim that this view on language is, as stated, a coherent position. What we claim is that we can try to reconstruct and understand the reasons people may have for thinking about language in a certain way. [PY]

³¹ One, and probably the best known, example of the superior observation skills of indigenous people is Micronesian navigation; it allowed tiny boats to travel the open ocean for hundreds of miles reliably finding little specks of land at the voyage's end.

³² We would not object if a reader felt reminded of Nietzsche's remarks in Part 1 of his post-humous essay on *Truth and Lying in the Non-moral Sense*.

formal education (book learning) does not qualify. This, we are told, is the distinction between *imo* (first-hand knowledge) and *igbagbo* (second-hand information) among the Yoruba in western Africa.³³

We now turn to a second but related argument that we find in Wáng Bì. It requires us to provide some background first.

Current thinking about language happens against the backdrop of a certain orthodoxy composed of analytic philosophy and Chomskyan linguistics. No such shared background existed at Wáng Bì's time or earlier,³⁴ except, maybe, for the (Confucian) demand to rectify names 正名, *zhèng míng*, which, however, was mostly a concern about administrative efficiency and less of a linguistic-philosophical issue.³⁵ The one thing, though, that was widely shared and did play a role was the Chinese naming system according to which an educated man had (at least) three different names: the family (clan) name 姓, *xìng*, a given or first name 名, *míng*, and a courtesy name 字, *zì*.³⁶ Both these names were, at least in theory, carefully chosen – the courtesy name would often bring out aspects inherent in the given name – for, like the Roman proverb *nomen est omen*, the Chinese believed that the given name 名, *míng*, would spell fate 命, *mìng*; it was thus frequently chosen so as to serve as a lucky charm for its bearer (fending off evil). Our current orthodoxy, in contrast, does not take any of it and portrays names as purely referential and without lexical content. It is thus considered an exception when names acquire lexical content and assume, say, adjective or adverbial function; for example, if James is known as shy and John as lazy, we can say “don't be such a Jim” or “don't pull a Johnny.” Clearly, matters stand differently in regards to beliefs held by the Chinese. Given names, so to speak, ‘fate’ their bearers and courtesy names spell out aspects of it. While this in an exaggeration, it points us in the right direction.

The distinction between given and courtesy name occurs in a prominent place in the *Laozi* (ch. 25):

- (3a) I do not know its name (*míng*) 吾不知其名,
 (3b) courtesy-naming it (*zì*) I call it Dao 字之曰道.

³³ See Barry Hallen, “Yoruba Moral Epistemology,” in *A Companion to African Philosophy*, ed. Kwasi Wiredu (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 298f.

³⁴ For an overview see Needham and Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilization*, passim, and John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).

³⁵ See Eric L. Hutton, *Xunzi. The Complete Text* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), ch. 22, for what the state of the art was.

³⁶ For details see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History. A New Manual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015⁴), ch. 8.

And while the distinction occurs just once, it came to form a lynchpin of Wáng Bì's interpretation. In the line commentary for (3a) he writes (tr. Lynn): Names [名, *míng*] are used to determine forms [形, *xíng*], but, amorphous and complete, it has no form, so we cannot make any such determination [定, *dìng*].

This is Wáng Bì's first argument for the Daoist naming prohibition: Since the Dao is formless, while names determine forms, the Dao cannot be named. He expands on this in the line commentary for (3b): Names [名, *míng*] are used to determine forms, courtesy names [字, *zì*] are used for what can be designated [稱, *chēng*].

This distinction he explained further in his introductory essay; our gloss (tr. Lynn/Wagner):

A name [名, *míng*] is what determines an object [彼, *bǐ*] and is born from it. A designation [稱, *chēng*] is a conventional name [從謂, *cóng wèi*] and comes from the subject [我, *wǒ*]. Likewise, if we have a specific name, there must be specific forms [形, *xíng*]; and if we have specific forms, they must have their specifications [分, *fēn*]. Furthermore, a name [名, *míng*] is always specific and will hence exclude something; therefore, there can be no real name for the all-encompassing Dao. Likewise, a designation [稱, *chēng*] highlights something specific and will hence not be exhaustive; therefore, no designation can serve as a name for the Dao.³⁷

This is Wáng Bì's second argument: an assigned name is either a given or a courtesy name; but any given name will leave something undetermined while any courtesy name will leave something unaccounted for. No assigned name can therefore name the Dao.

Wáng Bì's arguments are clear and compelling – provided, of course, we grant him his assumptions about names, forms, and objects.³⁸

³⁷ For the beginning see Wagner, “Wang Bi,” 5.1-4 (= Lynn, *The Classic of the Way*, 36); for the gloss after likewise see *Ibid.*, 6.32 (= Lynn, *The Classic of the Way*, 39), and for what follows after furthermore see *Ibid.*, 2.11-18 (= Lynn, *The Classic and the Way*, 32). For the preceding quote see *Ibid.*, 108, note 67, and Lynn, *The Classic and the Way*, 95.

³⁸ The topic of “names, forms, objects,” although it occurs in many different shades in various texts, has not yet (as far as we know) found sufficient systematic treatment; but cf. Chung-Yue Chang, *The Metaphysics of Wang Pi (226-249)* (PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1979), ch. II; Jude Soo-Meng Chua, “Tracing the Dao: Wang Bi's Theory of Names,” in *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, eds. Alan K. L. Chan and Yuet-Keung Lo (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010), 53-70. And while it is not our present business to explore or critique Wáng Bì's assumptions,

Our first argument was meant to ease in a “Western reader” while still being true to Daoist thinking; Wáng Bì’s arguments, although related, are different. Wang Bì’s names, in terms of their lexical content and role, are apt (i.e., appropriately chosen) or not. But names were stripped of any lexical content and reduced to a purely denotational role in the first argument; thus, they successfully denote or not, and sentences in which they occur are true or false. We therefore see different linguistic performance criteria (scoring rules) at work: apt–yes/no vs. denotes–yes/no vs. true–yes/no. We do not see how we can translate aptness into denotational success or vice versa, but we can link aptness and truth: a Wang Bì’s name is apt if it makes the right set of sentences true. Both contexts are thus intertranslatable.

Norms

We see no evidence that Daoists gave up on language hook, line, and sinker as we saw Antisthenes or Cratylus did at Plato’s time for probably quite similar reasons. But based on the interpretations just given, we argue that Daoists are likely to draw a conclusion Plato fought: we cannot trust language when it comes to fundamental insights or to formulating general truths.

Norm D1 (Limited Confidence): As Daoists, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Language, and in particular in its referential or denotational function, fails us when it comes to expressing the dào.*

We do not conceive of D1 as a kind of mysticism but as a rational conclusion based on a sober-minded analysis of a thoroughly empirical mind (see our second tangent). Consequently, without a basic confidence in language, logic faces limits of applicability:

we should still point out, since the secondary literature we have seen doesn’t mention it, that we can find them almost verbatim in a much older Daoist text, namely, Chapter 36: “Arts of the Mind I” 心術上, *Xīn shù* I, of the *Guanzi* 管子. There, Statement VII calls the Dao “formless” 無形, *wú míng*, while, according to Statement XV, “things [物, wù] have fixed forms [形] and forms have fixed names [名].” Note that, taken together, they yield already Wáng Bì’s first argument. We can find Wáng Bì’s second main assumption, at least *in nuce*, in Explanation XV: “This means that the name must not exceed its reality, and the reality [實, *shí*] must not transcend its name [名].” (Translations are from W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi. Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China I-II* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001²], vol. II, 72, 74, 79; for the characterization of ch. 36 as Daoist see Rickett’s remarks Rickett, *Guanzi*, 70.)

Norm D2 (Limited NCE): As Daoist, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Arguments and their validity play a limited role for a rational exchange on the dào.* Therefore,

Norm D3 (Limited Consensus): As Daoists, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Consensus on the dào is not guaranteed by an agreement on shared premises.*

It is not clear how principled the reservations were that various Daoist thinkers had about language, that is, how far it extended beyond speaking about the *dào*. Nor is it clear whether, and if so, with what scope, they developed a positive alternative which they set against those limitations; nor, for that matter, how representative Zhuāng Zi's point of view was.³⁹ But we won't need it. For the comparison that follows below, it is entirely sufficient to have spelled out these limitations. In a similar vein, we do not even need to insist that our interpretation is correct. Maybe we were all wrong and the Daoists did not name the *dào* for the same reason Jews do not speak the name of their god or male Apaches do not say the name of their mother-in-law: respect, be it religious, familial, or otherwise. (It is highly unlikely that this applies to Daoists, but we mention it nevertheless as a reminder of our general theme of identifying different ways the human condition may express itself.) For, as we see later, we take Daoism as just one representative of a tradition we find elsewhere, too.

A Western Apache Tradition

We now draw on a niche area where we depend almost entirely on what cultural and linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso (1940-2013) reported in his books and articles.⁴⁰ While he was, and still is, considered an authority, going with a single source is always less than ideal; and this

³⁹ Robert Eno develops a less (or non-) skeptical reading of the *Zhuangzi* in his article Robert Eno, "Cook Ding's Dao and the Limits of Philosophy," in *Essays of Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, eds. Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 127-151 (= ch. 6).

⁴⁰ We shall reference a single article, though, Keith H. Basso, "Speaking with Names': Language and Landscape among the Western Apache," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (1988): 99-130; repr. as ch. 7 in Idem, *Western Apache Language and Culture. Essays in Linguistic Anthropology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), 138-173; repr. as ch. 3 in Idem, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 71-104. Page references are according to the journal article. I am grateful to my colleague Shannon T. Bishoff who first brought Basso's work to my attention.

is even more true when, as in our case, the material was not obtained by direct observation but ethnographic interview.

Charged Toponyms

People who do not live in urban areas but either roam the land (e.g., as herders) or inhabit small-scale settlements (e.g., as villagers) often attach cultural significance to certain places: a mountain, a tree, a river bend, etc. As the Kiowa writer Momaday observed (and played back by Basso, p. 102): “Men and women learn to *appropriate* their landscapes, to think and act ‘with’ them as well as about and upon them, and to weave them with spoken words into the very foundations of social life” (emphasis in the original). And sometimes such significance is shared by city-dwellers, especially when there is a religious dimension to it, like sacred mountains in Buddhism.

While the meaning attached to a place is often spiritual, in what Basso reports about the Western Apache toponyms acquire a moral meaning. This moral meaning is linked to incidents which happened at that place in the tribe’s past. For example, if someone was bitten by a snake on a sandbar in a nearby creek called Whitewater, then the toponym Whitewater sandbar may acquire the moral meaning of acting/behaving without due caution. This peculiar use of toponyms as a moral resource was the key to unlock an otherwise unintelligible conversation (which we report in an instant) that got Basso first started on the moral dimension of toponyms among the Western Apache. Here is the story.

On a hot afternoon an older woman named Lola is mending clothes in the company of Robert, her husband, Clifford, her dog, and joined by two other women, Louise and Emily. The heat is oppressive, so all sit in silence until Louise breaks it. She shares her worries; that morning her younger brother was submitted to the hospital after a snake had bitten him and he refused to see a healer. She pauses for about a minute, then the following exchange ensues:⁴¹

Louise: *My younger brother ...*

[gets quietly interrupted]

Lola: *It happened at line of white rocks extends upward and out, at this very place!*

[pause: 30-45 seconds]

Emily: *Yes. It happened at whiteness spreads out descending to water, at this very place!*

[pause: 30-45 seconds]

⁴¹ See *Ibid.*, 105. Only English translations are reproduced below; the original utterances in the Cibecue dialect have been omitted.

Lola: *Truly. It happened at trail extends across a long red ridge with alder trees, at this very place!*

Louise: (laughs softly)

Robert: *Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming.*

Lola: *Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming.*

Louise: *My younger brother is foolish, isn't he, dog?*

While it is absolutely fascinating to read how Basso learns to unravel this potent shorthand that communicates so much by saying so little (to paraphrase Basso, p. 103), we won't explain it any further. We home right in on the conversational norms that underlie such exchanges as reproduced above.

*Apache Linguistic Ideology*⁴²

According to Basso, the Western Apache conceive of the act of thinking as an act of “picturing to oneself and attending privately to the pictures.” Consequently, speaking is “depicting one’s pictures for other people” and conversations consist “in a running exchange of depicted pictures and pictured depictions, a reciprocal representation and visualization of the ongoing thoughts of participating speakers.” And because, “even the most gifted and proficient speakers contrive to leave things out [...] Apache hearers must always ‘add on’ to depictions made available to them in conversation, augmenting and supplementing these spoken images with images they fashion for themselves.” This is why a conversation can be likened to the “rounding up of livestock: the ‘bringing together’ of cattle or horses from widely scattered locations to a central place.”

Given this context, Basso then notes the following on conversational norms:

Western Apache regard spoken conversation as a form of ‘voluntary cooperation’ (*tich’i’ ’odaach’idii*) in which all participants, having presumably come together in the spirit of good will, are entitled to displays of ‘respect’ (*yiñsìh*). Accordingly, whenever people speak in cordial and affable tones, considerations of ‘kindness and politeness’ (*bil goch’oba’*) come centrally into play. Such considerations may influence Apache speech in a multitude of ways, but none is more basic than the courtesy speakers display by refraining from ‘speaking too much’ (*taago yallti*). [...]

⁴² All quotes are taken from *Ibid.*, 109 and, towards the end, from page 110 (page break is indicated). Most of what we summarize has close parallels among speakers of other Dené languages.

A person who speaks too much – someone who describes too busily, who supplies too many details, who repeats and qualifies too many times – presumes without warrant on the right of hearers to build freely and creatively on the speaker’s own depictions. With too many words, such a speaker acts to ‘smother’ (*biká’ nyinlkaad*) his or her audience by seeming to say, arrogantly and coercively, ‘I *demand* that you see everything that happened, how it happened, and why it happened, *exactly* as I do.’ In other words, persons who speak too much insult the imaginative capabilities of other people, ‘blocking their thinking’ [...] and ‘holding down their minds.’ [... 109]¹¹⁰ [...] An effective narrator] will depict just enough for you to see what happened, how it happened, and perhaps why it happened. Add on to these depictions however you see fit. [...] He or she] takes steps to ‘open up thinking,’ thereby encouraging his or her listeners to ‘travel in their minds’. (emphases in the original)

Apache Norms

As before, we limit ourselves to those conversational norms that will play a role in the comparison to follow. We identify the following three, all of them flatly denying part of the Greek heritage. As a tribe known and feared for its ferocious warriors, competition is not alien to the Western Apache; but they believe it is amicable cooperation, not competition, what should guide conversations.

Norm A1 (No Contest): As Western Apache, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Conversation is a voluntary cooperation among participants of good will who display mutual respect.*

Western Apache value silence,⁴³ not volubility, and mutual respect, not unilateral domination driven by the conviction to be right.

Norm A2 (No Submission): As Western Apache, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Forcing someone to see things exactly as oneself is the most egregious violation of due respect.*

Consequently, consensus cannot be the goal in all matters.

⁴³ See Keith H. Basso, “To Give Up on Words: Silence in Western Apache Culture,” in Keith H. Basso, *Western Apache Language and Culture. Essays in Linguistic Anthropology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), 80-98 (= ch. 7); first published in *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26, no. 3 (1970): 213-230.

Norm A3 (No Consensus): As Western Apache, we agree on and operate under the condition that *Consensus among people may not be achieved since attempts to do so might prevent someone else from freely traveling in their mind.*

Clearly, the last norm does not apply to all conversations. When a situation required a decision to be made (e.g., whether or not to go on a raid), family clusters would defer to the authority of their head men. We should also remark that the averseness to volubility and to forcing others to adopt a certain viewpoint were widespread attitudes among speakers of Dené (or, in older terminology, Athabaskan languages). Finally, in light of our previous attempts to link norms to their socio-economic context, we should mention that we do not see either one as representative of their lifestyle as, mostly, hunter and gatherer. The institution of palaver in its various forms among sub-Saharan communities shows that achieving consensus may not only play a pre-eminent role in such communities but also be obtained by less savory means such as soft pressure (e.g., in case of a medicinal palaver to think harder what one's moral failures were that caused the illness) or the free use of every rhetorical means (e.g., in case of litigation palaver).⁴⁴ Again we do not try to be exhaustive here. We did not, for example, make silence a norm; many, albeit not all, European or American people experience prolonged silence as uncomfortable and awkward, but silence may be the only adequate behavioral option in many situations of an Apache life. As before, we listed only norms we plan to match up with ones we identified from the Greek tradition.

Logical Humility

Cultural Relativity or Superiority?

For each of the five conversational norms G1 through G5 we identified within the Greek tradition we found an exact opposite in a different tradition. In brief:

⁴⁴ Our understanding of the social practice of palaver is primarily informed by Jean-Godefroy Bidima, *Law and the Public Sphere in Africa: La Palabre and other writings* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013). Bénézet Bujo, "Differentiations in African Ethics," in *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 423-437 (= ch. 43). Fweley Diangitukwa, "La lointaine origine de la gouvernance en Afrique: l'arbre à palabres," *Revue Gouvernance* 11, no. 1 (2014): 1-22. Anna Floerke Scheid, "Under the Palaver Tree: Community Ethics for Truth-Telling and Reconciliation," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 31, no. 1 (2011): 17-36. We had plans to include palaver as a fourth source of conversational norms, but space limitations did not allow for that; so all that is left are some scattered remarks here and below.

G1 (LingCon): the assumption that we can have confidence in language (i.e., that we can have faith especially in its referential or denotational capacity) was denied for good reasons in the Daoist tradition (norm G1 vs. D1). Consequently,

G2 (NCE) and G3 (Euclid): the distinguished role of argument and logic, which became the hallmark of rationality among the Greek and their cultural heirs, and their use for achieving a consensus obtained through the power of logic is assigned a backseat in Daoism. The same happens, although for different reasons, in the Apache tradition (norms G2–3 vs. D2–3 and A3). Likewise,

G4 (Contest) and G5 (Illicit): modeling a conversation as a contest or competition where logical force and tricks get applied to subdue the opponent is alien not only to the Apache way but also to best practices among scientists and scholars (norms G4–5 vs. A1–2 and S1).

Are our findings an instance of cultural relativity we have to accept as something that won't go away, or is there a way to argue that certain norms are better than or superior to others? If we strip our remarks thus far from all detail, the bare-bones question which remains is: what is the proper role of logical argument and reasoning in a conversation among people from different traditions? We address the question in the next section but need to do some spadework first.

Success as Argument

The heirs of the Greek tradition established a series of empires – the Greek empire was followed by the Roman empire, followed by Islamic caliphates, and succeeded by European colonial powers – and they all seem to have assumed that their military and colonial walk-over answered the question in the positive. They explained their successes as the result of a superior culture, often as the result of or supported by divine will and protection. In the end, however, it boiled down to racism, one way or the other; as Hegel put it: “the spirit achieves absolute unity with itself only in the Caucasian race” (*Encyclopedia*, §393, supplement). Few still insist that the rise of the West was due to superior Greek virtues. A more informed view takes into account factors such as access to natural resources (e.g., no industrial revolution without abundance of domestic coal) and tries to balance those with the oftentimes powerful role religious or political ideas may play.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Popular studies that emphasize the role of the environment include Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel. The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 1997), and Ian Morris, *The Measure of Civilization: How Social Development Decides the Fate of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). The

Success is also what suggests itself as evidence for saying that the conversational norms inherited from the Greek are superior. For in particular the norms G1 (LingCon), G2 (NCE), and G3 (Euclid) do not only undergird logical reasoning and argument but also helped to define logic in the narrow and more specific sense of a scientific discipline or a set of explicit logic rules, something we may call Logic with a capital L. The argument then goes that Greek conversational norms must be superior because they made Logic possible and because it was Logic that, first, helped to create modern science and, second, is at the heart of the digital revolution. But neither of the two claims seems to be borne out by the facts.

The digital revolution required Boolean algebra, not a full-fledged Logic à la Aristotle or Frege; for digital devices manipulate zero's and one's according to algebraic laws, not quantifiers. And the mathematical tools the average engineer relies on – e.g., to study circuit design, to model communication inside and among devices, or to develop software – come mostly from discrete mathematics and probability theory. The same is true for the most advanced programs in artificial intelligence or big data; although they are marketed as intelligent or smart systems, they do not utilize Logic so much as pattern recognition via statistical analysis. Note that we do not claim that Logic did not facilitate the emergence of the new technologies; for it sure did. But in a counterfactual world without Logic, computer science would have developed just fine based on algebra, discrete mathematics, and probability theory.

Similar reservations apply to modern science (i.e., science post Galilei). It seems indisputable that modern science relies heavily on logical reasoning. But logical reasoning in this general and informal sense is part of almost all human endeavors, not just modern science or technology, and we can have it without Logic. The amoeba avoids higher levels of acidity; is this adaptive behavior or an instance of *modus ponens* (“if more acidic, move away; it is more acidic; therefore, move away”)? Likewise for the linguistic behavior of humans. American students who prepare for law school need to take a standardized test, called the LSAT, which includes a fair amount of logic problems that resemble reasoning in the courtroom. Those who perform very well on these logic problems are not those who have studied Logic (although this may give them a boost) but those who are avid readers; semantic hunches from honed language skills is all that it takes to be a quick and reliable juridical reasoner. In

importance of superior virtues is stressed, in contrast, by Victor D. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture. Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power* (New York: Anchor, 2002). The positive role of religious ideas was emphasized, e.g., by Karen Armstrong, *Islam. A Short History* (London: Phoenix, 2000).

short, the mere possibility of modeling well-adapted behavior as the result of logical reasoning does not imply that it was; nor does it require Logic.

This seems to fly in the face of received wisdom. But the orthodox view was defined not by scientists but by philosophers and theologians in whose fields Logic did play a critical role. And historical facts support our observation. Bacon moved to replace Logic with scientific method because he considered Logic as actually harmful to modern science, while Arnauld and Nicole (in their famous *Logic of Port Royal*) supplemented Logic with a doctrine of method. We thus see that already at the dawn of modern science Logic was not considered helpful, but method. Not much changed, though, until in the nineteenth century logicians – Mill in England and Sigwart in Germany – flocked to the new mission of bringing Logic to bear on the sciences. Although well-intended, there is no evidence that the new, science-oriented Logic had any impact on the sciences. (This movement was the direct predecessor to what we now call philosophy of science.)

While Logic did not make much of a contribution, some of the underlying social practices did. Arguing by counter-example (i.e., G2 (NCE)) is a social practice among scientists from the get-go (i.e., since Galilei's disputes with the Aristotelian science of his time), and experimental data play a critical role as common ground from which to proceed and infer new results (i.e., G3 (Euclid)). But as before we argue that the limited logical behavior just mentioned does not require explicit logic rules or conversational norms; it comes for free with language mastery. Assume a counterfactual Galilei who had mastered mathematics and Italian but without exposure G2 or G3; he would have written the same treatises.⁴⁶

These are, in a nutshell, the reasons why we think the prospects are grim for those who wish to advance a success-based argument for the superiority of Greek conversational norms. It is our first reason to leave the colonial mindset of a superior culture behind and to ask for some humility instead. Our second reason to ask for logical humility is that the scope of logic is overestimated, which we explain next.

Division of Labor

In the past, when philosophy was synonymous with science, there was no clear division of labor, and a single scholar could combine the task

⁴⁶ We can ignore G1 and G4+5. Modern science replaced natural languages with mathematics. But the semantics for the few relevant mathematical constants – zero, one, pi, and *e* come readily to mind – is much simpler (since abstract objects do not undergo visible change as natural objects do) and so the referential capacity of mathematics cannot be used to argue for G1 (LingCon). We mentioned already that the norms G4 (Contest) and G5 (Illicit) are not beneficial for scientific progress, which is why we put S1 (Pursuit of truth) in their place.

of the logician with being a specialist in botany and astronomy. These days, there is a clear division of labor among logicians and experts in the relevant field: logicians discuss the validity of arguments while experts take care of their soundness (i.e., decide on the truth or falsity of the premises). Testing for soundness is fairly straightforward in mathematics where premises are previously known results which, when we trace them back to their origins, derive from clearly defined concepts. This transparency explains much of the security of mathematical results. The sciences are in a similarly privileged position. Their premises either employ mathematical tools and models, in which case the scientist is not responsible for their soundness, or they speak about facts gleaned from controlled experience (data), in which case proper scientific method guarantees soundness. Note that everyday life takes place under similar conditions where simple facts (weather, food, job, etc.) are available even without invoking scientific methods. In all these spheres of human activity and thought we are, as logical reasoners, safe because we can vouch for the soundness of our premises. This accounts for the cross-cultural success of mathematics, the sciences, and global trade.

As humans we are the result of both nature and nurture and therefore deal with two types of facts: natural facts (so to speak) and cultural facts. Note that the latter can constitute as harsh a reality as the former: we can die from falling off a cliff but also from not having money or from being shunned as a transgendered person. We just mentioned why it is safe for us to employ logical reasoning to natural facts; we now say why we are in hot water in respect to cultural facts.

Logic as a Chaotic System

A chaotic system is a system that exhibits what came to be known as the butterfly effect: tiny changes, such as the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil, may lead to dramatic differences in the outcome, such as setting off a tornado in Texas. The double pendulum is an example. On one hand, it is a strictly deterministic system. This means if we know its initial state x (coordinates, rod lengths, masses, etc.) at a time t_0 , we can calculate its future state (coordinates, velocities, angles, etc.) for any future time t . In short, if f is a function that describes the behavior of the double pendulum (say, f is its Hamiltonian) and $f(x, t_0)$ is given, then $f(x, t)$ can be calculated. On the other hand, the system will exhibit chaotic behavior at higher energies. Suppose d is a difference in the system's initial conditions (e.g., its coordinates, or rod length, or mass) but so small that we cannot measure it; let Δx denote the new initial state. Then there is a time t such that not only $f(x, t) \neq f(\Delta x, t)$ but that their difference $f(x, t) - f(\Delta x, t)$ is arbitrarily large (within the obvious constraints, of course, like the conservation of

energy). In other words, since we have no control over d , we can no longer predict the system's future state.

Logical reasoning according to G2 (NCE) and G3 (Euclid) is a deterministic system. If we know what the premises of an argument are (its initial conditions, so to speak), then the set of its logical consequences, *viz.*, what the premises logically entail, is fixed and can normally be calculated. (Well, at least in principle; the calculation may take too long for any practical purposes.⁴⁷) This approach works in mathematics where the concepts used in the premises are precisely defined, usually by a system of axioms which can be translated, without loss of meaning, into a formal language. In the sciences or in our daily lives, in instances where we reason about facts (measurements, data points, prices, or sales numbers), we can likewise use logical reasoning not only to establish new truths (i.e., G2) but to compel others to accept them as such (i.e., G3). But outside these spheres logical reasoning is likely to exhibit the behavior of a chaotic system. This is due to the fact that most of the time we are unable to define non-mathematical concepts precisely enough for us to have full control over what exactly they entail when used in premises.

The idea of human rights can serve as a case in point. Assume two legal scholars working on human rights issues. They may arrive at widely diverging conclusions based on subtle differences in how they interpret various concepts. One jurist, for instance, will prove that the death penalty is a human rights violation since it constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, while the other jurist cannot prove any such thing.

Eleanor Roosevelt, to continue with another example in the same vein, worked tirelessly on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). It was approved by the General Assembly in 1948 with an overwhelming majority: 48 ayes, no nays, eight abstentions, and two non-voting countries – numbers, we note, that indicate a quite substantial consensus at the time. But the UDHR is not a legally binding document, so it was followed by a total of 18 international human rights treaties that are legally binding if ratified. Two of the 18 treaties translate the UDHR itself into legally binding documents; these are the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) which defines what a government cannot take away from its citizens (life, liberty, freedom of speech or religion, etc.) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) which lays out what a society owes its citizens (social security, paid holidays, free education, health care, etc.). The United States ratified only five of the 18 treaties; and while the ICCPR (but not (sic!) the ICESCR) is among the five treaties the US ratified, it was done with the highest numbers of qualifications among all signatory states (a

⁴⁷ In the more technical language of logic: the set of consequences is recursively enumerable but normally not recursive.

total of 14 so-called RUD's: five restrictions, five understandings, and four declarations). In short, the US, as a self-declared champion of human rights and whose representative, Ms. Roosevelt, was instrumental in drafting the main document (UDHR), does not agree, not even with its closest allies, the European countries (which all have ratified at least ten of the treaties, while most have ratified 15 or more), on what the human-rights idea implies legally.

Moreover, since the UDHR was perceived as framed with a Western and secular bias,⁴⁸ Asian and predominantly Muslim countries later issued qualifying and complementing documents, the so-called *Cairo Declaration* (1990) and *Bangkok Declaration* (1993). It seems therefore a daunting if not outright impossible task to give a final and exhaustive definition of what exactly the idea of human rights entails.

But even if we succeeded and agreed on a generally accepted understanding – and there is a considerable overlap among the UDHR and the Cairo and Bangkok declarations to make this plausible – the result would not last. For as society changes, so does its culture, and thick concepts such as human rights will remain in flux. Is, for instance, the collecting of GPS data from cell phones without consent a violation of privacy entailed by human rights standards or is it not? This question did not even exist in 1948 but is assumed answerable. In short, if certain ideas (e.g., inalienable human rights) are claimed to be universal in scope, and if everyone agrees that they are, their interpretation can still not be frozen in time. All this seems uncontroversial from recent history.⁴⁹

We said the goal of logical reasoning is, first, to establish new truths (i.e., G2 (NCE)), and, second, to be able to compel others to accept the new truths as such (i.e., G3 (Euclid)). The second step requires that we have achieved prior agreement on the soundness of the premises, for otherwise proof does not create an obligation to accept the conclusion. We can therefore not complete the second step unless we attained prior agreement on the soundness of the premises; this in turn requires a consensus on how best to define the critical concepts that occur in the premises. Generalizing the human-rights example above, we claim it is an empirical fact, evinced by the historical record, that culturally loaded concepts,

⁴⁸ This was pointed out by the American Anthropological Association already before the UDHR was even adopted; see American Anthropological Association, "Statement on Human Rights," in *American Anthropologist* NS 49, no. 4.1 (1947): 539-543.

⁴⁹ For an analysis of the somewhat surprising reluctance on side of US lawmakers, see Louis Henkin, "U.S. Ratification of Human Rights Conventions: The Ghost of Senator Bricker," *American Journal of International Law* 89, no. 2 (April 1995): 341-350. It is not without irony to see non-Muslims doubting the pretense of the Shari'ah to deliver a ruling on the moral status of any action, while the same people are expecting a single idea (human rights) to deliver almost as much.

which we here understand to go beyond observable facts, can normally not be defined with a rigor sufficient for their deployment in logical argument. For if concepts are not defined with close to mathematical rigor, minor differences in their meaning may lead to drastically different conclusions. This is when logic behaves like a chaotic system: minor differences in meaning that went unnoticed when people agreed on using certain concepts or ideas as common ground, blow up later spoiling the expected consensus. Or, in more colloquial terms: garbage in, garbage out.

If we are correct, and this is our second reason to ask for humility, then it may be sobering news for some. For it means that what is dearest to our hearts, our most cherished beliefs, our cultural identity, is not a proper subject for logical argument in the sense of G3 (Euclid). We cannot convince someone else by proving them wrong, or by proving ourselves right, unless we agreed on watertight definitions first – which, we argued, is normally an unattainable goal. Let us remind ourselves that this point was perceived differently in the past. Opinion leaders in all traditions that embraced logic – philosophers, religious and legal scholars, politicians and others in exalted positions – were convinced that their arguments in scholarly tracts and fancy speeches clearly proved them right and any dissenter wrong because there was no doubt in their mind about the truth of their premises, be it on account of sacred texts, divine revelation, superior culture, or on account of sheer bigoted ignorance.

A New Job Description

We do not say that rigorous logical reasoning is for the birds. For we can still complete Step 1 (i.e., G2 (NCE)) and use it to calibrate the conceptual contents of important ideas.

Assume we agree to use a certain idea – say, human dignity – as common ground and want to have a conversation about it, seeking consensus among different people or traditions. Then, in a first step, every participant can employ logical means to make explicit what they think the idea stands for by teasing out what it logically entails (i.e., G2). In other words, we can use logic to explore conceptual content. Going back and forth between the definition of a concept and what it entails, we can use unwelcome or missing consequences for the fine-tuning of our definition until it delivers according to our intuitive hunches or anticipated needs. In a second step, participants can register and discuss discrepancies in conceptual contents brought out in the open during the first step. (We should note that this is how it often works in modern mathematics where important definitions may be the result of a community effort.) If things go well, participants can use the same back-and-forth mechanism to bring their understanding of the concept in mutual alignment; even partial agreement can then be used to explore what further consensus on the issue it logically entails.

What we suggest, then, is that the proper use of logical reasoning in respect to culturally loaded concepts consists, first, in the individual effort of determining and calibrating what one's own words mean, and, second, in the collective effort of building partially or fully shared meanings. Due to the nature of logical entailment, both efforts must remain open-ended endeavors and require as such patience; progress can be had only at snail's pace. This new, limited job description is our third reason to ask for some humility.

We take the principle of charity as the reason why we should be content with people assigning slightly or vastly different meanings even to shared ideas and not attempt to correct their thinking. For no matter how strange other traditions may appear to us, we interpret them as legitimate expressions of the human condition and normally also as expressions of human rationality, however imperfect. In simple words: mutual respect and human decency.⁵⁰ What has moved us away from this stance of respect and human decency and poisoned the well (and continues to do so) are various fundamentalist views about infallibility and absolute truth (whether religious, or political, or economic) when brought to bear in the public square. This fateful marriage of logic with absolute truth has been a major cause, in the past 1,500 years (give or take), for human suffering of such unbearable measure. But this is also why Gandhi could recommend Hinduism (as he saw it at his time) as a model for the entire world to follow: without fundamentalism, all the different traditions subsumed under the umbrella term Hindu and hence people of vastly different persuasion coexisted peacefully for many generations.⁵¹

We did not say much new in the last subsection. As soon as intellectual elites started thinking about these matters, we have reports about their attempts to clarify the language we use or to rectify the names.⁵² But now, due to our advances in logic, we can think clearer about the issue; and formal Logic helps with the task. Also, what we say is related to but dif-

⁵⁰ An early reader asked two questions I should reply to. Does this extend to Stalin or Hitler? Don't we disrespect people for good reasons? I am not sure whether we should say the principle has unconditional validity. But I would be prepared to include the worst of the worst and if only for the reason that we need to understand pathological cases if we want to prevent them in the future. Shunning horrible people may be good for our well-being, but whether it is commendable I am not so sure. [PY]

⁵¹ We face an enormous challenge if our assessment is correct. For where we see the amazing variegation of the human condition, many others will see the specter of relativism and be gripped by strong xenophobic sentiments. Since these reactions answer to deeply felt psychological needs, overcoming them is no easy task.

⁵² Interestingly enough, the ancient Greeks, aware of the problem, coined a new term: *akribolegein*. It was meant to express the obligation to only speak with words that have a precisely delineated meaning. But the subject was hijacked by the usual suspects (lawyers) and consequently acquired over time the opposite meaning: verbiage.

ferent from conceptual analysis as traditionally conceived in philosophy or jurisprudence (say on controversial matters by the respective highest judicial authority, be it a supreme court or a mufti); the latter take a normative direction, while our suggestion is descriptive and explorative-constructive in spirit. Finally, what we say has little in common with the platitude to avoid politics and religion in conversation; the commonplace advice wants us to dodge the difficulty, while we suggest to address it head-on.

The Principle of Charity

We appealed to the principle twice but without justifying it; this is what we attempt now. We took the principle to be the default assumption when dealing with other peoples' behavior. More specifically, we said in the previous section that we interpret cultural norms as (*a*) legitimate expressions of the human condition and at the same time as (*b*) expressions of human rationality, however imperfect. We take the first part (*a*) to reflect the fact that people chose to adopt certain conventions or just grow accustomed to follow certain habits both of which emerge in response to demands made on them by their environment, be it natural or cultural. In the second part (*b*) we understand rational not in its narrow but in a very inclusive meaning as any behavior that we can make sense of if we try, namely, as anything people in the given circumstances may expect to result in well-adapted behavior. In a way, the *b*-part justifies the *a*-part. In our first section we furthermore construed assumption (*b*) as to imply the mandate (*c*) to amicably fill in the gaps in what seems to be imperfect expressions of their rationality.

Our understanding of the principle is informed by two sources.⁵³ On one hand, there is hermeneutics; initially conceived as a discipline for critiquing literary products (forged lines in Homer, spurious poems by Hesiod), then adopted by Christian scholars to resolve textual discrepancies and tensions as regards to contents (from Origen to Schleiermacher and beyond) before it was transformed into the general method of the humanities to understand not just texts but the human experience (Dilthey, Gadamer). This raises the question why an attempt of scribes and savants to reconcile textual discordances should rise to the status of a general principle; especially so, if we consider that the issues are generic to text-centric traditions only.⁵⁴ On the other hand, interpreting others as rational

⁵³ We ignore the more specialized Wilson–Davidson side of the discussion.

⁵⁴ Which is why we have similar hermeneutic developments in Judaism, Islam, Veda-based Hinduism, or Buddhism, to name just the usual suspects; cf. the various entries on hermeneutics in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 15 vols., ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit, MI: Macmillan, 2005²).

actors in their environment develops as a natural attitude around the age of three.⁵⁵ This, too, saw employment as a general explanatory principle: the intentional stance.⁵⁶ Dennett argued that the intentional stance provides an evolutionary advantage by reducing complex behavioral calculations to familiar acts of intentionality. This makes sense for small groups of people, say, a band of hunters whose survival may depend on quick and reliable readings of behavioral signals. But it is far from clear whether it scales or how to avoid the pitfall of mistaking a correct behavioral description for a normative principle (i.e., Hume's fallacy: the fact that we have the habit of doing something is no reason we should be doing it). Either way, the origins of the principle of charity do not seem to support the universal scope we attached to it.

While we cannot devote too much space to it, we can still sketch how we think a defense of the principle's universal scope can proceed both in the vein of Dennett and Dilthey (in that order).

Mimicking the argument for the protection of wildlife, we can say that we should also preserve cultural diversity (e.g., languages and their social practices), for otherwise we lose resources that might become critical for our species' survival in the future. The principle of charity, because it protects cultural diversity, yields therefore an evolutionary advantage also at a global scale insofar it helps to secure our survival: we self-select ourselves for extinction if we refuse it. A related argument is based on the observation that the most viable ideas result from the competition of many, not from the hegemony of some; so if we do not adhere to the principle, we dodge the healthy contest. (And we cannot relapse into the hubris of the Enlightenment and believe that the contest has produced a winner already; for the currently dominant ideas have led us to the brink to self-destruction – hardly a winning option.) Both arguments are simple means-end conditionals (do *x* if you want *y*) that in themselves have no normative force since they do not supply a reason why the end is worthwhile. We close the gap by stipulating that most think their survival (including that of their progeny) is desirable.

Dilthey conceived of textual interpretation as a paradigm for understanding the other: their spirit, soul, or mind (*Seelenerlebnis*). He did not consider understanding a prerequisite for peaceful co-existence (which many will consider a solid reason if the opposite of mutual understanding is a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*) but rather assumed that the wish to understand stems from the desire to enrich our own existence.

⁵⁵ For a summary of the psychological research, see e.g., Josef Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), chs. 3-4.

⁵⁶ See Daniel C. Dennett, "Intentional systems," *Journal of Philosophy* LXVIII, no. 4 (Feb 1971): 87-106; later as Daniel C. Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).

While many will share Dilthey's boujee sentiments, many won't. Similar for the parenthetical remark; many will not hesitate to endorse violence as long as they happen to be on the winning side. And why should we take any interest in people different from us anyway, or tolerate them? Looking from the outside in, we could argue that all of Dilthey is the product of many parochial ideas. Thus, to be successful along Diltheyan lines requires a consensus on many more contentious points than the previous appeal to the instinct of self-preservation. Instead of following the Dilthey route, we therefore cut the argument short by observing that the two Dennett-style arguments have mutual understanding as a prerequisite. For if we want to know what resources are available or want to have a hand in the competition of ideas, we need to understand them first. And we want to play an active part in both processes because their outcome might affect livelihood.⁵⁷

This appeal to self-preservation and playing an active role in it can of course be criticized as another parochial idea we sneak in. Assuming an active role in one's fate may indeed be an alien idea for someone who believes that divine providence assigned them their place and that trying to change anything about it were tantamount to disobedience to the divine plan (which, as we know, is what many people believed or were told). But all 193 countries represented in the General Assembly of the United States agree on active self-preservation which we take as a consensus sufficient to license its use as a premise.⁵⁸

Summary

We argued for what we called logical humility. It is mostly a call on people like me – who argue about everything all the time and love Logic with a capital L – to respect certain limits; we mentioned three. First, Logic as a discipline has taken big strides, but its impact on the exercise of our rational faculties, even in the sciences, is negligible; for most purposes, applied logical reasoning requires little more than good language skills. Second, the scope of logical reasoning is severely limited beyond mathematics and matters of fact due to its chaotic side; thus, its guidance is severely hampered where it would be needed most, loaded cultural issues. In respect to those issues logic's legitimate function is, third, re-

⁵⁷ We are aware that this is easier said than done for there is no consensus on how to achieve such a lofty goal; the road may be difficult although the destination is clear.

⁵⁸ To be honest, I believe that the principle of charity is more than our best bet for maximizing our chances of survival. I am deeply convinced that it is a moral ideal that we should uphold even if certain cultural norms turn out to be uncontroversially subpar but, say, are cherished by their people. But we can rest the case here (ethical questions are not our main concern) and leave the principle with a minimal justification.

stricted to conceptual exploration for which, again, Logic is not necessary although it may provide helpful tools.

This may not seem much. But compared to where we come from, it is. For once the scope of logic was universal and its exercise divine:

It demonstrates clearest insight to take refuge to logic in all things, for to appeal to logic means to appeal to reason. And they who fail to do so lose their honor, since it is reason that makes them the likeness of God. [...] The blessed Augustin dignifies logic in such a definition when he says: logic is the art of arts, the discipline of disciplines; logic renews knowledge, it refreshes teaching; logic wants not only to promote the sciences but achieves it.⁵⁹

While few would use Berengar's language, the mind set seems very much alive in many quarters.

The conclusion we wish to draw, then, is that the success of Logic does not give us any bragging rights in respect to the superior value of Greek conversational norms. And even if it were otherwise, the traditional scope of logical reasoning can no longer be justified, but certain adjustments of it are in order.

Discussion

The theme, *Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations*, is too tall an order for one slim paper. Worse, in light of the many past contributions to the topic, it is hard to say something new. But the problem is clearly pressing, so we wish to make a contribution no matter how minuscule it is. We first say a little about communication and where our norms fall into the bigger picture. Then we clarify a bit how we propose to think about cultures and traditions, before we turn to the topic.

Norms in Context

The ruling orthodoxy, analytic philosophy of language and Chomskyan linguistics, work with a severely impoverished notion of linguistic behavior. It therefore seems advisable, before we proceed, to remark on

⁵⁹ Berengar of Tours, *Rescriptum contra Lanfrankum* (= *Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Medievalis*; 84), ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), 85f. "Maximi plane cordis est per omnia ad dialecticam confugere, quia confugere ad eam ad rationem est confugere, quo qui non confugit, cum secundum rationem sit factus ad imaginem dei [...] Dialecticam beatus Augustinus tanta diffinitione dignatur, ut dicat: dialectica ars est artium, disciplina disciplinarum, novit discere, novit docere, scientes facere non solum vult, sed etiam facit."

the richness of communication as the social practice of certain primates. According to conservative estimates, non-verbal behavior accounts for roughly two-thirds of the meaning conveyed. And while speaking is linear (i.e., we can only speak one word after the other), non-verbal behavior is multimodal and may fire on different channels at the same time: we can smile while we gesture and display a certain posture but our sweating and flushed cheeks may speak even louder. In addition to non-verbal behavior as such, there is an entire slate of social rules we obey in successful communication: who may initiate and end an exchange and how to do either one, the rules for turn-taking and tolerated interruptions, positions of authority and subordination, etc. For example,⁶⁰ in one tradition people of authority (parents, teachers) observe those subordinate (children, pupils) to see whether they deliver as expected, while in another tradition the roles may be reversed and people in authority are closely watched to see what they have to offer since they are considered role models and are expected to lead by example. When there is no agreement on how to send non-verbal signals and how to read them, or when there is no consensus on the social roles and their distribution among participants, serious damage to a conversation is bound to occur; it may range from non-effectual misunderstandings to unfortunate stereotyping to unintended harm that will result in belligerent action.

These indications should suffice to make clear how tiny the segment is that is governed by the five conversational norms G1 through G5. As social practices, we see them on par with rules for proper turn-taking or assuming certain roles in conversation. But like any rule breaking, a violation of our norms may lead to a conversation breakdown. And since we identified for each of the five an opposite norm in a different tradition, the threat of communication breakdown seems real.

The Other Within

The way we introduced the conversational norms G1 through A3 may suggest that these norms belong to different cultures separated by an abyss of space or time. This was never intended and could actually be misleading, which would be highly unfortunate for two reasons.

It might suggest, first, that cultures (i.e., constructs such as the Chinese culture or the Muslim world) be homogenous; which they are not. We believe a more helpful way to think about culture is in terms of vectors:

⁶⁰ This is taken from the work done by Suzanne and Ron Scollon on interethnic communication; see Suzanne and Ron Scollon, *Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication (Advances in Discourse Processes: VII)* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1981), in particular ch. 2 "Athabaskan-English interethnic communication." I owe my colleague Chad L. Thompson for the pointer to their work.

we can combine many individual vectors of different lengths and directions into a single one – recall, for example, the parallelogram of forces. In other words, what seems to be a fairly cohesive unit that follows a single trajectory is actually the net result of diverging if not opposite forces. We can thus have a veneer of homogeneity visible on the outside, but without being forced to assume such homogeneity in each individual part.

The vector model also invites us, and this is our second point, to acknowledge that there may be different traditions within a single culture. We have, for example, apophatic traditions in Western theology and philosophy, in Islam, or in various schools of Hinduism and Buddhism; the Apache, too, told Basso that their concept of *diyí*⁶¹ (power) defies words, and many people unconcerned with highfalutin religious or philosophical ideas will turn to music or poetry (for what is said between the lines) to express the unspeakable. All these traditions would agree with Daoism that certain things cannot be named, are unspeakable, and therefore limit or deny the validity of G1 (LingCon). We can likewise find, in all cultures, smaller or greater pockets of people who reject the pervasive, all-encompassing nature of logic. They want to limit the scope of G2 (NCE) and G3 (Euclid) and insist on complementary aspects to guide our decision-making; for instance, aspects informed by a deep concern for the frailty of the human condition and the compassion that results.⁶¹ For if we do not put strictly logical reasoning in its place, or so the story goes, then nothing prevents us from becoming perfectly logical monsters: zealots who torture and burn the heretic, Nazis who act on racist ideas, cold-war politicians who deliberate in terms of megadeaths, captains of industry whose language is restricted to what their balance sheets say, or legislatures and university administrators who sacrifice education on the neoliberal altar of accountability and efficiency. And this is so – in the language we introduced above – because of the chaotic side of logic: start from premises that are just slightly off, and you may arrive at monstrous but perfectly logical consequences.

Whatever the worth is of these remarks, they should at least bar us from engaging in the fateful stereotyping of us versus them. The other, so

⁶¹ We cannot expand on any of it; what we have in mind are a hodgepodge of topics from sources as diverse as Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947). Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994). Martha Nussbaum, *Not For Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), here especially ch. III: "Educating Citizens: The Moral (and Anti-Moral) Emotions." Paul Erikson a.o., *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2013). Sandra Harding, *Objectivity and Diversity. Another Logic of Scientific Research* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2015).

to speak, might be our next-door neighbor, or even our very own alter ego, and not someone separated by thousands of miles or hundreds of years.

Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations?

On one hand, this is not really a question; for where is trade, there is dialogue, and there has been trade across cultures for thousands of years. On the other hand, when it comes to the exchange of ideas, not of goods, then it can be argued that, while ideas have always travelled along trade routes, during recent centuries there was little genuine dialogue and mostly colonial infiltration. Yet, times have changed, and unless we are willing to lose the good things we have achieved and trade them for a dystopian future, a genuine dialogue of cultures and civilizations is the order of the day.

We now review the five conversational norms G1 through G5 along with their counterparts from other traditions and add a few comments on each regarding what we see as their rightful place in a dialogue among traditions. Doing so, our focus is entirely on a dialogue among *cultural* traditions; we won't be concerned with scientific exchange or business relations, both of which pose far fewer challenges for the reasons we mentioned above.

G1 (LingCon)

In respect to G1 we made two remarks. First, we noted that G1's claim to a universal scope is a contested assumption in almost all cultures; not everything finds adequate expression in speech and even if we allow richer forms of expression like slam poetry or dance (permissible in some regional variants of palaver), some will still disagree. Furthermore, we remarked that the success of modern science cannot be used to quell these doubts since the language of modern science is mathematics, not any natural language.

If we are on the right track with these observations, then they raise principled obstacles for a dialogue among traditions intended to touch on things of cultural significance. Not only may participants encounter a situation where one party is unable to express the unspeakable, but they can no longer use logical argument to resolve the issue since logic requires the expressive power of language. Unable to communicate with words, we can no longer force a logical resolution and may find ourselves in a situation where further talking is simply of no avail. Its finality reminds me of a situation described by Hermann Graf von Keyserling (who was famous between the two world wars for his diaries of a traveling philosopher): A friend was playing tennis near Cordoba, Argentina, and asked a local boy to pick up the balls; but even after being offered a handsome

sum, the boy's reply was: "*no me da la gana*" – which was uttering "I simply can't (even if I wanted to)" in the most definitive manner.⁶² There are, then, or so it seems to me, situations where, engaged in dialogue, all we can do is to follow the Apache way and provide the other with hints where to travel in their minds.

If we are correct, then this may force us to simply accept someone else's stance without expecting further logical justification or reasoning. For we can no longer infer the groundlessness of an issue from the inability to put it in words. If a victim of rape is unable to find words adequate for communicating her or his trauma, we are not entitled to conclude it is a non-issue. Likewise, if aboriginal people cannot communicate the full spiritual significance of their landscape in words the occupying nation understands, we are not entitled to dismiss it as a non-issue.

G2 (NCE)

While limited to the prior acceptance and the scope of G1, G2 fared better in our assessment. We argued that much of logical reasoning is hard-wired into the semantics of our natural languages and a continuation of adaptive animal behavior. As such, logical reasoning *qua* practical reasoning (i.e., weighing of options and decision-making) is present in almost all human affairs without presupposing or requiring Logic (as a system of explicit rules or as a scientific discipline). At this level, it seems, G2 applies universally across all traditions; for (as far as we know) everyone everywhere acknowledges the role of counterexamples in discourse. It is simply analytic once we start using the word "all" (or any of its synonyms like every, each, none, etc.).

If we are correct, then we have a global license for using counterexamples to shoot holes in someone else's reasoning, no matter what tradition they identify with, as long as their reasoning was put in language.

G3 (Euclid)

We said in mathematics, where precisely defined concepts are available, or in the sciences and daily life, in instances where we reason about facts (measurements, data points, prices), we can use logical reasoning not only to establish new truths but compel others to accept them as such. Outside this sphere, however, the Euclidean method normally fails to

⁶² See Hermann Graf von Keyserling, *Südamerikanische Meditationen* (Stuttgart: dva, 1932), 153. I admit to liking the story and Keyserling's interpretation of it but only as a possible expression of the human condition: a state of utter akrasia but without the moralizing overtones of lacking control or against better judgement. I strongly object, however, to his stereotyping and his metaphysical hyperbole (which, to say the least, was proto-fascist).

deliver on its promise. One reason is efficiency. If timely action is demanded, then there is no time to jump through all the hoops required for a full implementation of G3. The second, more principled reason is the chaotic side of logic. For when we engage in a dialogue among people of different persuasion or among different traditions, then we cannot define, with sufficient rigor, the vast majority of culturally loaded concepts that would matter in a such dialogue. So logic will behave like a chaotic system and subtle differences in meaning will blow up in unexpected ways and lead to dramatically different conclusions, thus spoiling any consensus that might have been achieved on the premises.

We therefore assign logical reasoning a different role in inter-traditional dialogue and apply it to the task of sounding out the boundaries of an idea and to calibrating the meaning of shared concepts. We replace the traditional job description of proving dissidents wrong, of using logic as a weapon to strike down our opponents, with the new description of using it as a crutch as we walk the crooked path of dialogue.

If we are correct, and proceed on assumptions of mutual respect and human decency (and relinquish any claims as to absolute truth), then G3 can be put to the useful service of building a shared understanding of common ideas; provided, of course, we find sufficiently adequate linguistic expression for them. This takes time and patience. It may take a toll on those who hold fundamentalist views in private; but there seems no other option left short of killing the infidels and oppressing the brutes.

G4 (Contest) and G5 (Illicit)

G4 and G5 have no place in any dialogue among people or traditions (other than testosterone-fueled discussions among frat boys, that is, or among philosophers, we should add, infamous for their intellectual hostility). For if we limit G3 as proposed and employ it only for the clarification of meaning and not to subdue the dissenter, then there is no longer a contest (i.e., G4) we can try to win by bending the rules or cheating (i.e., G5). This assessment was presaged by scientific needs in form of the norm S1 (Pursuit of truth).

If we are correct, then a dialogue among and across traditions must follow the lead of the sciences as a cooperation of people who are determined to establish and then to accept only facts or unambiguously defined words as common ground; who are willing to actively seek and then to expunge their own misconceptions; and who are therefore prepared to engage in an open-ended dialogue whose outcome may not prove them right. And while logic has a big role to play in all this, it can no longer be the fateful role it played in the past.

Concluding Remarks

The reason we included above various socio-economic tangents is our view that social practices develop as rational responses of people to demands made upon them by the natural or cultural environment they live in. We see this as another implicature of the principle of charity. Consequently, we conceive of a rational response very broadly as anything people in the given circumstances expect to result in well-adapted behavior. This is at least what defines our base line. It does not mean that it panned out that way; and even if it did, at a later point in time it might have turned into an evolutionary trap: a fossilized ritual that is actually ill-adapted and hence harmful.

If our view is fundamentally correct, then it cuts both ways.

On one hand, it suggests that social practices (e.g., turn-taking during a conversation) may not be transferable between environments without losing their adaptive value. And this is a real threat, as the Scollons (*op. cit.*, 19f.) report: Indigenous people who hold on to their social practice of no self-praise, won't land a job with the government whose hiring officer expects applicants to put their best foot forward. In regards to our topic this means not only that norms and their antagonists, such as G1 (LingCon) and D1 or G3 (Euclid) and A3, may misfire if brought to bear outside their natural habitat but also that any such pair raises the question of how to design the environment for a dialogue among and across traditions. For a deliberate, conscious design decision seems to be called for to ensure that no traditions are put at cross-purposes. For otherwise, those who hold on to ideas of silence and respect (i.e., A2+3) will be perceived as weaklings without an opinion or unable to defend it, while, the other way round, those who communicate under G3 will be perceived as ruffian bullies not worth even talking to.

On the other hand, as we lose more and more individual traditions, the clearest sign of which is the rapid loss of languages, we can expect a convergence of social practices and hence a convergence of conversational norms, too. In 50 years from now, digital communication at the global scale may have molded a single set of conversational practices and thus rendered obsolete any academic concerns about the vagaries of intercultural dialogue. The question we are presently concerned with may therefore simply disappear. Hopeful that the drainage of cultural diversity will be contained, we now turn to the design aspect.

Above, we gave an outline of the place the norms G1 through G5 can rightfully occupy in a dialogue among and across different traditions on topics of cultural significance. We did not call it their proper role to play to indicate that any such choice must be left as a design decision to the participants who engage in the dialogue. The single general design recommendation that emerged from our discussion above was the principle of

charity (or mutual respect and human decency) and the relinquishing of any claims as to absolute truth. Everything else needs to be negotiated by the participants and likely also be custom-tailored for the topic at hand. We find it entirely conceivable that some dialogues will be composed of participants sending one another on mind travels the Apache way (to further mutual appreciation), all the while some dialogues will consist of heated scholarly debates making maximal use of logical argument (to build shared ideas).

But conversational norms can serve a purpose also outside dialogue. For we can take pairs of antagonistic norms as an occasion to re-evaluate our own. We see this as an opportunity to remove evolutionary traps (ill-adapted, harm-causing social practices) in one's own tradition. We indicated some of it above but won't pursue it any further since adding to it would be off-topic.⁶³

We remarked above that, stripped from all detail, the bare-bones question we face is about logic's proper role in a dialogue among people from different traditions, traditions which may represent entire cultures or just an undertow within. And our bare-bones answer is that, while logic does and must play a role, the details are not as obvious as one might have been inclined to believe. Logic, we intimated, may very well be overrated. But once we allow ourselves to get involved in the question, rethinking logic's role in one's own tradition may be a not so unwelcome side effect.

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⁶³ Although I see this, re-evaluating the scope and function of logical argument and reasoning in my own culture, as a pressing issue. Previous generations drew a clear line between, say, understanding and reason, or between being rational and being wise; it not clear what the present answer is or should be. But I would expect it takes in account, among others, the issues raised in the literature we mentioned in Footnote 69 above.

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4.

Culture and Civilizational Progress: The Problems of Dialogue

Joseph C.A. Agbakoba

Introduction

What is culture and what is civilization? Culture, broadly speaking, includes all the things humans have developed over and above the givens of nature, and includes all the arts and sciences, technology and organizational forms of society; and of these language and philosophy are at the core. Civilization is often taken as the elevation or development of a given culture, especially in matters of taste, conduct, social relations, organization and technology to admirable levels; however, in this sense it is rather indistinguishable from culture. Civilization strictly speaking refers to things, states and events that concern civil life, that is, the life of citizens in the general sense, and also refers to the quality of life of citizens or, more broadly, of members of a polity. Hence, civilization can refer to the state of development of members of a polity, that is, the capabilities, rights and obligations they have and the attendant self-realization and quality of life achieved therein. In other words, civilization means the level of the good life that can be achieved by the members of a given polity, while a civilizational progress refers to the advancements that can be made in this regard by a polity and its members. From the foregoing it can be concluded that culture informs civilization and underpins the sorts of progress that it can make. And since language and philosophy are at the core of culture, they are also at the core of civilizational progress. And this is philosophy both in the strict sense, as a second order activity, and in the broad sense in which it stands for a worldview or ideology or life-vision – in which it contains conceptualizations of ultimate reality, human nature, the telos of humanity and the supporting ethics for the achievement of such a telos. It is in this sense that philosophy informs human action and makes a good deal of popular impact. This is the basic assumption of the normative consequence approach that was espoused in its pristine form in modern times by Max Weber in his *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The impact of philosophies on human personality, agency and civilizational progress comes in and through broadly three ways, which create the basis for individual internal discourses or monologues and the more social discourses that are dialogues between at least two parties.

First, let us look at internal discourses or monologues and the transformation they can produce. There seems to be three ways by which

individuals confront history, traditions, structures and external circumstances within their mind and being: in a conformist, rebellious and transformative manner. I have argued in respect of categorical frameworks and ideologies that as soon as the individual gains self-consciousness and is capable of reason he/she begins to react in three basic ways to reality, demands and power of categorical frameworks and ideologies. First, selectively and, to some extent, rebelliously: in this case the individual ignores the conditions which the conceptual framework (or ideology) imposes and the formal, semi-formal and informal relations that these conditions sponsor, because he/she finds certain aspects of these conditions irksome, without having a sense of involvement in a contradiction arising from non-conformity to accepted values, beliefs and rules. Such an individual can readily act against the rules governing the objective social conditions without any sense of guilt. Second, conservatively and conformingly: the individual in this case seeks to conform completely to the standards of the accepted ideology. Third, creatively: here the individual does not relate to the objective conditions of an ideology by breaking irksome rules and conditions or conforming to them, but by seeking and exploring the elastic and interpretational limits of beliefs, values and protocols. By so doing he/she transforms or replaces perceived irksome and inadequate beliefs, values and rules with something more acceptable.¹

These options apply broadly to human beings as they grapple with the possibilities presented by institutions, traditions, structures and other external circumstances. These are ideal categories; individuals do not belong to any one of them all the time but rather exhibit the different forms in different concrete situations. It is important that we understand (or rather attempt to understand) some of the factors and forces that underpin different reactions. A good deal of course has to do with an individual's natural endowments. However, beyond our natural endowments are values, dispositions and attitudes that we have cultivated. In this regard and at the most general level, a good deal turns on how we have cultivated reason (especially transcendental reason and the principle of consistency) and what I have referred to as ontological beneficence – that is the sum total of the other-regarding affective and conative states of an individual that issues in the promotion of freedom, equality, justice, charity, altruism, tolerance, etc.² The combination of the principle of consistency and ontological beneficence, which I have referred to as consistency-beneficence or reasonability, is the basis of all our attempts to achieve a civilizational progress. Reasonability necessarily contends with its opposite pair of self-regarding unconcern and inconsistency. We may refer to this as apathy-

¹ Joseph C. A. Agbakoba, *Development and Modernity in Africa: An Intercultural Philosophical Perspective* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2019), 127-137.

² *Ibid.*, 87-92.

inconsistency or insensibility, which combines the epistemological and moral opposites of reasonability and will thus be deployed as the opposite of reasonability in the stipulated sense above. The full opposite of consistency-beneficence, it seems to me, should begin with the affective dimension, apathy, and end in irrationality (inconsistency).³ Apathy-in-consistency produces or goes with falsity, contradictions, disorder, chaos, and non-being as well as nothingness, man-made suffering, discontent and underdevelopment. The one set of principles is rationalistic because of the centrality of reason in-itself in its composition as well as 'reasonabilistic'; the other is voluntaristic, because of the subordination, or absence of reason in-itself in its composition, as well as insensibilistic.⁴

If the supreme beliefs and values of a person are ensconced in reasonabilism his or her moments of conformational, rebellious and transformative responses would reflect reasonability; the opposite would be the case with respect to insensibility. The individual's internal resolutions as described above and strength of personality are brought to bear on interpersonal relations and their entanglements, and the totality of this produces the publicly acceptable norms and mores, institution, customs and traditions of a people and as it were the civilizational patterns of a people.

The degree of reasonability that can be mustered by individuals and communities underpins the sorts of civilizational progress that can be made in given contexts. An important element of this process is dialogue. Dialogue is a discussion, an exchange between two or more parties, which is basically a process of argumentation in which one exposes one's views and claims with the aim of convincing the other(s) about its truth and the consequent set of actions that should follow. Dialogue elicits conviction and commitment by way of reasonability because it is not simply logicity that is at play here but also empathy and sympathy that often play an important role in convincing people and drawing the ascent of the illative sense. This implies that the operative radius of reasonability in the individual, that is, the scope and depth of consistency and beneficence in time and space that frame or structure a person's thought and actions, is very crucial in dialogues. There is, as it were, in a general sense, a natural radius of reasonability native to a person; this however is enhanced or diminished by the worldview (ideology), education or formation, traditions, institutions and historical/cultural contexts in which people find themselves. Thus, the culture of a people, the level of reasonability in it and the level of effectiveness in imbuing its members with its cultural values will influence greatly the sort of civilization and civilizational progress that can be achieved.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Civilizational Progress and the Problems of Dialogue

What can dialogue really achieve in terms of enhancing civilization and civilizational progress; and what are its strengths and weaknesses? First, what can dialogue do with a Machiavellian revolt against reason and reasonability? In terms of a foxy bully that is given to Machiavellianism in dealings with people, how much can dialogue do? The efficacy of dialogue depends on a certain modicum of sincerity and commitment to veracity and integrity; yet Machiavellianism rejects and undercuts these basics. Therefore, from the angle of personality types, there is a limit to the efficacy of dialogue because extra-dialogical means have to be employed to manage interactions with Machiavellian personalities.

Another source for the limitation of the efficacy of dialogue in managing interactions emanates from the limitations of the radius of consistency of the worldview or ideology to which a person may subscribe. Many people are often uncritically and unquestioningly attached to a worldview; and, as sincere persons, they also often apply the logic of their worldview and the beliefs and values it contains. Consequently, the illogicalities inherent in the limits of the radius of reasonability of their worldview would limit the efficacy and fruitfulness of dialogue. We can see this in the Duke of She's conversation with Confucius:

The Duke of She told Confucius: 'In my land, there are righteous men. If a father steals a sheep, the son will testify against him.' Confucius said, 'The righteous men in my land are different from this. The father conceals the wrongs of his son, and the son conceals the wrongs of his father. This is the correct way!'⁵

Among the Igbo, it is put thus:

A. You should respect your Okpala (the head of your family or family group; literally father, the one who succeeds and represents or personifies a dead father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc.); B. You must not be forward toward your Okpala; you must remain subordinate to him; C. You must pay him homage (with gifts, etc.); D. You must always defend him, show loyalty and support to him in any conflict with outsiders.⁶

⁵ Confucius, *Analects*, 13:18, trans. A. Charles Muller (1990, revised edition 2013; updated 2017-05-24, T17:17), accessed October 18, 2017, <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html>.

⁶ Ben Chukwudebe, ed., *Onitsha Quo Vadis* (Owerri: B.N. Chukwudebe, 1986), 40.

If we go by the above demands of Confucius and the Igbo value system, a person is required to lie to save a relative; in which case, an outsider will get nothing in terms of justice in a dialogue with such a person. This is because some of the basic things about fruitful dialogues, namely sincerity and objectivity have been compromised. This is a type of revolt against reason, if I may use this Popperian term.

Some people may argue that the partiality expressed above can be the basis of ethics, because ethics involves relationality in an affective sense and so such relationalities should be emphasized, leading to the founding of ethics on specific identities and solidarities. But it should be clear that ethics founded on affectivity is bound to conflict with reason at some point. Relationality in terms of affectivities can go only some distance with relationality conceived in terms of structures and reason. Soon, the demands of structures and reason will conflict with the direction of emotions and passions, as between filial love and duties in contrast with reason in the Confucian passage above. When this happens, one will be compelled to choose between relationality in the form of affectivities and relationality in the form of reason and structures as the basis of one's ethics.

I have, however, tried to show that one can choose reason as the basis of one's ethics while still retaining some, if not all, of the advantages of a system of ethics based on affectivities. In this framework, a person faced with the problem presented in the Confucian verse above has the following options: (1) Align with reason by simply telling or pursuing the truth, but this will crush filial love between father and son and the obligations therein. (2) Follow the Confucian advice and align in a partial manner against reason and truth. (3) Neither align with reason nor with partiality by refusing to provide any form of response. This however runs the risk of concealment which in effect may support the continuation of wrong-doing. (4) Opt to stand in the instead of the father or son as the case may be (or any relation or friend as the case may be), and face the consequences on account of the father or son (or any relation or friend) who has shirked the responsibility attendant on his/her action. In this way, both commitment to impartiality and filial relations and the duties therein can be maintained. This however demands an ever-higher degree of self-sacrifice as the magnitude of the responsibility increases. It is possible that such courageous selfless acts might induce the offender to take up his/her responsibility and so free the morally conscientious relative or friend, but one cannot count on this. Further, there may be barriers in some legal and ethical systems to such involvements of innocent people. Options three and four, however, show that there are ways of getting around situations in which one might be apparently compelled to choose between impartiality and natural strong affectivities (relationality in the affective sense) that are part of the constituents of life and cherished social

existence; ways that permit the retention of both impartiality and these affectivities. Thus we can conclude that morality, properly speaking, is founded on the principle of impartiality; partiality as a principle cannot support morality properly.⁷

Another species of the revolt against reason comes in the form of ideological incommensurability. Ideological incommensurability occurs when the evidential support for contending ideological postulates and claims are radically different and opposed, such that if one accepts one ideology and its evidential support, the other cannot be accepted in whole or even in part.⁸ This happens not only with religious ideologies, where there could be incommensurable evidential support drawn from different intuitive and mystical sources, but also between non-religious ideologies as one might say of Leninist-Stalinist communism in contrast with liberalism. This sort of problem is often rooted in epistemic domain violence. This is a situation in which the epistemic faculty and capacity that is best suited to the verification and/or establishment of truth, verisimilitude and the overall veridic status of an experience or claim in a given area of human cognitive encounter is sidelined in the exercise of final epistemic authority regarding the veridic status of claims in such an area of cognitive encounter. For example, the field of ethics deals with relationality in a structural, rational, as well as in an affective, emotional and conative manner; it has sides that are suited for rational investigation as well as for intuitive encounter as their final epistemic authority. However, as indicated earlier the emotional and thus intuitionist dimension of relationality is too circumspect to be the foundation of trans-cultural, trans-ethnic and even trans-family ethics or the ethics of any form of complex society in terms of big population size and extensive territory, urbanization and the anonymity that goes with its deepening ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, etc. Relationality in terms of structures and thus of rationality therefore becomes more appropriate for ethics; hence, final epistemic authority in the domain of ethics should incorporate reason as its basis, but this cannot be reason devoid of the emotions. Rather it should be a reason that is united with affectivities and conative orientations that maximizes its existence in a mutually reinforcing manner – this is reasonability. In order to avoid epistemic domain violence in the field of ethics, especially in applied ethics, intuitionist backed normative claims must not contradict reason, and rationalist backed normative claims must not contradict the collection of affectivities and orientations of the will, supported by

⁷ Agbakoba, *Development and Modernity in Africa*, 173-183 (this paragraph contains excerpts).

⁸ Joseph C.A. Agbakoba, "Building Bridges in the Era of Globalization," *Philosophy, Culture and Traditions* 5 (2008/09): 48-50.

transcendental reason, the totality of which I have referred to above as ontological beneficence.

Concluding Remarks

In sum, the limits of dialogue center on the ability (or inability as the case may be) of persons to submit to the demands of reason. This might be due to an inability to cultivate self-control or submission, and commitment to an ideological disposition in favor of Machiavellianism or some other reason. It might also be due to submission and commitment to a narrow radius of reasonability (consistency-beneficence) inherent in one's worldview, to agreement or disagreement over what counts as evidence for truth claims, especially when dealing with concepts, notions and principles. Some of the major problems here include basic incommensurability and the matter of epistemic domain violence.

Also, there is a problem with reliance solely on dialogue as an instrument of making civilization progress especially in a multi-cultural or pluri-cultural society. There is no doubt that dialogue is useful in making the desired progress, but its efficacy is limited by the problems mentioned above. It therefore has to be supplemented with the appropriate use of state power in the service of reasonability and the values, institutions and traditions that derive from it, such as freedom, equality, justice and solidarity in their various manifestations that are within the limits of (or compatible, as the case may be, with) reasonability. This use of state power does not imply the use of coercive force all the time or moments of such applications, but requires that the state fosters the education and formation of its citizens along the lines of reasonability with the resources available to it in order to minimize dissent against reasonability and the necessity to use the coercive powers of the state.

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Part II
Socio-ontological Commitments and
Religious Traditions

Confucianism, Vedanta and Social Theorizing: Cultivating Planetary Conversations

Ananta Kumar Giri

Theory in the Greek sense requires a combination of interest and disinterest. The theorist needs to be fully engaged and even urgently *interested* in the quest for truth, goodness, and beauty; but at the same time, the theorist needs to bracket selfishness and to be *disinterested* in the pursuit of his/her own particular ‘good’ or advantage.¹

However, it makes a difference whether we speak with one another or merely about one another.²

In philosophy, one way to address the epistemic injustice which the over-commitment to the Eurocentric vision creates is to liberalise the discourse arena in which the attitude of philosophical nationalism is substituted for philosophical conversationalism. [...] Concepts of justice and specifically epistemic justice in any form and in philosophy particularly will not be able to go global if there is no horizontalization of ‘philosophical conversations’ and verticalisation of ‘philosophical questions’ by means of conversational thinking. By horizontalisation of philosophical conversations I mean equal intercultural engagement of actors from different cultures in the global justice debate in which there is no discrimination or marginalization of any philosophical tradition by another. In contrast, verticalization of the questions of philosophy sues for the liberalisation in which uniformity in philosophical question is discouraged. Thus different philosophical traditions are allowed to ask different questions in recognition of the varying conditions of life which give rise to those questions from one locale to the other. Hence while horizontalisation debar discrimination as to who should be a part of the conversation convened on equal platform, verticalisation promotes a form of discrimination as to the type of questions

¹ Fred Dallmayr, “The Future of Theory,” *Journal of Contemporary Thought* 38 (2013): 8.

² Jürgen Habermas et al., *An Awareness of What is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 16.

are allowed to ask. In other words, verticalisation is opposed to the uniformity of philosophical questions from different places. This verticalisation strategy breaks any form of knowledge hegemony and leaves room for the emergence of diverse epistemic perspectives. So the ideas involved in these two concepts are geometrical, horizontal suggesting equality of those in the conversation and vertical suggesting difference in their epistemic perspectives. What is required in the global justice debate in general and in epistemic justice in particular, is an ideology that is not ethnically and which encourages bridge-building like conversationalism.³

Invitation: Widening and Deepening Modes of Social Theorizing

Social theorizing in the modern world has had a European beginning and is still predominantly Euro-American in its assumptions, cultural, religious and metaphysical premises. For example, modern social theory has a Judeo-Christian root and the globalization of Euro-American sociology and its accompanying North Atlantic Universalism has not been accompanied by an interrogation, deepening and broadening of such basic Judeo-Christian premises.⁴ In modern sociology, the idea of society as all powerful owes its origin to both the Judeo-Christian idea of an all-powerful God as well as to its later replacement by the idea of the state as all-powerful. The state-centric and Judeo-Christian origins of the idea of society in modern sociology have not been opened to deeper planetary conversations, for example by thinking about and realizing society as a field and circle of self-realization and co-realizations. In this paper, I strive to do so by engaging with visions and practices in streams of Confucianism and Vedanta.

This exploration draws inspiration from the pre-eminent philosopher Daya Krishna's discussion on different ways of thinking about society, namely socio-centric and Atman-centric. For Krishna, we can look at society either through the primacy of the societal or the primacy of the Atman or Soul. I begin with a discussion of Krishna's frame of thinking and then explore how it can help us to cultivate social theorizing as processes of planetary conversations involving dialogues across different philosophical, cultural and religious traditions while not being imprisoned

³ Jonathan O. Chimakonam, "African Philosophy and Global Epistemic Justice," *Journal of Global Ethics* 13, no. 2 (2017): 132.

⁴ Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot and political theorist Aakash Singh Rathore challenge us to realize how much of our theoretical discourses in modern social sciences are imprisoned within a valorized and arrogant logic of North Atlantic Universalism. See Aakash Singh Rathore, *Contemporary Indian Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 2016).

within these traditions as fixed essentialist wholes. It is in this spirit that we can look at different ways of theorizing about society or exploring different modes of social theorizing by walking and meditating with diverse paths of Confucianism and Vedanta as plural movements of thinking and practice in societies and histories. As plural movements of thought we also explore the multiple border-crossing movements that both Confucianism and Vedanta have had and can have with Buddhism, for example in the past, and with Marxism, Post-Marxism and several contemporary movements of thought, such as deconstruction, post-structuralism, postmodernism and an emerging transmodern mode of being with self, other and the world.⁵

Social Theorizing: Beyond the Two Predicaments of Socio-Centrism and *Atman*-Centrism

Daya Krishna, the pre-eminent philosopher from India, tells us

Society need not be considered the last term of human thought. The centrality may be restored to the human individual who, then, may be viewed as the nucleus of the social cell from what all creativity emanates or originates. In this perspective, then, society would be conceived as a facilitating mechanism so that the individual may pursue his trans-social ends. Instead of art, or religion, friendship or love being seen as the lubricating oil for the functioning of the social machine, the machine itself would be seen as facilitating the emergence and pursuit of various values [...].⁶

In many cultures, including the Indian, the social does not have the same ultimate status as it has in modern Western society and socio-religious thought. The social in Indian thought does not have a primal significance and is considered an intermediate field, and an ideal society is one which facilitates the realization of our potential as *Atman*, soul. Krishna calls it an *Atman*-centric approach which is also the perspective

⁵ Philosopher Enrique Dussel from Latin America talks about the emerging transnational moment and movement when earlier suppressed cultures, philosophical traditions and nations do memory work and realize their own potential and reconstruct social institutions, discourses and practices based upon such reawakened memory works. We can look at the emergence of Confucian and Vedantic thought in both China and India as part of such an emergent transmodernity. But in both cases such a rise is accompanied by dangers of narrow nationalism and a sense of one-sided triumphalism against which one has to be on the guard.

⁶ Daya Krishna, *Social Philosophy: Past and Future* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1993), 11.

of Vedanta, and contrasts this with the socio-centric approach, not only in the modern West but also in religious traditions such as Christianity. But one also finds socio-centric approaches in certain aspects of Confucianism, which accords primary significance to social relations and not, to the same extent, to processes of self-realization. Both *Atman*-centric and socio-centric approaches have their own limitations, what Krishna calls the “two predicaments” – the *Atman*-centric predicament and the socio-centric predicament. The socio-centric predicament does not give enough space to self-realization, while “*Atman* centrality leads a person’s attention away from an active concern with society and its betterment.”⁷ In order to overcome the one-sidedness of an *Atman*-centric approach and socio-centric approach Krishna links it to a new realization of freedom while Sri Aurobindo links it to evolutionary transformations, transforming the very constitution of the individual and the social beyond their present-day dualistic constitutions.⁸

Buddhism, Confucianism and Vedanta

From the point of view of this aspiration to overcome *Atman*-centeredness or self-centrality and socio-centeredness we can look at Asian traditions in new ways. We can here take, for example, the case of Buddhism and Confucianism – two major traditions of discourse and practice from Asia. While Confucianism focuses in its reflections on humanity on webs of relationships, Buddhism emphasizes the need to transcend the limits of social relationships, particularly anthropocentrism. But both traditions have gone through many inner debates as well as contestations among them which, as for Confucianism, giving rise to movements such as Neo-Confucianism, which urges us to pay simultaneous attention to webs of relationships as well as to nurturance of self-realization in our

⁷ Ibid., 23

⁸ Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycles* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1962), 272-3: “In the relations between the individual and the group, this constant tendency of Nature appears as the strife between two equally deep-rooted human tendencies, individualism and collectivism. On one side is the engrossing authority, perfection and development of the State, on the other the distinctive freedom, perfection and development of individual man. The State idea, the small or the vast living machine, and the human idea, the more and more distinct and luminous Person, the increasing God, stand in perpetual opposition. The size of the State makes no difference to the essence of the struggle and need make none to its characteristic circumstances. It was the family, the tribe or the city, the *polis*; it became the clan, the caste and the class, the *kula*, the *gens*. It is now the nation. Tomorrow or day after it may be all mankind. But even then the question will remain poised between man and humanity, between self-liberating Person and the engrossing collectivity.”

quest of human realization.⁹ According to Tu Weiming, Neo-Confucianism involves a “continuous deepening of one’s subjectivity and an uninterrupted broadening of one’s sensitivity.”¹⁰ It also involves a

dynamic interplay between contextualization and decontextualization. Hence, the self as a center of relationships finds itself simultaneously in the grip of an ongoing decentering or displacement. [...] Just as self-cultivation requires self-overcoming, so cultivation of family and other relationships demands a transgression of parochial attachments such as nepotism, racism and chauvinism and ultimately a transgression of narrow anthropocentrism in the direction of the mutuality of Heaven and man and the unity of all things.¹¹

Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Vedanta

Thus in neo-Confucianism there is a simultaneous attention to social relationship as well as to the deepening of subjectivity which helps us to go beyond the one-sided emphasis on either society or self. We find a similar emphasis on emergent sociality and self-realizations in neo-Vedantins such as Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, who urge us to cultivate creative relationships between self and society with additional cultivation of the divine along with and in between. We can also find the resonance of similar concerns in Gandhi and Tagore. It is helpful to cultivate further dialogues between neo-Confucianism and neo-Vedanta. This, in turn, calls for dialogues between Confucianism and Vedanta and not only between Confucianism and Buddhism. The dialogue between Confucianism and Vedanta has not yet been undertaken and for the making of a new world order it is helpful for us to undertake this. For example, Confucianism is concerned with harmony, but in the conventional manifestation of harmony in traditional China this can be hierarchical and anthropocentric. In the conventional articulation of harmony in Confucianism there may not be enough awareness of the challenge of establishing harmony between humans and non-humans, and between society and Nature. Vedanta with its concern of unity of all life can help Confucianism to realize this, just like Confucianism with its emphasis on proper social relationships can make Vedanta more social and here the Confucian vision and practice of *Tian Xia* – All Under Heaven – can help us. For example, the Vedantic concern with unity of life needs to be practiced in

⁹ Fred Dallmayr, *Peace Talks: Who Will Listen?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 152-71.

¹⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

the realms of social relationships, which in the traditional social order are dominated by caste and gender exclusion. Both Confucian harmony and Vedantic unity face the challenge of transformation of hierarchy, monological domination and authoritarian construction of unity.

Harmony and Unity as Meditative Verbs of Pluralization

Harmony and unity help us in coming together with and beyond the traps of domination and exclusion. This is suggested in the vision and practice of *loka-samgraha* from the Indic tradition which has a Vedantic root in a very open and cosmopolitan sense. *Loka-samgraha* is spoken about in the Bhagavad Gita which challenges us to realize the gathering of people which is not only a public, but also a soulful gathering. In modern social and political thought and practice, we are used to the vision and practice of the public sphere but we can realize and transform this also into a field and practice of *loka-sagrahma* which is simultaneously public and soulful. *Loka-samgraha* is a field of mutual care and responsibility and it is a challenge at all levels of human gathering – from dyadic associations, institutions and movements to the triadic and beyond such as family, community, nation and the global order. In our present phase of globalization and the challenges of global responsibility via challenges like climate change and terrorism, we need to talk about global *loka-samgraha*. This global *loka-samgraha* becomes a field of a new cosmopolitan realization, where to be cosmopolitan is not only to be a citizen of the world but also to be a member of the human family. It is also not only epistemological and political but also ontological and spiritual.¹²

¹² Here, what Dallmayr writes deserves our careful consideration: “As an antidote to the spread of ‘worldlessness’ in our time, Hannah Arendt recommended the restoration of a ‘public realm’ in which people would actively participate and be mutually connected. Digging beneath this public forum, Heidegger unearthed the deeper source of connectedness in the experience of ‘care’ (*Sorge, cura*) in its different dimensions. From the angle of human ‘being-in-the world’, care penetrates into all dimensions of this correlation – in the sense that existence is called upon to care about ‘world’ and its constituent features (fellow-beings, nature, cosmos). Differently put: There cannot be, for Heidegger, an isolated ‘self-care’ (*cura sui*) without care for the world – that includes care for world maintenance (without which *Dasein* cannot exist). In this latter concern, this work does not stand alone. In the Indian tradition, especially the *Bhagavad Gita*, we find an emphasis on a basic ethical and ontological obligation: the caring attention to ‘world maintenance’ or *loka-samgraha*. According to the Gita, such attention needs to be cultivated, nurtured and practiced in order for human life to be sustainable and meaningful.” See Fred Dallmayr, *Against Apocalypse: Recovering Humanity’s Wholeness* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 51-2.

Confucianism, Vedanta and the Calling of Planetary Conversations

Confucianism has a major influence in Asia, especially in China, Japan, Korea and many parts of South East Asia. It has been used in various ways in South East Asia as it is embedded in China in histories and contemporary society. Many a time it has been used to justify authoritarianism. But there is a new democratic consciousness brewing in South East Asia as well as in China which calls for rethinking Confucianism beyond the prism of authoritarian justification.¹³ Another issue is the issue of pluralism. Confucianism has existed in societies which have not valued pluralism as a way of life. Most of the societies where Confucianism is present are monological, characterized by the dominance of one ethnic group, for example that of Han Chinese in China, Japanese in Japan and Korean in Korea. In this context we have to link Confucianism to pluralism. This in turn calls for dialogues across borders and making Confucianism part of varieties of planetary conversations.¹⁴

¹³ Han Sangjin, "Three Tasks of Critical Theory and Korean Development," in *Habermas and the Korean Debate*, ed. Han Sangjin (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1998), 289-315.

¹⁴ In this context the work of Dallmayr is enriching. He discusses the affinity among these different streams of thought and practice – pragmatism, Confucianism, Gandhi's experiment with truth and paths of Swaraj. He writes the following about Gandhi and the pragmatists like William James and John Dewey: "In speaking of interconnectedness and the 'play of mutual forces' Gandhi displays an affinity with the spirit of Jamesian and Deweyan pragmatism. But the parallel can be carried further. Like William James and Dewey, and perhaps even more emphatically, Gandhi was an ethical and spiritual pragmatist, in the great tradition of Indian spirituality. [...] Gandhi deliberately chose the path of action or praxis (*karma yoga*) demanding continuous ethical engagement in the affairs of the world. Again like Dewey he did not assume that human beings are free and equal by nature (or in an original 'state of nature'); rather freedom and equality for him were achievements requiring steady practice – a practice involving not only change of outward conditions but primarily self-transformation." See Fred Dallmayr, "Liberal Democracy and Its Critics: Some Voices from East and West," *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* XXIV, no. 4 (2007): 10.

Then Dallmayr writes the following about Confucius, Dewey and Gandhi: "Despite his deep modesty, Confucius himself can be seen and was seen, as an 'exemplar' or 'exemplary person' (*chun-tzu*) who taught the 'way' not through abstract doctrines but through the testimony of daily living. At this point, the affinity with the Deweyan philosophy comes clearly into view – a fact perhaps not surprising given Dewey's extended visit to China after World War I. As in the case of Gandhian *swaraj*, leading a responsible life in society involves self-restraint and the abandonment of domineering impulses. In Confucius's own words, humanness or to be properly human (*jen*) means to 'conquer oneself (*ke-chi*) and to return to propriety (*fu-li*)" (see *Ibid.*, 15). The above reflections of Dallmayr can help us to probe further the affinities among paths of Confucius, Gandhi and the pragmatists like Dewey as part of planetary conversations. See Pochi Huang, "The Idea of Humanity: A Comparison of

Such planetary conversations can begin at home, for instance, with the now already noted pluralities in China by some creative interpreters. For example, Tu Weiming, the creative interpreter of Confucianism, now talks about the five teachings of China – Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. In Chinese histories and intellectual streams there have been visible and invisible dialogues among these teachings. During a visit to a Muslim town, Nagu Town in Yunnan province (July 2009), I asked an interpreter what has been the mutual influence between Islam and Confucianism. She said that while Confucianism has made Islam much more this-worldly, Islam has made Confucianism to have a new understanding of the meaning of Heaven. Though scholars like Tu Weiming have carried out dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity but not with the Islam, there is an urgent need for further dialogues in this field now. This is especially needed because the present day Chinese Government is promoting Confucian Institutes all over the world. Such Institutes should give rise to mutually transforming dialogues in China, India, the Middle East and the world rather than be a center of promotion of official Chinese nationalism.¹⁵

Dynamic Harmony and Dynamic Emptiness

Harmony is a key concern in Confucianism as well as in many Asian traditions. But usually this is taken as static and has been used to justify authoritarianism. We need to rethink harmony to build upon traditions such as dynamic harmony.¹⁶ In his study of Japanese religion, where Buddhism has interacted with Shintoism and Confucianism, sociologist of religion Robert Bellah notes that while Japanese religion is concerned

Confucius's Jen and Gandhi's Ahimsa," in *Philosophy as Love of Wisdom*, eds. Patrick Laude and Peter Jonkers (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2019).

¹⁵ In this context, what Ravi Prasad Narayan writes deserves our careful consideration: "[...] As long as the major classics flowing from Chinese history and writings from famous Chinese litterateurs like Lu Xun, Mo Yan and many others are not translated into many Indian languages and similarly the writings of India's lively vernacular literary tradition (including English) translated into Chinese, the two countries and their people are not going to appreciate one another and the only prism of comparison will remain the material (development)." See Raviprasad Narayan, "Culture and Foreign Policy: The Confucian Institutes and Advancing 'Soft Power' With Chinese Characteristics," in *Beyond Strategies: Cultural Dynamics in Asian Connections*, eds. Priya Sing et al. (New Delhi: KW Publishers, 2014), 31-44.

¹⁶ Dynamic harmony has a dimension of harmonization: it is dynamic harmonization.

with harmony, i.e., harmony among persons and harmony with nature, this is not a static harmony but dynamic one.¹⁷ As Bellah writes:

What has been said about the unity of man, nature and divinity should not be interpreted as a static identity. Rather it is a harmony in tension. The gratitude one owes to superordinate benevolent entities is not an easy obligation but may involve the instant sacrifice of one's deepest interests or even of one's life. Union with the ground of being is not attained in a state of coma, but is very often the result of some sudden shock in daily life. Something unexpected, some seeming disharmony, is more apt to reveal the Truth than any formal orderly teaching. Japanese art and the aesthetic attitude toward nature are also concerned with the unexpected.

Compassion here is not imprisoned in the logic status-quo, rather it is animated by a spirit to unsettle the existing harmony and invite the unexpected in a spirit of dynamic harmony. Realization of dynamic harmony is also an animated aspiration in paths of Kashmir Saivism. As Harish Deheja writes:

Kashmir Saivism postulates that *Parama Shiva* contains the entire universe, pulsating within it, just as the seed of the mighty *nyagrodha* potentially contains the entire tree. At the immanent level, the transcendent *prakashavimarshamaya* splits into *parakasha* and *vimarsha*, Shiva and Shakti, *aham* and *idam*, I and this, subject and object, held together in pulsating, *dynamic harmony* [...] At every level there is differentiation into subject and object, *aham* and *idam*, but the differentiation is based in, and unified by the non-duality of consciousness.¹⁸

Kashmir Saivism seeks to realize dynamic harmony by realizing differentiation without dualism. Realization of non-duality is also an animated goal in the paths of Buddha, for which Kashmiri Saivism possibly has contributed to this pursuit of non-duality the work of dynamic consciousness. Since there is an occasion for mutual learning on the part of Buddhism and Kashmiri Saivism, as we can learn from experiences in these traditions.¹⁹ Realization of non-duality as a complex process of

¹⁷ Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (Glencoe, NY: Free Press, 1985 [1957]), 62-63.

¹⁸ Harish V. Deheja, "Kashmir Saivism: A Note," in *Abhinavagupta: Reconsiderations*, ed. Makarand Paranjape (Delhi: Samvad India), 422 (emphasis added).

¹⁹ It must be noted here that differentiation and integration are perennial human concerns and have been key themes in social and political theory in the last three or

being, becoming and social relationship is also an important concern and challenge in Vedanta.

Dynamic harmony can be accompanied by dynamic emptiness. Emptiness is an important concern in Buddhism, but this emptiness is not static but dynamic. Emptiness is not there only in the beginning, we are perpetually invited to realize emptiness in all our modes of thinking and being. As the Dalai Lama says: “Things and events are ‘empty’ in that they do not possess any immutable essence or absolute ‘being’ [...]”²⁰

Both dynamic harmony and dynamic emptiness are part of what can be called transformative harmony.²¹ Important contributions from Asian traditions to revitalize modern social theory and dialogues with modern Western social theory can help to make both these concepts become more transformationally dynamic as in Asian traditions there is a tendency to conserving the status quo in the name of either harmony or emptiness.

Meditative Verbs of Pluralization

Dialogues help us realize pluralities in our singularly conceptualized and constructed identities. There are pluralities in Europe as there are in Asia, and in each of the countries, cultures and civilizations, such as India and China. We need to build our understanding upon these pluralities. But in order to understand this we need to have a dynamic view of pluralism by contributing to the process of creating a more plural understanding as well as society. But here our activities of pluralizations are not only activist but also meditative. There is a need to cultivate meditative pluralizations in thinking about and realizing our identities as well as reflecting upon themes in social theories.

Vedanta and the Calling of Planetary Conversations

As Confucianism is concerned with harmony, Vedanta has been concerned with oneness and unity. Vedanta has been part of a global engage-

four hundred years. In our recent theoretical discourses, Niklas Luhman urges us to realize the need for distinction, for example, between system and its environment; Derrida urges us to understand the work of difference, which is just not mere difference but has the capacity to resist temporal and spatial incorporation; Parsons and Habermas in their own different ways stress the need for integration and communication. All these attempts can be enriched by the quest from Kashmiri Saivism to realize differentiation without dualism. The Buddhist quest for non-duality can also be enriched by it. It can also help us to rethink identity and difference in contemporary social and political theory.

²⁰ Dalai Lama, *The Universe in a Single Atom: How Science and Spirituality Can Save Our World* (New York: Random House, 2005), 49.

²¹ See Ananta Kumar Giri, ed., *Transformative Harmony* (Delhi: Studera, 2017).

ment for a long time. Recently, scientists and philosophers have explored links between Vedantic concern with unity and scientific concern with unity, which has given rise to the vibrant exploration of science and spirituality. In terms of social discourses and envisioning of self, culture and a different world, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Yogananda Paramahansa, Sri Aurobindo, Pandita Ramabai and Tagore have had some impact on thinking about self, society and the world in the Euro-American region as well as other parts of the world. This may enable deeper dialogues across religious and philosophical borders. In case of Sri Ramakrishna, there was a profound border-crossing movement between Tantra, Christianity, Islam and folk Hinduism. In the case of Gandhi, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda and Yogananda Paramahansa there was a border-crossing movement between Vedantic Hinduism and Christianity as well as with other movements of thought, such as Tolstoy's philosophy and modern science. Pandita Ramabai brought the challenge of Vedanta to Christianity and also challenged Swami Vivekananda's interpretation of Hinduism in the modern world from the point of view of gender domination. A contemporary engagement with Vedanta and social theorizing needs to build upon creative and critical memory works and memory meditations and face the challenges of contemporary self, social, cultural and world transformations.

Confucianism, Vedanta and Social Theorizing

Social theorizing needs to rethink terms of discourse such as individual, state and community, as well as to establish a dialogue with themes such as harmony and unity in trans-disciplinary and open ways. We need to specifically focus on looking into implications of rethinking contemporary social theories from the point of view of Confucianism and Vedanta.²² We need to carry out a simultaneous engagement with neo-Confucianism and neo-Vedanta as they reconstitute the relationship between individual and society. This involves a simultaneous historical and theo-

²² Here we can follow a very important recent work on social theory and China: Qi Xiaying, *Globalized Knowledge and Chinese Social Theory* (London: Routledge, 2014). In this book, the author discusses the significance of Chinese concepts and modes of thinking for advancing Western social theory. Qi also urges us to look at an important posthumous essay by C. Wright Mills, "The Language and Ideas of Ancient China," exploring similar issues. Also important here is the work of Ann Brooks, *Social Theory in Contemporary Asia* (London: Routledge, 2010). With specific reference to cross-currents of modern historical and contemporary theoretical issues in understanding Asian resistance and search for alternatives, see Syed Farid Alatas, *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism* (Delhi: Sage, 2006), and Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

retical engagement, and this also brings Buddhism into our universe of discourse. As has already been argued, mainstream Confucianism needs to deal with the problem of pluralism and this is also a challenge for Vedanta, especially in its Sankarite Advaita Vedanta variety. Sri Ramanuja's Vishistadvaita possibly has more opportunities here in terms of dealing with issues of difference and dignity of difference, as Sri Ramanuja fought for the transformation of the caste system and the realization of dignity of all. Going beyond the absolutist conception of the singular and articulating varieties of manifestations of the singular plural are important strivings in many streams in contemporary social theory and philosophy.²³ We need to bring this challenge of pluralism or pluralization to Confucianism and Vedanta.

In the preceding pages, we have discussed some issues related to Confucianism, so let us now explore some issues concerning Vedanta and modern social theory. Modern social theory talks about the individual and society, and the Vedantic concern with Atman or soul can help social theory to explore the soul-dimension of the individual and society. This exploration would have resonance with creative works in psychology such as in the works of Carl Gustav Jung and Victor Frankl.²⁴ It also can find resonance with streams of sociological thinking which understand the limits of the social, as we find in the work of Alain Touraine, and openness to transcendence, albeit immanent transcendence, in the work of various philosophers and sociologists, including Jürgen Habermas and Piet Strydom. Finding commonality in the midst of differences is an important theoretical and practical challenge, and here the Vedantic quest for oneness with its needed internal and foundational transformation, such as the one which already embraces many, can be an important contribution to rethinking modern social theory and philosophy.²⁵ In modern social thinking and social movements such as the ones initiated by Swami Vivekananda, Gandhi, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, some of these Vedantic concerns have played an important role, but in Indian social theorizing we see glimpses of engagement with Vedanta only in a few social theorists such as in the works of Radhakamal Mukerjee and A. K. Saran.²⁶

²³ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

²⁴ Carl Gustav Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: Routledge, 1933).

²⁵ Ananta Kumar Giri, ed., *Social Theory and Asian Dialogues: Cultivating Planetary Conversations* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁶ T. N. Madan, ed., *Sociology at the University of Lucknow: The First Fifty Years* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013); Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Integral Sociology* (Delhi: Radha Prakashan, 2000); A. K. Saran, *Traditional Thought: Towards an Axiomatic Approach* (Varanasi: Central Institute of Tibetan Studies, 1996), Idem, *Soci-*

Pragmatism, Society and Spirituality

Both Confucianism and Vedanta have simultaneously a dimension of pragmatism and spirituality, though usually Confucianism is looked at as much more political than spiritual. In understanding different aspects of Confucianism, Vedanta and Social Theorizing, it is helpful to bring the dimensions of pragmatism and spirituality to our exploration here.

Pragmatism has been an important philosophical and socio-cultural movement in the USA which has influenced our view of language, social reality and the human condition. American pragmatism as cultivated by Charles Sanders Pierce and John Dewey has influenced post-war continental philosophy in the works of seekers like Karl Otto-Apel and Jürgen Habermas.²⁷ But this has not been merely a one-way influence. In the works of Apel and Habermas, we see a mutual dialogue between American pragmatism and streams in continental philosophy, namely Kant, leading to what is called Kantian pragmatism. Kantian pragmatism has influenced critical theory and has opened up pragmatism to new realities and possibilities as a result of the dialogue between American pragmatism and continental philosophy.

However, this dialogue now needs to be broadened and be part of what can be called planetary conversations. There is a need for dialogue between varieties of pragmatism and also for exploring spiritual horizons of pragmatism. For example, Confucianism does have an important emphasis upon practice and pragmatism. Dewey visited China and learned the Confucian streams of theory and practice. Pragmatism does also have a spiritual horizon and base as, for example, in many streams of Indian spiritual traditions there is a focus on transformative practice. In this context, Sri Aurobindo in his *Life Divine* proposes a nobler pragmatism “guided, uplifted and enlightened by spiritual culture and knowledge.” In his *Human Cycles*, he also talks about spiritual vitalism. Resonating with the Habermasian pathway of Kantian pragmatism, we can understand vision, discourse, pathways and movements of both Confucian and Vedantic pragmatism which have important implications for rethinking and re-imagining language, self and society.

In his reflections on language, Sri Aurobindo does not just look at it as a social practice but rather as *mantra* and urges to cultivate the *mantra* dimension of language.²⁸ That we can go beyond a simplistic view of

ology of Knowledge and Traditional Thought (Varanasi: Central Institute of Tibetan Studies, 1998). Mukerjee’s project of integral sociology has a Vedantic resonance.

²⁷ Myra B. Aboulafia and Catherine Kemp, eds., *Habermas and Pragmatism* (London: Routledge, 2002).

²⁸ Harold Coward, who has written on Sri Aurobindo’s approach to language as *mantra*, says, “The term *mantra* signifies a ‘crossing over’ through thought (root *man* ‘to think’), and (to cross over) from the Transcendent to the human levels. As *man-*

language as reflection of society. This resonates with Martin Heidegger's conception of language as a way-making movement.²⁹ In Sri Aurobindo and Heidegger we find streams of spiritual pragmatism in their medita-

tras, the Vedas are primarily manifestations of the descent of Spirit into the world, and, through the repeated chanting of them, an ascent from the physical to the spiritual can be accomplished. As pure Sanskrit language, the *mantras* are conjunctions of certain powerful seed syllables which endure a certain rhythm or vibration in the psychosomatic structure of consciousness and arouse a corresponding psychic state. This is Sri Aurobindo's theory as to how language evolves from certain seed-sounds into root words from which come an immense progeny. Not only does language evolve, but also seed-sound *mantras* represent concentration points of transcendental energy from which evolutionary spiritual growth can take place." See Harold Coward, "Language in Sri Aurobindo," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 24, no. 1 (1989): 145.

Sri Aurobindo strove to realize such a meaning of language as *mantra* in his *sadhana* of poetry. In Raghunath Ghosh's words, "Sri Aurobindo's poetry is generally called 'overhead poetry,' the poetry of the overmind. The overmind in terms of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, is nearest to the identity of being and becoming, the supermind, the sovereign truth – consciousness. From this plane of expression and vision, word and rhythm become at once intense and immense to the utmost. The overhead utterance is marked by a value and a form in which all qualities of the subordinate planes fuse in something diversely ultimate, and variously transfigured by an inmost oneness with the cosmic harmony and with the supracosmic mystery. Language in such an atmosphere becomes *mantra*. Sri Aurobindo's poetry has shown how and when *mantra* is possible." Raghunath Ghosh, *Humanity, Truth, and Freedom: Essays in Modern Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Northern Book Center, 2008), 93.

²⁹ What Heidegger writes in his essay, "Way to Language" deserves our careful attention: "What unfolds essentially in language is saying as pointing. Its showing does not culminate in a system of signs. Rather, all signs arise from a showing in whose realm and for whose purposes they can be signs." See Martin Heidegger, "The Way to Language," in Idem, *Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 2004), 410. Furthermore, "What is peculiar to language thus conceals itself on the way, the way by which the saying lets those who listen to it get to the language." See Ibid., 413. For Heidegger, "the way to language is the [...] way-making movement of appropriation and usage" where "appropriation appropriates human beings for itself, [...] appropriation is thus the saying's way-making movement toward language." See Ibid., 418-9. "What looks more like a tangle than a weft loosens when viewed in terms of the way-making movement. It resolves into the liberating notion that the way-making movement exhibits when appropriated in saying. It unbinds the saying for speech. It holds open the way for speech, the way on which speaking as hearing, hearing the saying, registers what in each its case is to be said, elevating what it receives to the resounding word. The saying's way-making movement to language is the unbinding bond, the bond that binds by appropriating." See Ibid., 419. What Heidegger speaks about language as saying as part of "way-making movement" is suggested in the tradition of people's enlightenment in Europe, namely the folk high school movement and people's enlightenment patiently cultivated by Grundtvig and Kristen Kold. Both of them challenged us to realize language as living words – words that could enliven and energize us. This is also akin to Sri Aurobindo's suggestion to create poems which would work like *mantra*.

tions on language, self, being and reality. This can also inspire us to explore the spiritual struggle in Wittgenstein's conception of language as a form of life.³⁰

Through a creative dialogue with Sri Aurobindo, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Habermas and Dewey, we can cultivate paths of spiritual pragmatism as a new way of looking at self, society, language and reality. In spiritual pragmatism new languages and practices are born of multidimensional *sadhana*, strivings and struggles, touching both the social and spiritual bases of life and society. Spiritual pragmatism involves interpenetration of the spiritual and the material, immanence and transcendence, capability and the given. Spiritual pragmatism involves practical discourse as suggested in the critical theory and practice of Habermas and practical spirituality suggested in the works of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo as well as in many transformative spiritual movements in societies and histories.³¹ Spiritual pragmatism thus contributes to strivings for realization of non-duality as an ongoing *sadhana* and struggle in life, culture and society. It must be noted that there is an important legacy of overcoming dualism in American pragmatism as well, which we notice in the work of social philosophers such as George Herbert Mead who urges us to go beyond the dualism of subject and object.³² Vedanta is a multi-

³⁰ Veena Das, building upon Stanley Cavell, shares some insightful reflections here: "When anthropologists have evoked the idea of forms of life, it has often been to suggest the importance of thick description, local knowledge or what it is to learn a rule. For Cavell *such conventional views of the idea of form of life eclipse the spiritual struggle of his (Wittgenstein's) investigations*. What Cavell finds wanting in this conventional view of forms of life is that it not only obscures the mutual absorption of the natural and the social but also emphasizes *form* at the expense of *life* [...] the vertical sense of the form of life suggests the limit of what or who is recognized as human within a social form and provides the conditions of the use of criteria as applied to others. Thus the criteria of pain do not apply to that which does not exhibit signs of being a form of *life* – we do not ask whether a tape recorder that can be tuned on to play a shriek is feeling the pain. The distinction between the horizontal and vertical axes of forms of life takes us at least to the point at which we can appreciate not only the security provided by belonging to a community with shared agreements but also the dangers that human beings pose to each other. These dangers relate to not only disputation over *forms* but also what constitutes *life*." The blurring between what is human and what is not human sheds into blurring over what is life and what is not life; see Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 15-6 (emphasis added).

³¹ Ananta Kumar Giri, *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realizations* (London: Anthem Press, 2013); Idem, ed., *Practical Spirituality and Human Development* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); M. Paranjape, ed., *Science, Spirituality and the Modernisation of India* (Delhi: Anthem, 2009).

³² G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934); Idem, "The Philosophy of John Dewey," *International Journal of Ethics* 46, no. 1 (1935): 64-81.

dimensional movement of overcoming of dualism and we can explore how and whether this is at work in Confucianism as well.

In understanding and exploring different dimensions of Confucianism, Vedanta and Social Theorizing, we can move ahead with spiritual pragmatism as a frame and movement of reference. We can locate this in the context of cross-currents of pragmatism, sociology and spirituality in sociology. Pragmatism has influenced sociology in many important ways in the course of more than one century. Many classical and contemporary sociologists have had dialogue with pragmatism.³³ Durkheim gave a set of lectures on pragmatism and sociology. There have been varieties of pragmatic sociology and anthropology over the years which have spiritual horizons, starting from Mead to Habermas to Bourdieu and onto contemporary creative pragmatic sociologists such as Laurent Thevenot, Luc Boltanski and Piet Strydom.³⁴ Indeed, Habermas's pragmatics of communication does have a transcendental dimension what he himself calls immanent transcendence. Thevenot's different modes of sociology of engagement point to spiritual horizons as Latour's modes of existence.³⁵ Boltanski explores agape and justice as competences.³⁶ Strydom's exploration of a new cognitive critical sociology also has a dimension of depth as it points to the need for new modes of self-formation. The current discourse of the post-secular, as it emerges from scholars such as Habermas,³⁷ has a dimension of spiritual seeking which is manifest in the works of scholars such as T. N. Madan and J. P. S. Uberoi.³⁸ Thus it is important to explore the spiritual horizon of varieties of classical and contemporary sociology and then open to planetary conversations. For example, it is helpful to open up the contemporary discourse of the post-secular as it

³³ Hans Joas and Wolfgang Knoble, "Neo-Pragmatism," in Idem, *Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 500-528

³⁴ Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2006 [1991]); Piet Strydom, "Cross-Currents of Pragmatism and Pragmatics: A Sociological Perspective on Practices and Forms," in *Special Issue of Spiritual Pragmatism and Pragmatics*, ed. Ananta Kumar Giri.

³⁵ Laurent Thevenot, "Power and Oppression from the Sociology of Engagements: A Comparison With Bourdieu and Dewey's Critical Approach to Practical Activities," in *Pathways of Creative Research*, ed. Ananta Kumar Giri (Delhi: Primus, 2014)

³⁶ Luc Boltanski, *Love and Justice as Competences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

³⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

³⁸ T. N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010²); J. P. S. Uberoi, *The Other Mind of Europe: Goethe as a Scientist* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984)

emerges from the works of scholars such as Habermas to critique of secularism coming from scholars such as Madan.³⁹ In such works there is a simultaneous work of the pragmatic and the spiritual creating the border-crossing vision, practice and movement of spiritual pragmatism. We can move with this perspective of spiritual pragmatism in our exploration of Vedanta, Confucianism and Social Theorizing.

Confucianism, Vedanta and Movements of Border-Crossing

While Maoism in China, especially during Mao's Cultural Revolution, was pronouncedly anti-Confucian, developments in politics, economics and ideology after Deng Xiaoping's Reforms have witnessed a turn to Confucianism. But this is many a time an official nationalistic Confucianism which has complex relationships with Marxist and Post-Marxist thoughts in China. As in neo-Confucianism there was a dialogue between Confucianism and Buddhism where both influenced each other, it is important to explore how Confucianism and Marxism have influenced each other, leading to if any Confucian Marxism or Marxist Confucianism.⁴⁰ Similarly, Marxism has also challenged Vedanta to address the challenges of inequality, class struggle, human rights, domination and the need for emancipation. Both Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo did respond to the challenge of socialism and in the process they also challenged socialism and Marxism to strive for the radical equality of soul and opportunities for soul realization.⁴¹ This radical equality of soul has a gender dimension as Pandita Ramabai's challenge to Swami Vivekananda highlighted more than a century ago. Feminism challenges Confucianism, Marxism and Vedanta for radical gender equality, but in turn they also plead for the transformation of feminism. For example, Confucianism can challenge feminism on how to cultivate the relational in gender relations even while fighting against gender domination. Similarly, Vedanta can challenge feminism to realize that the woman is not just a body or a social construct, but also has a soul sphere which has a responsibility to realize non-duality in inter-gender relations and consciousness. Post-Marxism

³⁹ Madan, *Modern Myths*.

⁴⁰ In the Korean context, sociologist Han Sang Jin ("The Three Tasks of Critical Theory") has explored the possibility of bringing Habermasian process of discourse ethics and moral argumentation to Confucianism. Han suggests that Confucian ways of being in the world can include processes of moral argumentation. We can find in these possibilities for transforming elements of dominating hierarchy in Confucianism into varieties of post-hierarchical formations.

⁴¹ The great Indian philosopher D. P. Chattopadhyaya has explored connections between Marx and Sri Aurobindo. See D. P. Chattopadhyaya, *Sri Aurobindo and Karl Marx: Integral Sociology and Dialectical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

and postmodern movements challenge Confucianism and Vedanta in various ways to come to terms with the dignity of difference as well as the emptiness of reality.

Social theorizing today calls for a multi-dimensional engagement with planetary conversations where we start with our own roots of thinking, practice and movements and converse and learn across borders. This makes us to move beyond both ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism or for that matter beyond any other centrism such as Confucian and Vedantic centeredness, and be engaged with moving across borders in a spirit of mutual learning and enrichment of our experiences of being human and theorization of the human condition. In this essay, we have made some efforts in this direction in terms of the two traditions of Confucianism and Vedanta.

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6.

A Comparison of Filial Piety in Ancient Judaism and Early Confucianism¹

Fu Youde & Wang Qiangwei

Introduction

Chinese scholar Yu Yingshi points out that “comparing and contrasting China and the West has been an issue of great concern for Chinese scholars since the end of the Qing Dynasty,” and that “the question that most interested (him) is how to understand the cultural similarities between China and the West through the lens of history.”² Ancient Judaism – the Judaism of the Hebrew Bible and the *Talmud* – does not belong to Western culture, but rather it is widely recognized as one of the roots of Western culture. Chinese and Jewish cultures developed in isolation from each other, and due to certain historical factors these two long-standing and magnificent cultures were barely aware of each other’s existence for many centuries. This state of affairs continued until the end of the twentieth century when certain Jewish scholarly works were introduced in China. In keeping with Yu Yingshi’s statements, as scholars of Jewish Studies we feel a responsibility to clarify the similarities, differences and origins of these two civilizations so as to illuminate what is common and what is unique to these two traditions. We do this while introducing Jewish thought and culture by way of comparing it with China’s mainstream culture, in particular Confucianism. We hope to draw on this foundation of knowledge to enrich our own values.

Early Chinese society, which was agricultural, and ancient Jewish society, which was both nomadic and agricultural, have more in common than with the world’s other civilizations, and are thus more comparable. Both cultures exhibit a strong ethical orientation, within which filial piety is a large area of common ground. In order to further the recognition and understanding of Jewish ethics within Chinese academia, and in light of modern China’s need for social reform, this article conducts comparative research on the ethics of filial piety between ancient Judaism and early

¹ This paper appeared earlier in *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 1-2 (2015): 280-312.

² 余英時 (Yu Yingshi), “中國文化與自由民主不是尖銳對立” (“Chinese Culture and Liberal Democracy are not Diametrically Opposed”), 鳳凰網 (*Fenghuang Wang*), 鳳凰大學問欄目 (Fenghuan Big Issue column) (September 19, 2014).

Confucianism.³ We will first observe the significance of filial piety and behavior in ancient Judaism and Confucianism through an examination of their texts to determine the “what.” We will compare and contrast both traditions, and then clarify the familial, domestic, social, and governmental structures underlying these similarities and differences so as to determine the “why.” Finally, we hope to use the foundation of our analysis to provide a Jewish perspective that can be of use to modern Confucian ethics for the revival and reestablishment of filial ethics.

Common Conceptions of Filial Piety

In Chinese, the character for “filial piety” (孝) has two parts. On top rests the character of “old” (老), and on the bottom “child” (子). The Han Dynasty *Dictionary of Words and Expressions* (說文解字) provides the following explanation: “Filial – one who is good to his parents. From the characters of ‘old’ and ‘child’, the ‘child’ carries the ‘old’.”⁴ Bronze inscriptions from the Western Zhou Dynasty depict that the character of filial piety symbolizes the old and the young supporting each other. In ancient texts, the character of filial piety is often used in concert with the character for “offering” (享). Examples include the *Book of Changes* (周易), which states “The king will go to his temple, and there he will present offerings with the utmost filial piety” (王假有廟, 致孝享也), and the *Book of Songs* (詩經), in which is written, “With joyful auspices and purifications, you bring the offerings” (吉蠲為饗, 是用孝享). It is clear that during the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, the character of filial piety often referred to ritual sacrifices to ancestors and spirits, and consequently had a distinctly religious dimension. After the Spring and Autumn Period, Confucius and his disciples used this idea as foundation to create a set of moral concepts and behavioral norms that revolved around filial duty. These norms would later become an important component of Confucian doctrine.

The fundamental concepts of Confucian filial piety are care and respect. “Care” refers mainly to material support. The *Book of Filial Piety* dictates that even if one is a commoner, one must still work hard and live

³ Here, ancient Judaism refers to biblical and rabbinical Judaism, that is, the Judaism embodied in the Hebrew Bible and the *Talmud*. Early Confucianism refers roughly to the development of Confucian thought beginning during the Western Zhou Dynasty, through Confucius’ life, and up to the beginning of the Han Dynasty. This primarily includes pre-Qin Dynasty Confucian classics, particularly the *Book of Filial Piety* and the filial ethics contained therein.

⁴ 許慎 (Xu Shen) (the Eastern Han Dynasty), annotated by 段玉才 (Duan Yu Cai) (the Qing Dynasty) *說文解字注* (*The Annotated Dictionary of Words and Expressions*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House for Ancient Works, 1988), 173.

frugally so that one can provide food, clothing, and shelter for one's parents (用天之道, 分地之利, 謹身節用, 以養父母. 此庶人之孝也).⁵ Providing material support for parents is the minimum standard for filial piety. However, Confucius believed that providing merely material support could not constitute genuine filial behavior. Rather, a more essential component of filial piety was respect (敬), which for him encompassed not only respect, but also love, and reverence. In responding to a question regarding filial piety from one of his disciples, Ziyou, he said, "Dogs and horses require care as well. Without respect, what is the difference (between caring for animals and parents)?" (至於犬馬, 皆能有養. 不敬, 何以別乎?).⁶ Here, Confucius differentiates between the standard of care for people and animals. Furthering Confucius' view, Zengzi delineates three levels of filial behavior: "In filial piety, respect is paramount. Second is to not bring shame upon one's parents, followed by the ability to support them materially" (大孝尊親, 其次不辱, 其下能養).⁷ He believed respecting one's parents was the highest level of filial behavior, while material provision remained the lowest. Thus, we find that "care" is the most basic form of filial behavior, while "respect" carries greater importance. If one were to provide for one's parents but lack the necessary disposition in doing so, then the level of one's filial behavior would fall to that of an animal.

Ancient Judaism likewise advocates filial piety in its religious texts. In the Hebrew Bible, Judaism's most important text, God issues the commandment, "honor thy father and mother," in three different places.⁸ Honoring one's father and mother is thus considered to be one of biblical core commandments in Judaism. The original text of the Hebrew Bible uses two separate terms to refer to filial behavior. In the Ten Commandments, first listed in *Exodus*, the fifth commandment states, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God given thee."⁹ In this section of the text, the Hebrew word for filial behavior is *kabed* (כָּבֵד), which corresponds to the English word "honor."¹⁰ In contrast, the related text in *Leviticus*, "Every one of you is

⁵ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 6.

⁶ *Analects*, Book 2.

⁷ *Dai Senior's Book of Rites*, Chapter 11.

⁸ These three iterations can be found successively in the Chinese and Complutensian Polyglot Bibles in *Exodus* 20:11, *Leviticus* 19:3, and *Deuteronomy* 5:15. In the Hebrew Bible, they can be found in *Exodus* 20:12, *Leviticus* 19:3, and *Deuteronomy* 5:16.

⁹ *Exodus* 20:11.

¹⁰ *Deuteronomy* 5:15 also states, "Honor your father and mother, as Yahweh your God has ordered you to, so that you will live long and have things go well with you in the land Yahweh your God has given you." This sentence is a reaffirmation of Moses' fifth commandment, and the Hebrew used here is again "כָּבֵד."

to revere his father and mother, and you are to keep the Sabbath,” employs the word *tirau* (תִּירָא). Root: ירא), which corresponds to the English “fear” or “revere.”¹¹ It is evident that while the Hebrew Bible uses different expressions to communicate the concept of filial piety, it places great emphasis on the emotion of respect.

In the post-biblical rabbinical text, the *Talmud*, one rabbi distinguishes honor from fear through concrete examples: “As for fear, I mean that a son may not stand where his father stands, sit where his father sits, contradict his father in speech, nor may he be on equal footing with his father. In contrast, honor means that a son must feed and clothe his father, and assist him in leaving and coming home.”¹² In this sense of the word, “fear” emphasizes emotions of reverence and respect, and “honor” refers primarily to the provision of material support. In his *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides, the famous Jewish legal scholar of the Middle Ages, employed a similar lexicon to echo the views expressed by the rabbi above.¹³ Thus, we can see that the filial obligations expounded in rabbinical Judaism coincide largely with those of early Confucianism. Both traditions include the material and emotional duties of care and respect.

The reverence implied in the Jewish commandment of honoring one’s parents is also an element of Confucian filial piety, which is embodied in the practice of “ritual” (禮). The first chapter of the Confucian classic, the *Book of Rites*, states that in a traditional Chinese house, certain areas are the exclusive domain of the father, and his children are not to set foot in these areas, lest they overstep their father’s authority and disrespect him (人子者, 居不主奧, 坐不中席, 行不中道, 立不中門). This manner of respect is the same as the one expressed in the above-mentioned declaration of the rabbi that a child must not stand in his father’s place nor sit in his seat. Chapter twelve of the *Book of Rites* also explicitly dictates standards of care that a son and his wife must care for both of their parents. Such care includes to rise as soon as roosters crow to clothe and brush their parents’ hair. Moreover, parents’ cousins are to be “treated only with respect,” and it is forbidden for the younger generation to hiccup, cough, sneeze, yawn and stretch, spit, or shiver, in their presence. Nor may the younger generation display any bias or look askance toward their parents’

¹¹ *Leviticus* 19:3.

¹² *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin, 31b. Unless otherwise specified, the version of the Babylonian Talmud referenced in this paper is *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1935-48).

¹³ Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, “Sefer Shoftim,” “Hilchot Marim” 6:3; *Mishneh Torah: A New Translation with Commentaries*, trans. Eliyahu Touger (New York/Jerusalem: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 2001), 376-78. Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* is comprised of 14 books. “Hilchot Marim” is the third chapter in *Sefer Shoftim*, the last book. This chapter discusses the filial piety in the bible.

cousins.¹⁴ Thus, the image of the dutiful son who walks with caution in the presence of his father is formed.

In addition to caring for and respecting their parents, children are also expected to inherit and advance their parents' legacy. This is both an expression of filial piety and an inherent requirement. Confucian filial piety explicitly includes carrying on the affairs and beliefs of one's parents. Chapter 31 of the *Book of Rites* states that a son's filial sentiment should be expressed by his inheriting of his father's ideals and aspirations (夫孝, 善繼人之志, 善述人之事者也). A father and son should remain of one heart and one mind even after the father is deceased. The Confucian dictum that "When the father is alive, watch the son's aspirations. When the father is deceased, watch the son's behavior. He can be deemed filial if he does not deviate from his father's way three years after his death" (父在, 觀其志. 父沒, 觀其行. 三年無改於父之道, 可謂孝矣),¹⁵ is not only about remaining faithful to the "father's way," but even includes the obligation that the son take on his father's occupation and "not change his father's ministers, nor his father's mode of government" (不改父之臣, 與父之政).¹⁶ In the Song Dynasty, the Confucian scholar Zhu Xi demonstrated how one should carry on the affairs and beliefs of one's parents with an example: "The Duke of Zhou honored his ancestors by perfecting the virtue of King Wen and King Wu. This is what it means to carry on the legacy of one's predecessors" (周公成文, 武之德以追崇其先祖, 此繼志述事之大者也).¹⁷ Judaism expresses a similar conception of continuing the legacy of one's predecessors. One rabbi writes that a father "must be respected in life and in death." For example, while a father is alive, if a son goes somewhere at the behest of his father, he must say he has come because of his father. After his father is deceased, a son must say, "my father, my teacher" when referring to his father. A son must regard his father as a teacher both because he has benefited from his parents' personal instruction, and because he is the heir and vessel of his father's teachings after his father's death.¹⁸

As an ethical sentiment, filial piety transcends the limitations of time and even mortality. In both Confucianism and Judaism filial obligations remain constant whether parents are living or dead. Confucius once said that "a filial child must honor his parents with the proper ritual and treatment whether they are alive or dead. Only in this way can he remain filial"

¹⁴ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 1.

¹⁵ *Analects*, Books 1 and 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Book 19.

¹⁷ 朱熹 (Zhu Xi) (The Song Dynasty), *四書章句集注 (Collected Commentaries on the Four Books)* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983), 27.

¹⁸ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 31b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Mamrim, 6:4-5. 378.

(生, 事之以禮; 死, 葬之以禮, 祭之以禮).¹⁹ The *Doctrine of the Mean* states, “When they are alive, serve them according to ritual propriety; when they are dead, bury them according to ritual propriety and sacrifice to them according to ritual propriety. This is the ultimate expression of filial behavior” (事死如事生, 事亡如事存, 孝之至也).²⁰ The *Book of Filial Piety* tells us that “the love and reverence of parents when alive, and the grief and sorrow following their death – these are the duties of the living. Having carried out this righteous conduct during his parents’ life and death, a filial son has fulfilled his duty to his parents” (生事敬愛, 死事哀戚, 生民之本盡矣, 死生之義備矣, 孝子之事親終矣).²¹ Judaism also advocates honoring parents after their death. For example, whether he is alive or dead, children may never directly call their father’s name.²² Judaism requires eleven months of mourning for parents, after which a son says to his deceased father, “I wish your life in the next world.”²³ This bears great similarity to Confucian practice. It is evident that both traditions place great value on funeral rites and perpetuating the will of the deceased.

Although Confucianism dictates that a child must obey, respect, and revere his parents, this does not mean a child must unconditionally accept his father’s mistakes. In fact, while Confucianism emphasizes obedience, concession, and deference to parents, it also contains a tradition of being critical of one’s superiors. This “critical” aspect may be considered as another important kind of filial behavior alongside care, respect, inheriting one’s parents’ legacy, and seeing to their funeral rites. In the *Analects*, Confucius advises that children should “Remonstrate with parents gently” (事父母幾諫).²⁴ Zengzi likewise instructs that the gentleman should “criticize according to what is right” (以正致諫).²⁵ This notion is given further weight in *Xunzi*, where it is written, “Follow the Way and not the ruler. Follow what is just and not the father” (從道不從君, 從義不從父).²⁶ Here Xunzi contrasts “the Way” and “what is just” with the will of a ruler or father, thereby making moral rationality the utmost expression of filial piety. The *Book of Filial Piety* addresses the true meaning of correcting one’s superiors: if one is aware that his father is guilty of “unjust” conduct and blindly follows him despite such awareness, this is no longer filial behavior (父有諍子, 則身不陷於不義. 故當不義,

¹⁹ *Analects*, Book 2

²⁰ *Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 19.

²¹ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 18.

²² Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Mamrim 6:3. 376.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6:5. 378.

²⁴ *Analects*, Book 4.

²⁵ *Dai Senior’s Book of Rites*, Chapter 11.

²⁶ *Xunzi*, Book 8.

則子不可以不爭於父, [...] 故當不義, 則爭之).²⁷ However, Confucianism holds a harmonious relationship between father and son in the highest esteem; thus, when a son criticizes his father, he must do so appropriately and still remaining respectful. This was Confucius' intention when he said, "Heed but do not follow. Respect but do not transgress" (見志不從, 又敬不違).²⁸ Zengzi advocated that a child "Remonstrate but not contradict" (諫而不逆) the errors of a parent.²⁹ The *Book of Rites* further explains how one should act in this manner of circumstance: "When a son is critical of his parents, he must adopt a respectful tone and gentle diction. If his parents do not listen to him, the son should remain respectful as ever and wait until they are in high spirits or there is a suitable moment before broaching the subject again" (父母有過, 下氣怡色, 柔聲以諫. 諫若不入, 起敬起孝, 說則復諫; 不說, 與其得罪於鄉黨州閭, 寧孰諫).³⁰ Because the rationale behind remonstrating a parent is helping that parent avert an injustice, such criticism may still be considered filial behavior.

Rabbinical Judaism resolves this issue in a manner similar to Confucianism. If a son discovers that his father's behavior violates any holy law, he is supposed to correct his father in a timely fashion. Even so, the son must remain tactful in his reproach. Here, Maimonides provides a practical example: "When one discovers that his father has violated a law, he cannot say 'Father, you have violated the *Torah's* laws.' Rather, he should say, 'Father! Is it not written that we should act in such and such a way?' as if he were asking a question and not admonishing him."³¹ In this way, the son can uphold the sanctity of the law and at the same time maintain his father's dignity through skillful means. This is also a flexible kind of filial piety.

In sum, Confucianism and Judaism possess a great deal of common ground when it comes to the basic content of filial piety. Where Confucianism tells us to respect our parents, Judaism has a corresponding commandment. Confucianism's most basic form of filial behavior is comprised of material care, respect, and reverence, the same as Judaism. Confucian filial piety includes inheriting and carrying out the legacy of one's father and forefathers, and Judaism imposes similar requirements. Confucian filial piety emphasizes respect for parents in both life and death, and Judaism largely does the same. Confucianism and Judaism both promote tactful criticism of parents when they transgress. Hence, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism may be said to possess sets of filial ethics that are identical, or at least fundamentally in agreement.

²⁷ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 15.

²⁸ *Analects*, Book 4.

²⁹ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 24; *Dai Senior's Book of Rites*, Chapter 11.

³⁰ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 12.

³¹ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Mamrim 6:11, 380-82.

Differing Versions of Filial Piety

If we conduct a more detailed analysis of Jewish and Confucian filial piety, we find that they do in fact diverge. These traditions differ in three main respects: (1) the degree of filial behavior, (2) the extent and scope of such behavior, and (3) the relative status of filial piety within each society, which differs widely between the two cultures.

The difference in degree of filial behavior required is evident first in the nature of the care accorded to parents. Confucian filial piety necessitates not only material care, but also that children please their parents with their behavior. When Zixia asked Confucius about filial piety, Confucius replied, “The difficulty lies with one’s countenance” (色難). He continued, “For the young to handle the affairs of the old, and when there is food and drink, for them to serve their elders first. Is *this* filial?” (有事, 弟子服其勞; 有酒食, 先生饌, 曾是以為孝乎?).³² In Confucianism, although the young doing labor for the old or serving them food and drink may be filial expressions, they do not constitute authentic filial piety. True filial behavior, which is more difficult, requires that parents always be treated with an amiable demeanor so as to maintain their own positive disposition. The *Book of Rites* mandates that “When a filial son cares for his parents, he delights their hearts and does not go against their will. He delights their ears and eyes and makes it so that they may sleep peacefully. He serves them faithfully with his own food and drink” (孝子之養老者, 樂其心不違其志, 樂其耳目, 安其寢處, 以其飲食忠養之).³³ Thus, in Confucianism, “care” is not limited to providing food and clothing but rather includes ensuring one’s parents’ peace of mind.

In comparison, although the Hebrew Bible also says “Make your father and mother glad. Let those who gave birth to you rejoice,” this kind of guidance is rare.³⁴ Moreover, there is no concrete guidance regarding how to please one’s parents while serving them. The *Talmud* discusses the degree to which one must respect one’s parents in several places, including the following story. There was once a filial son named Dama, son of Nethinah, who had the opportunity to earn 600,000 gold coins in the merchant trade. However, because the key he needed to do so was stored below his sleeping father’s pillow, he did not disturb his father’s rest. Another rabbi wrote the same story with a prize of 800,000 gold coins, but with the same outcome. Yet another rabbi commented that this Dama once sat amongst Roman aristocrats and adorned himself in gold-embroidered silk robes. During this time, his mother arrived, tore his robes, beat his head, and spit in his face. Dama never lost his temper, and did not

³² *Analects*, Book 2.

³³ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 12.

³⁴ *Proverbs*, 23:25.

embarrass his mother.³⁵ Another story speaks of a very filial Rabbi Tarfon. Whenever his mother went to bed, he would kneel so that she could use him as a stepstool. Because of this, Tarfon boasted at school of his filial behavior. His peers admonished him, saying, “This does not even constitute half-filial behavior! True filial piety is when your mother throws a bulging coin purse into the sea and you do not blame her for any wrongdoing. Could you do that?”³⁶ These stories demonstrate that, from a Jewish perspective, reverence for one’s parents cannot be measured in gold. Filial behavior is more valuable than money. At the same time, we can see that while Judaism regards respect and reverence for parents as more important than one’s individual material and emotional comforts, its discussion of filial behavior stops at the level of comparing material benefits. This falls short of the Confucian standard of “delighting” parents.

Confucianism and Judaism also exhibit different degrees of mourning and remembering deceased parents. Confucianism places tremendous emphasis on death through the required attitudes and behaviors surrounding the death of a parent and the aftermath. In order to emphasize the importance of a proper funeral to deceased parents, *Mencius* instructs, “Supporting one’s parents while they are alive is not enough to be considered a grand affair. Only performing the proper rites when they die can constitute a grand affair” (養生者不足以當大事, 唯送死可以當大事).³⁷ What, then, constitutes a proper funeral? According to the *Book of Filial Piety*, when a parent dies, the children must weep bitterly and loudly in a way that is unpleasant to the ears. They must prostrate while crying, and when they speak, their speech must be simple and austere. They may only wear mourning clothes and must remain unmoved by music. When they eat they must show that their food has no taste.³⁸ In other words, one’s sorrow must come from within and be made manifest in one’s grieving.

The *Book of Filial Piety* also clearly regulates funeral rites. The deceased must be given a shroud and placed within two coffins, an inner one and an outer one, and sacrifices must be made before their memorial tablet. Mourners must wail uncontrollably, and sorrowfully send off the dead. Burial sites must be chosen via divination. Even after the funeral, relatives must “Prepare the temple and offerings for them to enjoy.” (為之宗廟, 以鬼享之). This is a memorial ceremony that consists of placing a tablet inscribed with the name of the deceased in the family’s ancestral shrine.³⁹ After this, relatives are further obligated to intermittently recall the deceased: “In the Spring and Autumn they offer sacrifices, and periodically

³⁵ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 30a.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31b.

³⁷ *Mencius*, Book 4B.

³⁸ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

think of the deceased” (春秋祭祀，以時思之).⁴⁰ Confucianism dictates that a son must mourn his father for three years. This rule can be found in the *Book of History*, the *Zuo Zhuan*, the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, the *Book of Rites*, and the *Book of Filial Piety*.⁴¹ Mencius was aware of this rule and believed it to be a tradition in place for some three dynasties: “Three years of mourning, wearing rough mourner’s garb, and eating gruel. From the emperor to the common people, everyone has observed this practice for three dynasties” (三年之喪，齊疏之服，飭粥之食，自天子達於庶人，三代共之).⁴² While mourning, a son must observe certain protocols. In particular, he must don coarse, crudely sew his clothing, carry his staff of unworked bamboo, and live in a temporary thatched cottage constructed outside his house. He must also eat gruel and sleep on a straw mat with a headrest made of earth. Even later conquerors of China ensured that the ancient right of a three-year mourning period remained institutionalized in China.⁴³

The death of a parent is also a significant life event in Judaism. Judaism requires relatives to be present at the moment of the individual’s passing, and to bury him or her as soon as possible after death. Unless the death takes place during the Sabbath or a holiday, the body is usually buried that day. Relatives attending the funeral must rend their clothing to show their emotion. The period of *shiva* lasts for seven days after the funeral, during which the children of the deceased are forbidden from working so that they can focus on the memory of the deceased. Friends and relatives come to offer their condolences, comfort the family, and pray. Lamps and candles are lit constantly.⁴⁴ After *shiva*, there are no further strict mourning obligations other than a prohibition against celebration for 11 months after the parent’s funeral.⁴⁵ Although Judaism and

⁴⁰ The *Doctrine of the Mean* states: “In Spring and Autumn, they cleaned the ancestral temple, laid out the sacrificial vessels, dressed in the ceremonial clothing, and prepared the seasonal foods.” (春秋修其祖廟，陳其宗器，設其裳衣，薦其時食.)

⁴¹ *Analects*, Books 1 and 17; *Mencius*, Books 3A and 5A; *Xunzi’s Lilun* (禮論); the *Book of Rites*, Chapters 3 and 38; and the *Book of Filial Piety*, chapter 18.

⁴² *Mencius*, Book 3A.

⁴³ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 38. For additional details on the origins of the “three years of mourning” practice, 丁鼎 (Ding Ding), “三年之喪，源流考論” (Determining the Origins of the ‘Three Years of Mourning’). 史學集刊 (*Collected Papers of History Studies*), vol. 1, 2001.

⁴⁴ 徐新 (Xu Xin), 凌繼堯 (Ling Jiyao), eds., 猶太百科全書 (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*) (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1993), 572.

⁴⁵ Shlomo Ganzfried, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch: A New Translation and Commentary on the Classic Guide to Jewish Law*, vol. 2, trans. Rabbi Avrohom Davis (New York: Metsudah Publications, 1996), 1181-89; David J. Goldberg and John D. Rayner, *The Jewish People, Their History and Their Religion* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 380-81.

Confucianism both advocate intense mourning and recollection of the deceased, as well as proper funeral rights, Judaism places fewer requirements upon mourners. The solemnity of funeral and burial rites, the duration of mourning, and the number of taboo behaviors during the mourning period are quite fewer than their Confucian counterparts.

In ethical cultures, it is common to regulate behavior through prohibition. For example, the Jewish *Torah* has 613 commandments, of which 248 are positive obligations and 365 are negative prohibitions.⁴⁶ Judaism and Confucianism are of one mind when it comes to using this method to discuss filial piety. That is, they often define what is *not* filial in an attempt to better illustrate what is. In this sense, discussion of un-filial behavior is the discussion of filial piety nonetheless. We must also note that, while both Jewish and Confucian traditions include discussions of un-filial behavior, there exists a clear disparity in their views of what constitutes such behavior.

In *Mencius*, there are “three offenses against filial piety” as well as another additional “five offenses against filial piety.” In book four of *Mencius* it says: “There are three offenses against filial piety, the gravest of which is to fail to produce a male heir” (不孝有三, 無后為大). According to the explanation written by the Han Dynasty scholar Zhao Qi (趙岐), the first of the three offenses is to not obey one’s parents, go against their will, or lure them into committing an injustice. The second is that, when one’s parents are old, one lacks the resources to care for them, fail to provide them with nourishment and warmth, has no funds necessary for their medical care, or fails to obtain an official rank, salary, and good reputation. The third is to fail to take a wife and bear a son to continue lighting incense for the ancestors. Having no male heir is considered the gravest of the three offenses against filial piety.⁴⁷ Book four of *Mencius* also enumerates a list of five offenses against filial piety (世俗所謂不孝者五: 惰其四支, 不顧父母之養, 一不孝也; 博弈好飲酒, 不顧父母之養, 二不孝也; 好貨財, 私妻子, 不顧父母之養, 三不孝也; 從耳目之欲, 以為父母戮, 四不孝也; 好勇斗狠, 以危父母, 五不孝也).⁴⁸ Here, the

⁴⁶ Maimonides lists Torah’s 613 commandments in the introduction of his *Mishneh Torah* as preparation for the reader to study the Torah as oral law. For a complete list of these laws, Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, 38-91.

⁴⁷ 朱熹 (Zhu Xi), 四書章句集注 (*Collected Commentaries*), 286-87.

⁴⁸ *Mencius*, Book 4B. It means, “People often claim that there are five offenses to filial piety. To not care about your parents through laziness (a failure to work) is the first offense. To not care about your parents by playing games or drinking liquor is the second offense. To not care about your parents by clinging to material wealth and being partial to one’s wife and children over one’s parents constitutes the third offense. To indulge one’s desires in a way that shames one’s parents is the fourth offense. To fight in a way that endangers one’s parents comprises the final offense.”

aforementioned three offenses are partially repeated, but this time more meticulously differentiated. There are some new additions as well. In general *Mencius* provides Confucianism's treatment of un-filial behavior in detail.

The Hebrew Bible also provides examples of un-filial behavior. For instance, *Exodus* names those who hit or scold their parents.⁴⁹ *Deuteronomy* mentions those who disrespect their parents.⁵⁰ *Proverbs* refers to those who "mistreat" and "cast out" parents, and "mock the father, and despise the mother's instructions."⁵¹ On the whole, these forms of un-filial behavior – insolence, scorn, beating, and scolding – can be reduced to disrespectful attitudes and mistreatment. When compared with Confucianism's three and five offenses, Judaism's offenses rest within a much narrower scope, and are much less detailed and systemized than their Confucian counterparts. In fact, much of the un-filial behavior denounced in Confucianism is never even addressed by Judaism. This is undoubtedly an area worthy of attention for the body of Jewish law, which places great importance on nuanced discussion.

The *Analects* also instructs, "While your parents are alive, do not travel far. If you do travel, you must have a purpose in doing so" (父母在, 不遠游, 游必有方).⁵² The *Book of Rites* tells us that a son should generally remain by his parents' side, but if he must travel far, he must inform his parents of his intended whereabouts so as to put them at ease. In order to prevent his parents from fearing for his safety, he must also steer clear of dangerous situations (夫為人子者: 出必告, 反必面, 所游必有常. [...] 不登危, 懼辱親也).⁵³ "Preventing worry" is a form of filial behavior that expresses deep psychological concern for parents. This specific kind of filial behavior is nowhere to be found in the Jewish tradition.

Confucian filial piety was originally a system of domestic ethics, and only after successive generations of scholarly interpretation did it break free from the walls of the household and expand into a rich, far-reaching sociopolitical ethical system. Filial piety led to new terms of addressing for brothers and elders, and was even applied to rulers in a manner that linked filial piety with fidelity to a sovereign. The *Book of Filial Piety* states, "The filial piety with which the gentleman serves his parents may become fidelity to a ruler. The sense of fraternal duty with which he serves his elder brother may become deference to elders" (君子之事親孝, 故忠可移於君. 事兄弟, 故順可移於長).⁵⁴ If we take filial piety to be a form

⁴⁹ *Exodus*, 21:15,17.

⁵⁰ *Deuteronomy*, 27:16.

⁵¹ *Proverbs*, 19:26, 30:17.

⁵² *Analects*, Book 4.

⁵³ *Book of Rites*, Chapter 1.

⁵⁴ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 14.

of familial ethics, then honoring elders, being faithful to a ruler, and other hierarchical forms of social filial piety certainly transcend its domestic scope. It has now expanded into a sociopolitical ethical system whose purpose is no longer to govern the relationships within a family, but rather to delineate, solidify, maintain, and harmonize all forms of societal relationships. It serves the function of maintaining social stability and order.

The *Analects* raises the point that those who are filial at home are often obedient citizens (其為人也孝弟, 而好犯上者, 鮮矣; 不好犯上, 而好作亂者, 未之有也).⁵⁵ In this light, expanding filial piety's application to the whole of society can create a harmonious society. "Teaching filial piety is a tribute of reverence to all the fathers. Teaching fraternal piety is a tribute of reverence to all elder brothers. Teaching the duty of a subject is a tribute of reverence to all rulers" (教以孝, 所以敬天下之為人父者也. 教以悌, 所以敬天下之為人兄者也. 教以臣, 所以敬天下之為人君者也).⁵⁶ From a Confucian perspective, as long as people are filial, there will exist "loving fathers and filial sons, love and respect amongst brothers, and benevolent rulers and loyal ministers," thereby bringing about a well-ordered nation. The Han Dynasty rulers readily accepted and implemented a practice of "governing the world with filial piety," and later dynasties all looked favorably upon this method of ruling.

In contrast, Jewish filial piety has always remained within the domain of domestic ethics. First, Judaism regards filial piety as having a fixed number of objects for application – namely, parents. It does not govern relationships between brothers, let alone toward individuals outside of the family. Although in practice Jews also advocate respect for elders in general, this teaching is rarely found in early Jewish documents.⁵⁷ Second, even if filial piety occasionally extends to teachers, a teacher is, in a sense, a "spiritual parent." This is because a teacher provides spiritual cultivation, and the spiritual takes precedence over the physical. This notion aligns rather well with the Confucian saying, "to be

⁵⁵ *Analects*, Book 1.

⁵⁶ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 13. The second essay in *Lü's Spring and Autumns Annals* (呂氏春秋·孝行覽) says, "In tending to the root, there is nothing more essential than filial piety. If a ruler is filial, then his reputation will spread far and wide. Those under him will be obedient, and all will praise him. If ministers are filial, then they will be faithful in their service to their ruler, uncorrupt in governance, and willing to sacrifice themselves if disaster strikes. If scholars and the common people are filial, then they will harvest enthusiastically. They will succeed in attack and defense. They will not tire, and will not flee. Filial piety is the root of the legendary emperors and the guiding order behind all manner of affairs. When this principle is implemented, all that is good will be realized, and what is ill will be no more. All under heaven will follow it. This is filial piety!"

⁵⁷ For example, *Leviticus* 19:32: "Stand in the presence of a person with grey hair. Show respect for the old."

a teacher for a day is to be a father for life.” Thus, the relationship between a teacher and a student can be understood as a familial relationship. Moreover, the scope of Jewish filial piety has never encompassed rulers or entered sociopolitical territory. Instead, it is unique in that Jewish filial piety transcends secular custom and has been raised to the level of love for the divine.

The *Talmud* groups God and parents together as “partners” worthy of pious devotion: “Our rabbis taught: There are three partners in man, the Holy One, the father, and the mother. When a man honors his father and his mother, the Holy One says, ‘I ascribe merit to them as though I had dwelt among them and they had honored Me.’”⁵⁸ If we take into account the fact that God is the parent of all humankind in Judaism’s creation myth, Jewish filial piety includes both parents and God. This kind of relationship can even be used to establish a “grand family” in the universal sense. Evidently, the main function of Jewish filial piety has always been to maintain a hierarchy between parents and children, and God and humanity, as well as to instill respect for and obedience of parents and God. The different treatment of domestic ethics in Confucianism and Judaism draws a dividing line between both traditions’ conceptions of filial piety, which demonstrates how they differ in extension and scope.

Generally speaking, analyzing a single concept’s status within an entire doctrine can serve as the primary basis for evaluating the importance of that concept within the system to which it belongs. Thus, we will now address the relative position of filial piety within the Confucian and Jewish traditions respectively. We know that “benevolence” (仁) is the most important concept in Confucianism, and has been used as the foundation for all Confucian theories and institutions since Confucius himself. However, a pressing question for Confucianism has always been how to understand and even realize benevolence. Filial piety is considered the first step on the road to benevolence. It has been said that “The gentleman tends to the basics. Once these are established, the entire Way flows naturally. Filial piety and fraternal devotion – are these not the root of benevolence?” (君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與!)⁵⁹ Because filial piety and fraternal duty are most pertinent to daily life, and moreover are the most common and feasible forms of ethical behavior, they are considered to be the starting point for benevolence, in other words, moral perfection. Feng Youlan (馮友蘭) once noted that this so-called “root of benevolence” refers to a form of filial piety that asks us to begin with

⁵⁸ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 30b.

⁵⁹ *Analects*, Book 1. See 朱熹 (Zhu Xi), 四書章句集注 (*Collected Commentaries*), 48. According to Zhu Xi’s explanation, the character “為” means a verb here. “為仁” therefore means to act benevolently, which is to exhibit one’s innate benevolence.

those close to us so that we may learn to empathize.⁶⁰ Because of this interaction between filial piety and benevolence, filial piety received ample attention in early Confucianism. As the Confucian ethical system developed, it became more abstract, developing into both a form of virtuous behavior and a kind of morality, thereby ascending the ranks of Confucian virtues.⁶¹ This is evidenced by the following excerpt from the *Book of Filial Piety*: “Confucius said: ‘Filial piety is the root of all virtue and the stem from which all moral teaching grows’” (子曰: 夫孝, 德之本也, 教之所由生也).⁶² Filial piety became the most fundamental and important virtue in the Confucian doctrine after successive generations of scholarly analysis. One could even call it the “first virtue” of Confucianism.

In contrast, filial piety is important in Judaism, but plays a smaller role in comparison with Confucianism. As previously mentioned, honoring one’s father and mother is Judaism’s fifth commandment. The preceding four commandments dictate that the Israelites must accept Yahweh as their god, forbid idol worship and taking the lord’s name in vain, and keep the Sabbath (because the Sabbath is a holy day connected to the creation of the world). These four commandments pertain to the relationship between people and a transcendent God, and are the first part of the Ten Commandments. The remaining six commandments address secular relationships, including respecting parents, forbidding murder, stealing, improper sexual conduct, bearing false witness, and coveting the property of others.⁶³ Judging from this sequential order, filial piety is a commandment of the second variety, and thus it is not as important as commandments dictating the relationship between human beings and God. From a theological perspective, although it is the first among “secular” commandments, honoring one’s father and mother will always be second to worshipping God.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ 馮友蘭 (Feng Youlan), 中國哲學史 (*A History of Chinese Philosophy*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1961), 437, Note 1.

⁶¹ 陳來 (Chen Lai), 古代宗教與倫理: 儒家思想的根源 (*Ancient Religions and Ethics: The Origins of Confucian Thought*) (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, April 2009), 333-34, 340-41.

⁶² *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 1.

⁶³ *Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5:6-21*.

⁶⁴ Loius E. Newman, *An Introduction to Jewish Ethics* (New Jersey: Pearson, 2005), 107. 田海華 (Tian Haihua), 希伯來聖經之十誡研究 (*The Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible*) (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2012), 95. Some scholars also group the Ten Commandments into the first five and the remaining five. According to this view, the commandment to honor one’s mother and father belongs to the first group. This division places the commandment amongst the religious commandments rather than the secular ones, and in doing so demonstrates the importance of this commandment within Judaism. However, this reorganization of the commandments

Rabbinical Judaism places greater emphasis on filial piety than biblical Judaism. As mentioned above, rabbinical Judaism argues that honoring one's father and mother is tantamount to honoring God. However, even if children honor both God and parents, the respective positions of God and parents are not the same. God always occupies the supreme position because parents and children alike worship Him. Additionally, Judaism instructs children to "honor" and "fear" both their parents and God, but only God is worshipped. "Worship" implies both honor and fear, but far surpasses both in degree. As the quintessential monotheistic religion, Judaism regards God as the only object of worship. The rabbis who identified both parents and God as "partners" in receiving children's honor never intended for parents to be the object of worship. Otherwise, they would have violated Judaism's fundamental monotheistic principle.

In sum, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism exhibit clear differences in the degree, extension, and scope of filial piety, as well as the position within the overall doctrine of each tradition. "Differences of degree" refers primarily to differences in comprehensiveness and nuance, and Confucianism is more thorough in both of these respects. When it comes to the extension and scope of filial piety, both traditions adopt unique standpoints. Confucianism expands filial piety from its familial ethical foundations into sociopolitical territory, while Jewish filial piety has always remained a domestic affair. The status of filial piety is also different in both traditions. Confucianism has always accorded importance to filial piety, and this importance grew as scholars successively reinterpreted the concept. In Judaism, however, filial piety occupies a secondary position for theological reasons.

How Can Both Traditions Advocate a Common Filial Piety?

How can ancient Judaism and early Confucianism, with their unrelated origins, advocate like forms of filial piety? Fundamentally speaking, Judaism and Confucianism hold similar views regarding care and respect for parents, carrying out their wishes, funeral and mourning rites, and how to remonstrate with them, primarily because both traditions are grounded in affection for and gratitude toward family members. Emotions are an important aspect of humanity. From Plato's psychological framework of "reason, emotion, and will," to Aristotle's emotion-based hedonic theory of the soul, to Hume's ethics of moral sentiments, none of them denied that emotion was an innate aspect of human nature and was inherently tied to morality. Familial affection and gratitude are embodiments of our intrinsic human nature. In this sense, they comprise a natural

does not change the fundamental fact that worshipping God takes prominence over respect for parents.

basis for filial piety, thereby playing an essential role in the genesis of filial piety and its initial progression.

Ancient Confucians used precisely these innate sentiments to ground their filial instructions. To synthesize their collective works, the character of “filial piety” (孝) has always been an ideogram comprised of the characters of “old” and “child.”⁶⁵ The information transmitted by this compound is that “the child carries the elder,” and thus we can observe the intergenerational familial relationship implied by this character. Confucianism has always regarded continuing the family line as extremely important. Mencius’ statement that “there are three offenses against filial piety, and to fail to produce a male heir is the gravest of the three” (不孝有三, 無后為大) clearly depicts the relationship between filial piety and furthering the family’s bloodline.⁶⁶

Moreover, this relationship is repeatedly cited in Confucian ethical theory and practice. Scholarly research has indicated that “love for a biological son is the deepest psychological basis for benevolence (仁). As a form of moral consciousness, benevolence refers first and foremost to the love one feels for a family member.”⁶⁷ This familial love is an emotion that transcends pure reason, and this is the filial piety we have in mind. Hence, a foundation of familial affection serves as both the starting point for the Confucian theory of affection for one’s fellow human beings and the chief manifestation of benevolence. The patriarchal clan system that we examine in the latter half of this paper, which was endorsed and maintained by Confucianism, was also built on a foundation of affection for family members. Historical Confucian theories were easily accepted precisely because they conformed to human emotions, and the corresponding social systems derived their stability from this same foundation. This is one reason why traditional Chinese society lasted for over one thousand years.

Familial affection has often influenced Confucian filial piety in tandem with the emotion of gratitude. In the *Analects*, Confucius’ reply to Zaiwo’s question of whether a dutiful son should observe three years’ mourning illustrates the importance Confucius attached to filial piety and its related duties. On a deeper level, it reflects Confucius’ call for spontaneous gratitude toward parents. Zaiwo believed that three years of mourning was too long, and illustrated his point with examples. He contended that it was detrimental to the system of rites already in place, and

⁶⁵ 肖群忠 (Xiao Qunzhong), 中國孝文化研究 (*Research on Chinese Filial Culture*) (Taiwan: Wunan Books Publishing Company, 2002), 11-12.

⁶⁶ *Mencius*, Book 4A.

⁶⁷ 朱貽庭 (Zhu Yiting), ed., 中國傳統倫理思想史 (增訂本 (*An Intellectual History of Chinese Traditional Ethics [Expanded Edition]*) (Shanghai: East China Normal University Publishing, September 2003), 37.

argued that it did not match the natural progression of the four seasons. He believed that a mourning period of one year would suffice. Confucius replied by asking Zaiwo whether he would have “peace of mind” if he violated the three-year mourning period, to which Zaiwo replied in the affirmative. After Zaiwo left, Confucius reacted angrily, explaining from the perspective of gratitude why three years of mourning are necessary for peace of mind. Children hardly leave their parents’ side until after three years of age, and so a three-year mourning period serves as reciprocity for this initial period of care (予之不仁也! 子生三年, 然后免於父母之懷, 夫三年之喪, 天下之通喪也. 予也有三年之愛於其父母乎?).⁶⁸ The period of pregnancy and its hardships are not even factored into this sum. We can now understand Confucius’ anger with Zaiwo, for Zaiwo either could not understand or completely disregarded the significance of those three years in favor of a simplified, utilitarian alternative.

Confucianism contains numerous further examples of emphasis on the emotion of gratitude. In the Confucian classic, the *Book of Songs*, it is written: “The kindness of parents is higher than the heavens when they give their children life, live together with them day after day, raise them with the utmost care, and love them dearly” (父兮生我, 母兮鞠我, 拊我畜我, 長我育我, 顧我復我, 出入腹我. 欲報之德, 昊天罔罔).⁶⁹ This means that for grown up children to repay their parents’ dedication with a filial heart is actually “a matter of course.”⁷⁰ Confucian filial piety is founded upon this awareness of the innate human emotions of familial affection and gratitude. It is an ethical obligation saturated with emotion.

Ancient Jewish texts also devote attention to affection for and gratitude toward family members as expressions of human nature, but these concepts receive different amounts of emphasis during different phases of history. The importance of familial ties is reflected in the Hebrew Bible, in which the ancient Israelites’ desire for sons, that is, biological heirs, is an important theme. God repeatedly commands that the Israelites “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,” and the desire to bear an heir is tested time and again in the bible.⁷¹ We observe that, keeping in mind the desire to bear and rear a son, many female figures in Judaism bore the torment of infertility. These figures include Sarah, wife of Abraham,⁷² Rebecca, wife of Isaac,⁷³ and Rachel, wife of Jacob.⁷⁴ Yet God ultimately

⁶⁸ *Analects*, Chapter 17.

⁶⁹ *Book of Songs*, Minor Odes, *Liao'e* [蓼莪].

⁷⁰ *Book of Filial Piety*, Chapter 7.

⁷¹ *Genesis* 1:28, 9:1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 18:9-15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25:21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30:22-24.

granted each of these figures a son, and these sons were cherished all the more by their fathers for their miraculous births.

In addition to its emphasis on male heirs, the Hebrew Bible takes great lengths to chart humanity's genealogy since God's creation of the earth, particularly that of the Semites (the forbearers of the Jewish people).⁷⁵ Readers often choose to skip over this information, which does not lend itself to easy reading. However, with the aim of compiling and circulating classic texts in mind, including genealogies within these central texts serves to preserve and strengthen hereditary memory. We believe that the frequency with which this method is used demonstrates the emphasis that the ancient Israelites placed on biological heirs. There are genealogies in the Bible that illustrate this point, with two model examples in *Genesis* and *Chronicles I*. The genealogy in *Genesis* is scattered amongst the chapters, and records humanity's lineage in several segments: from Adam up to Noah (chapter five), from Noah's three sons to their descendants (chapter ten), including a direct line from Noah's son, Shem, to Abraham.⁷⁶ The line that ultimately reaches Abraham, the first Jew (then called Abram), also extends as far back as the Israelites that came to Egypt, who were the descendants of Jacob.⁷⁷ This lineage displays how God chose the Israelites from the whole of humanity, and gave special prominence to the heritage passed down from Abraham to Isaac, and then to Jacob in order to illustrate the integrity of the Israelite bloodline. The genealogies in *Chronicles* are relatively streamlined in format and cover a longer period of time. They take up nine chapters in total and stretch from Adam to the era of David and Solomon, even covering portions of the lineage in exile and return to the land of Israel. This genealogy expands upon the time period and scope of that in *Genesis*, and covers more important biblical figures. Thus, it more systematically reflects the origins and inheritance of the Israelite line.

Filial piety is an inter-generational ethical concept, and as such it does not involve children alone. A more appropriate understanding of filial piety would be to regard it as a "relationship" between parents and children. This relationship is unquestionably rooted in familial sentiment, and usually manifests at home. Biblical depictions of domestic life often present a comfortable setting. For example, the happiness of Abraham and his wife, Sarah, when they give birth to their first child at the age of one hundred,⁷⁸ Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau,⁷⁹ and Jacob leading his

⁷⁵ *Genesis* repeatedly records and restates humanity's lineage, Abraham's in particular. Related records can be found in *Exodus*, *Book of Numbers* and *Chronicles*.

⁷⁶ *Genesis* 11:10-26.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 46:8-27.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 21:2-8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27:27-29; 27:39-40.

sons to Egypt to seek refuge and their subsequent reunion with Joseph.⁸⁰ If we temporarily exclude the religious and focus only on the secular events that occur in these stories, we are left with a distinct sense of the love between family members. It was this familial bond that enabled the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Jacob, to unite, accept the same monotheistic beliefs, and ultimately create an established Judaism. Additionally, later generations of Jews have used this biological lineage as a standard for determining whether someone is Jewish. Whether the paternal or maternal line, it is ultimately an individual's genetic lineage that plays the decisive role. The ties between a parent and a child can never be severed. Jewish filial piety was developed from this foundation of familial affection.

We can refer back to God's creation of humankind in order to understand the function and significance of gratitude in Jewish filial piety. The interpretations found within rabbinical Jewish texts are particularly illuminating. According to the second chapter of *Genesis*, God created Adam from earth and imbued him with a soul, after which he created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. After this, humanity multiplied. The *Talmud* provides an explanation of this process, which explains God's creation of man more concretely: "Man's white substance becomes the brain and veins, and woman's red substance becomes flesh, blood, and skin. Life, the spirit, and the soul all come from God."⁸¹ According to the *Talmud's* explanation, the descendants of Adam and Eve are all creations of God through a synthesis of their parents' biology and God's gift of the soul. This explanation thus involves parents in the process of creation such that it is a father, mother, and God who create a life together. Appreciation for this gift of life is a debt of gratitude. As the Jewish scholar Louis E. Newman has said, "Some Jewish authorities have observed the basic principle of gratitude in the commandment to honor one's parents, and have thereby come to view it as a general commandment."⁸² In this way, gratitude performs a fundamental role in Jewish filial piety.

In short, children are filial in order to repay their parents' gift of life, nourishment, and education. This filial piety reasonably complies with human nature, and is common to all regions and eras. The reason why Judaism and Confucianism have so much in common when it comes to filial piety is that they share a common foundation in human nature, that is, the bonds of familial affection and gratitude. It is this shared underpinning that explains how these two ancient civilizations, separated by space and time, could hold the same views.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43:27-45:15.

⁸¹ *Babylonian Talmud*, Niddah 31a.

⁸² Newman, *An Introduction to Jewish Ethics*, 106.

Why Jewish and Confucian Filial Piety Differ

Combing through the variation in both traditions described above, we cannot help but inquire a step further: why do Judaism and Confucianism differ if they agree on genealogical matters? From where does each tradition derive its unique aspects?

We believe that their unique attributes originate from the different cultures in which these two traditions were conceived and developed. From what has already been written, we can see that Judaism and Confucianism both place tremendous emphasis on the here and now, which manifests concretely in their attention given to the perception of and reaction to human emotion. Both traditions chose to interpret and explain filial piety in terms of the bonds of familial affection and gratitude. However, Jewish filial piety involves a more fundamental religious element, while Confucianism has used these emotions as the starting point for the design of an ethical system of governance, taking the humanist side of Chinese culture to its utmost.

Judaism is both the first and the quintessential monotheistic religion. Biblical Judaism and rabbinical Judaism have the following main characteristics. First, Yahweh (God) is the only god and object of worship. No other deities are permitted. Second, Jews must believe in the word of God, which is revealed through prophets and their insights. Furthermore, the commandments of the Hebrew Bible are a record of God's covenant with Moses, and are God's direct commandments to humankind. Third, Jews can commune with God via sacrifice or prayer. Fourth, the Israelites are God's "chosen people," and thus God has established a covenant with them that has become Jewish law. Fifth, Judaism advocates "righteousness through deeds," that is, the belief that every Jew can become a righteous individual by adhering to the *Torah's* commandments. Sixth, everyone is created in God's image, and consequently, all are equal before God. Seventh, Judaism decrees that all Jews live by the commandments of the *Torah*, which is comprehensive in its instruction. Therefore, a Jewish life is a religious life, and there is no aspect of life that is purely secular. The result of this religious life is that it "makes the ordinary holy." It is clear from the characteristics above that Judaism is a theocentric religion. In other words, God serves as the highest entity and legislator, and lies at the very core of Judaism. Jewish life is carried out in accordance with divine guidance in the form of God's commandments.

In comparison with ancient Judaism's consistent religious development, Confucianism has elements of religious mysticism as well as a tradition of humanism. This humanist nature was particularly evident in Confucianism's early stages. Scholars generally agree that the ideas of the Western Zhou Dynasty provided the background and intellectual re-

sources for Confucian thought.⁸³ In particular, the Western Zhou saw the awakening and development of secular thought. In contrast with their immediate predecessors of the Shang Dynasty, who worshipped gods and spirits, the people of the Zhou Dynasty turned their gaze away from the supernatural and toward worldly affairs, focusing their attention on “the people.” From the establishment of the concept of “virtue” by the founder of the Zhou Dynasty to the Duke of Zhou’s establishment of rites and ritual music, and ultimately to Confucius’ continuing the Zhou legacy via the propagation of Zhou institutions and the study of benevolence (仁), the constant focus had been worldly affairs and everyday life.⁸⁴ Successors of the Zhou universally recognized this shift as well. Zichan, the Spring and Autumn Period statesman endorsed by Confucius, once famously said: “The way of heaven is distant, and the way of man is near. We cannot reach the former” (天道遠, 人道邇, 非所及也).⁸⁵ This clearly reflects the secular mindset of the period. Furthermore, the attitude with which Confucianism handled the worship of ancestors, deities, and spirits completely differed from that of the Shang and early Zhou Dynasties. Confucius once said, “How can you serve the spirits if you cannot serve man?” (未能事人, 焉能事鬼?)⁸⁶ and “Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance” (敬鬼神而遠之).⁸⁷ In the *Analects*, it is also written that, “Confucius did not speak of the extraordinary, feats of strength, chaos, or the supernatural” (子不語怪, 力, 亂, 神).⁸⁸ Later generations inherited the humanist tradition of early Confucianism and adopted it as a guiding principle.

Of course, we cannot conclude from this that Confucianism lacked a transcendent religious dimension. Early Confucian classics such as the *Book of Songs* regard Heaven as the creator of humans: “Heaven gave birth to the multitude of humanity, and in each of them inscribed its laws” (天生烝民, 有物有則).⁸⁹ In the *Analects*, Confucius also considered Heaven to be an entity capable of punishment and reward, warning that, “He who offends Heaven can pray to no one” (獲罪於天, 無所禱也).⁹⁰

⁸³ 陳來 (Chen Lai), 古代宗教與倫理: 儒家思想的根源 (*Ancient Religions and Ethics*), 18.

⁸⁴ For more information on the development of “virtue” since the Western Zhou Dynasty, see 王博 (Wang Bo), 中國儒學史·先秦卷 (*A History of Chinese Confucianism: Pre-Qin Dynasty Volume*) (Beijing: Peking University Publishing, 2011), 1-13.

⁸⁵ *Chronicle of Zuo*, Duke Zhao, year 18.

⁸⁶ *Analects*, Book 11.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Book 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 7.

⁸⁹ *Book of Songs*, Major Court Hymns.

⁹⁰ *Analects*, Book 3.

These examples indicate that early Confucians treated Heaven as a transcendent object of ultimate faith. It is simply that the humanist aspects of Confucianism eclipsed its religious elements. When compared with Judaism and its theocentrism, Confucianism is an ethical system with religious elements that takes humanity as its primary focus.

The above analysis of both cultures aids our contrast of the degree and scope of Jewish filial piety as well as its etiquette and relative position within the tradition, with the corresponding aspects of Confucianism. As the focus of Judaism, God is seen as the only object of worship, while parents occupy a secondary role under which they are accorded honor and fear, which do not reach the degree of worship. If one worships anything other than God, including one's living or dead parents, then one has violated Judaism's first prohibition: idol worship. The Jewish prohibition on idolatry and polytheistic worship is maintained constantly within the tradition, for instance in *Exodus* 32, in which Moses struggles with his fellow Israelites after they resort to idol worship while wandering in the wilderness. It is also written in *Genesis* that "God created mankind in his own image; male and female, he created in His own image."⁹¹ Since every person is a creation of God, all are equal in dignity. Judaism is deeply influenced by this egalitarian spirit, and so its filial piety does not surpass a recognition of hierarchy between father and son, thereby weakening the degree of veneration accorded to parents. Since worship and respect for God are primary, and reverence for parents is secondary, caring for one's parents need not meet the Confucian standard under which parents must be respected *and* pleased.⁹² By the same token, pious worship of God is naturally a primary virtue, since God is the only acceptable object of worship. Hence, filial piety is relegated to a secondary form of moral behavior. Since every Jew can become a righteous individual by following the *Torah's* commandments, and since these commandments are comprehensive in their content, filial piety is one of many moral commitments, and therefore it is not and need not be so meticulously delineated as it is in Confucianism. Perhaps excessive attention to filial piety runs the danger of detracting from one's observance of other commandments. Since Jewish life is a life governed by divine commandments, filial piety is not a purely secular form of domestic ethics, rather worship of God takes precedence.

In Judaism, bonds of familial affection and gratitude take a back seat to faith in God, thus the filial ethical relationship becomes a religious

⁹¹ *Genesis* 1:27.

⁹² Judaism also addresses the issue of "serving" God. In *Proverbs* 3:9, it is written, "Honor Yahweh with your wealth and with the first fruits of your harvest." Biblical Israelites used sacrifices as a form of worship. There were various kinds of offerings, such as peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, burnt offerings, and meal offerings. For details, see *Leviticus*.

commandment, and is prescribed as one of many religious duties. Because filial piety is a duty, Jews need only fulfill it as such. With God's permission and punishment as a "barrier," there is no motive or need for an expanded application or further explication of filial piety in Judaism. Its degree and scope are quite limited in comparison to those of Confucian filial piety. From a philosophical perspective Jewish filial piety is grounded in innate familial affection, but a religious or biblical perspective reveals God as the ultimate root of filial piety. From this perspective filial piety is a special bond between God and his "chosen people," inscribed in the God-given laws passed down to the Jews by Moses. We could thus say that the characteristic features of Jewish filial piety derive from their being a part of a quintessentially monotheistic culture.

Both ancient Judaism and early Confucianism, deeply rooted in human nature, are expressions of the same human nature, but manifested in different times and places. Each of them was a fusion of a common human nature and a particular spatiotemporal setting. By responding to the needs of their time periods, they created institutional forms uniquely suited to their respective conditions, and these institutions in turn continued to strengthen their intellectual traditions, thereby accounting for the differences in Jewish and Confucian filial piety.

Confucianism's emphasis on familial bonds and ethical relations directly influenced traditional systems of governance as well as the relationship between Confucianism and political affairs. Family ties have characterized Chinese governance since the Xia Dynasty founder Yu the Great "ruled the nation like a family." During the Zhou Dynasty, institutional reform was based on bonds of consanguinity, in particular, the establishment and development of systems that delineated family lines and dictated the number of temples allowed for various members of the aristocracy.⁹³ The idea of "structuring the family and the nation according to the same principle" was advanced through the establishment of institutions that distinguished varying degrees of familial relation. The socio-political structure that regarded "all under heaven [as] one family" was established with the Zhou emperors as the heads of this grand family (宗法制度).

Confucianism continued to develop upon this foundation, establishing concentric systems for governing human interaction as indicated by the adage in the *Great Learning*, "Cultivate your character, manage your household, govern the nation, and all under heaven will be pacified" (修身, 齊家, 治國, 平天下). From a Confucian perspective, a household and the nation share the same structure. The nation is an extension of the

⁹³ 王國維 (Wang Guowei), 殷周制度論, 觀堂集林 (*Institutions of the Late Shang and Zhou Dynasties; Guantang Jilin*), vol. 10 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 454-55.

family, and the ruler acts as the head of a household. This is what makes possible the seamless transition from household to nation and from father to sovereign. Within the household, filial piety is the ethical bond between family members. This same kind of relationship can be extrapolated to the national scale, where it can develop in parallel with a patriarchal clan system. By this logic, there is no difference between obedience to a father and loyalty to a ruler. This attitude persisted until the “governance through filial piety” school formally established the close relationship between filial piety and governance through its slogan of “let filial piety become loyalty,” as represented in the *Book of Filial Piety*. Such ideas had a profound influence on the construction of traditional Chinese systems of governance.

As a religion that places great emphasis on actions, ancient Judaism pays particular attention to the role that “deeds” play in salvation. This is called “righteousness through deeds.”⁹⁴ According to this principle, an individual may become righteous through adherence to the holy laws of the *Torah*. Collectively and as a nation, adherence to God’s laws is necessary for a peaceful society and a prosperous nation. These conditions directly influence the dynamic between Judaism and governance. As we know, the Israelites can be traced back to a common ancestor (Abraham), and their twelve tribes possess a common lineage. However, due to the presence of God and the laws of the *Torah*, the Israelites never developed a society or system of governance modeled off of a patriarchal clan system, as was the case in ancient China. We may observe in the Hebrew Bible that, from the time of Moses to the era of the biblical judges, the Israelites lived under a theocracy.⁹⁵ Even during Israel’s period of united monarchy, theocratic governance predominated, the gist of which was the following: God is the true ruler of the nation, while human rulers – leaders of the people like Moses, or tribal leaders and judges, elders, and kings – were in theory only implementing laws prescribed by God. Moreover, these leaders were required to govern according to these laws, lest they face condemnation by prophets or even revolt instigated by the same. Under a theocratic system of this sort, people’s ultimate concern was the implementation of divine laws.

In contrast to the concentric structure of Confucian governance, Judaism adopted a “top-down” method for establishing political legitimacy. Under the premise that all Jews completely accept the Jewish faith,

⁹⁴ For a contrast of Judaism’s “righteousness through deeds” with Christianity’s “justification by faith,” see 傅有德 (Fu Youde), 猶太哲學與宗教研究 (*Jewish Religion and Philosophy*) (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 2007), 174-8.

⁹⁵ Baruch de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), trans. 溫錫 (Wen Xi) (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1982), 232.

Jewish sovereigns derived their authority from Judaism's holy source – God – and maintained their rule with the help of their subjects, who lived in accordance with the holy laws. At the same time, this theocracy did not tolerate improper behavior from its rulers, but rather supervised their rule through the employ of prophets, who would often openly condemn unsuitable rulers in God's name. We should take special note of the humble backgrounds of the majority of biblical prophets, and that “they transmitted the word of God, reflected the demands of the common people, and represented society's conscience.”⁹⁶ The social critiques of these fearless prophets realized the ideals of justice and fairness, and established a balance between ruler and subject through prophets' willingness to speak out. Influenced by the opinions and behavior of prophets, Israelites held their rulers accountable by remaining loyal to God. They adhered to the laws of the *Torah* and sought a holy life over secular subsistence. Thus, it is not peculiar that the ancient Israelites lacked “fidelity” to a sovereign monarch. Moreover, if we consider the influence of religion on socio-political dynamics, Judaism's mode of conduct in society can be summarized as “love.” With the prerequisite of love of God, one must love God and one's neighbor.⁹⁷ To put it concretely, one must love God through sacrifice and by honoring His commandments, and one must love others through equal treatment and “loving others as oneself.”

In this schema, Judaism bifurcates love into love of God and love of humanity, and groups parents amongst humankind. This weakens the special love accorded to parents, that is, the space wherein filial piety resides. With this restriction on filial piety imposed by religion, all roads ultimately lead to God. Rulers therefore need not resort to secular ethics such as filial piety in order to maintain a population of compliant citizens, nor need they rely on extensions of filial piety – fraternal deference, respect for elders, and fidelity to a sovereign – in order to harmonize social relationships amongst brothers and neighbors. In other words, ancient Israel did not develop a conception of filial piety that extended beyond parents and into other households, society, and government precisely because this was unnecessary.

Thus, substantial differences in the cultures of ancient Judaism and early Confucianism account for dissimilarities in their versions of filial piety. Amongst these cultural differences, Judaism's theocentric stance and Confucianism's humanist characteristics play a decisive role. Likewise, the different systems of governance and social dynamics established by each tradition also served to produce divergent conceptions of filial piety.

⁹⁶ 傅有德 (Fu Youde), 希伯來先知與儒家聖人比較研究 (“A Comparative Study of Hebrew Prophets and Confucian Sages”), *Chinese Social Sciences* 6 (2009).

⁹⁷ *Deuteronomy* 6:5; *Leviticus* 19:18.

Final Remarks

In recent years, there has been continuous discussion of filial piety within Chinese academic circles.⁹⁸ This paper does not aim to critique this body of work, nor does it attempt to offer a comprehensive discussion of filial piety. We are concerned with comparing the ancient Jewish and early Confucian conceptions of filial piety, and addressing two observations made in relation to the characteristics of Jewish filial piety. These observations may serve as a reference in the revival and reestablishment of Confucian filial piety as an ethical principle.

First, rooting filial piety in both the transcendent and human dimensions can prevent it from becoming excessive. Early Confucians entrenched filial piety in familial bonds and regarded providing for and respecting one's parents as its core spirit. These bonds and this behavior provide an appropriate base as they reflect a universal and perpetual value system in the past and at the present for Chinese individuals, Jews and the entire humanity. However, we should note that ancient Confucianism as a whole adopted an indifferent stance with regard to transcendent values, but rather devoted disproportionate attention to human bonds of affection. This stance was largely responsible for suppressing the transcendent dimension that filial piety should possess, thereby resulting in a tendency toward its pronounced humanism and secularism.

In ancient Judaism, bonds of familial affection serve as a foundation for filial piety rooted in human nature, and a transcendent God is the ultimate source of human morality. Because God takes precedence over parents, faith and reverence for God take precedence over love and respect for parents. This kind of filial piety has limitations; thus, it cannot be the primary virtue or highest object of pursuit. In addition to respecting one's parents, one should also live in reverence of the infinite and transcendent. Such an individual is capable of continuously reflecting upon and rectifying one's filial behavior in daily life precisely because he/she possesses this religious disposition.

Second, equality tempers the hierarchy imposed by intergenerational relationships. There is undoubtedly a necessary hierarchy between junior

⁹⁸ For example, Chinese scholarly circles have been discussing the question of "relatives covering for each other" in recent years. Cf. 郭齊勇 (Guo Qiyong), ed., 儒家文化研究 (*Research on Confucian Culture*) (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2008²); 郭齊勇 (Guo Qiyong), 儒家倫理新批判之批判 (*A Critique of New Criticisms of Confucian Ethics*) (Wuhan: Wuhan University Publishing, 2011). Foreign scholars have taken an interest in the issues on Confucian filial piety as well. For a summary of this discussion and an overview of recent research, see Hagop Sarkisian, "Recent Approaches to Confucian Filial Morality," *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 9 (2010): 725-34; Cecilia Wee, "Filial Obligations: A Comparative Study," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 13, no. 1 (2014): 83-97.

and senior; however, this kind of relationship can be a source of conflict between parent and child if taken to the extreme. Therefore, it can be a detriment to the development of filial piety. Jewish filial piety avoids this pitfall by according individuals an equal status. The Hebrew Bible stresses equality because every individual is created in God's image. God, as the creator of the world, is worshipped by all, since Jewish believers in God, parents and children, are equals. This equality makes possible a social buffer such that the relationship between parents and children will not end in deadlock and collapse due to a strict delineation of authority between junior and senior. Hence, when reestablishing a modern Confucian filial piety, we should keep this equal relationship between parent and child in mind and conceive it such a way that both parents and children respect each other's dignity. In this light, we can construct a modern filial ethic in which both sides of the equation are aware of their mutual rights and responsibilities.⁹⁹

Ancient Judaism and early Confucianism are artifacts of the past. Just as Christianity underwent a reformation in the sixteenth century that established a religious and ethical foundation for contemporary individuals in the West, Judaism underwent its own reformation in the early nineteenth century, and devoted nearly a century to completing traditional Judaism's modern transformation. This metamorphosis assimilated modern Jews into mainstream Western society and managed to sustain Jewish culture by maintaining its unique characteristics. Chinese culture is currently in the midst of its own modern transformation. Like the Jews after the French Revolution, since the Opium Wars the Chinese have continually faced conflict, and decisions divided between the traditional and the modern, as well as the national and the global. When faced with such decisions, the Jewish people chose to adopt an inclusive path of "both/and" rooted in tradition, and to accept modernity. That is, they steadfastly maintained their traditional identity as a people, while at the same time joining mainstream global society. The lesson of Judaism's modernization is undoubtedly valuable for Chinese culture. Perhaps we can draw upon Judaism as a resource in modernizing our own filial ethics. We can create a union of traditional values and modern spirit by remaining rooted in a traditional conception of filial piety, that is, a recognition of familial bonds as the foundation of filial piety, and accommodation of the modern

⁹⁹ After examining various Western and Chinese forms of filial piety founded on parent-child relationships, Cheng Zhongying (成中英) proposes that a modern filial piety should be one of "parallel responsibilities between parent and child." He stresses the mutual rights and obligations of both parent and child. Cf. 成中英 (Cheng Zhongying), 論儒家孝的倫理及其現代化：責任、權利與德行 ("On the Ethics of Confucian Filial Piety and its Modernization: Rights, Responsibilities, and Virtuous Behavior") *The Journal of Sinology* 4, no. 1 (June 1986).

values of equality, freedom, universal love, and individual rights. Thus, we can both retain the Confucian humanist tradition and seek out a transcendent form of filial ethics.

The above thoughts are reflections of a macroscopic nature through a comparison of the concepts of filial piety in ancient Judaism and early Confucianism. The concrete execution of bringing traditional filial piety into the modern era is a matter beyond the scope of this paper.

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Crisis of Western Liberal Societies through the Lens of a Metanarrative Critical Analysis

Michal Valčo

Introduction

Our personal lives are unique and make sense because each life is a distinct story. Each individual's personal story is simultaneously intertwined with those of others – primarily family members, friends, colleagues, but also all others who comprise human society locally and globally. Thus, in complex and often unfathomable and unexpected ways, our individual identities are shaping others and being shaped by others in the complex story of our civilization and ultimately our world.¹

However, the complexity of our personal identities and the givenness of their mutual interdependence are not being emphasized, or often even recognized in a culture obsessed with individualism and inflicted by chaotic desires, the result of which is a malignantly growing fragmentation. Parker Palmer is right to point out that “when my little story, or yours, is our only point of reference, we easily become lost in narcissism. So the big stories of the disciplines must also be told in the learning space – stories that are universal in scope and archetypal in depth, that frame our personal tales and help us understand what they mean.”²

Christians are convinced that our world – the visible and invisible realities of what we call our Universe – is a deliberate unfolding of a grand narrative that starts before the emergence of space and time and continues beyond its physical limits. This grand narrative is the story of creation, redemption, and renewal – a story of salvation conceived of in Trinitarian terms. Christians contend that the created world – all the created realities with their rich expressions of life and beauty including (but not limited to) human beings – derive their dignity and value from the fact that the stories of their lives are parts of a great creation symphony, willed by a loving, just, and powerful Creator.

¹ This paper draws from the results of author's research, originally published in Michal Valčo, “The Role of the Church in a Post-narratable World: Bringing Meaning to Reality through a Credible Narrative,” in *Church and Society: Towards Responsible Engagement*, eds. Lubomir M. Ondrasek and Ivan Modorosi (Ruzomberok: Verbum, 2015), 270-284.

² Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 76.

Such a metanarrative approach to reality, however, generates its own challenges and is far from being universally accepted today. Following the Enlightenment-era disillusion over medieval Christendom – a politicized form of Christian metanarrative implemented in medieval Europe from 1000-1600 – Western civilization bet on the power of enlightened reason to build a more harmonious and happier human society. Divinely revealed truth was traded for humanly discerned truth by observation and/or logical deduction. The world as created reality still had a unifying story, only the church, revealed religion, and ultimately God were no longer the primary actors in it. The newly emancipated, rationally thinking human being became their substitute.

Each of the three socio-economic and political visions of reality that followed and built upon the Enlightenment – Marxism, Fascism, and democratic Capitalism – propagated their own narratives of reality that aspired to attain the level of an overarching meta-story. Each of them brought a certain level of order and promised to usher a kingdom of heaven on earth to its adherents. Humanity's hope for secular salvation, however, died in the trenches of the two world wars; was shattered in the Siberian gulags; was seriously wounded in the stock market crashes of 1930s and more recently in the socio-economic crises that followed the real estate bubble burst in 2008 (and many times in between). Thus, in place of a normative metanarrative, many in the Western world adopted a hermeneutic of suspicion with regard to big narratives – political, cultural, religious, or even scientific, though human hopes in science seem to be somewhat resurgent today. The world, as we perceive it in the postmodern West, no longer seems to have a narratable character.

On the crossroad of the 20th century, European societies “seem to have lost their former vitality and sense of meaning and have instead delved into a consumerist frenzy and bureaucratic boredom. A technocratic dullness appears to be the preferred solution of the fearful, wretched majority, who choose rather to be submerged into the foul waters of sordidness and indifference.”³ What we are experiencing in the West is a crisis of meaning with an ensuing danger that “the great words with which we have pressed our history onward – freedom, emancipation, justice, happiness – have in the end nothing but an exhausted, desiccated meaning.”⁴ Slovakia, along with the wider Euro-American civilization, appears

³ Katarína Valčová, “Povaha a kontext kresťanskej viery v post-kresťanskom svete: kritická apropiácia Kierkegaardovho posolstva (The Nature and Context of Christian Faith in the World of Post-Christendom: A Critical Appropriation of Kierkegaard's Legacy),” in *Kierkegaard and Existential Turn. Acta Kierkegaardiana Supplement*, ed. Roman Kralik (Toronto: Kierkegaard Circle & Central European Research Institute of Soren Kierkegaard, 2014), 285.

⁴ Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 41.

to be suffering from a “shattered visage”:⁵ stumbling on the brink of nihilism (twin sibling of unchecked hedonism) on the one hand, and the resurgence of religious fundamentalism, and neo-Nazism, on the other. The postmodern era’s fear of all normative narratives (metanarratives) is thus gradually being countered by the necessity of finding a livable alternative that can connect the shattered pieces of reality into a meaningful whole. This, however, is no easy task, regardless of whether one is religiously or secularly inclined. For Christian intellectual reflection, past shortcomings and present competing alternatives constitute a real challenge for contemporary discourse.

If we truly live in a world that is losing its story, then those adherents of monotheistic religions who receive their identity from what they believe is the grandest narrative ever written, are obliged to think about how to reestablish a sense of narrative identity of our reality. Those following the narrative of the Book (the Bible) wish to stress the importance of narrative for the shaping of a vision of life; for the motivation of individuals and groups of people; as well as for the cultivation of values. In addition to the key role of the Judeo-Christian story, Christians also wish to speak about the need for an intentional dialogue between narratives as a way forward in today’s multi-cultural European society.

Dissonant Voices in a Global Village

What lies behind the existing conflicting renderings of reality (politically as well as culturally) – such as Critchley’s anarchism,⁶ consumerist capitalism, multiculturalism, neo-fascism, agnosticism, etc. – is the willful rejection of the creation-redemption narrative along with its sober (as well as sobering) anthropology.⁷ Confusion about what or who a human being is, leads to chaotic solutions of human problems. The ideal of harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous society thus vanishes on the horizon of frustration, anger, and disenchantment. Any call for peace and tolerance in our present societies will be futile providing there remains a deep-seated fear and hate in the human heart. Fear and hate of the other come

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990).

⁶ Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London/New York: Verso, 2007).

⁷ Some basic anthropological questions that should be of concern to us are: Are human beings naturally inclined towards violence, incapable to withdraw from biologically conditioned struggle for survival? Or are they essentially good, with an intrinsic, natural disposition to social empathy and an innate desire to cultivate a mutually enriching mutuality, even if it meant bringing a costly self-sacrifice? What kind of environment, what kind of cultural and social fabric would promote the much desirable outcomes?

mainly from ignorance. It is human ignorance that, so to speak, necessarily spawns superstitious views of the other as an enemy of me and my tribe. Where there is such ignorance, there cannot be a safe, trusting environment. Thus, any appeal for tolerance and peace will be looked upon with suspicion.

It is curious, however, that this should be so. We live in a so-called global village, permeated by the omnipresent reality of media that shout information at us at a lavish rate, almost unbearable to withstand. Many of us suffer from an information overdrive, yet people seem to endure a high degree of ignorance when it comes to the other. How is this possible? We do not pay attention. We do not truly listen to the other. As society, we do not seem to be serious about investing time and energy into discovering what moves us as humans, believing we already know the answer: human loves of temporal realities like a romantic relationship, social status, fame and recognition, adrenaline experience, wealth, and power. Yes, our love of these realities and our hate of everything that stands in the way of our desires – which we view as utterly legitimate – are, undoubtedly, incredibly strong motivational forces behind our actions and attitudes. But are they the strongest? Will the satisfaction of these desires truly bring about peaceful happiness and tolerance? Is it truly as self-evident as we believe it to be that our, that is, a Western socio-political and cultural layout, marked by individual freedoms and a common commitment to respect cultural and religious differences, is the unshakable safeguard for happy and content individuals, and thus for a peaceful society? What if it isn't enough? What if people are, whether they are fully aware of it or not, driven by a higher desire and remain unfulfilled by the temporal securities that the Western secular dream is able to offer?

A society that ignores these issues and dilutes its vision of human social living to a socio-economic political construct crafted by skillful social engineers will have to suffer the detrimental effects of desocialization and depersonalization. A false anthropology inevitably leads to disrupted social ties, as Maria Kardis observes in her recent study: “While false anthropology deifies man without soul living in the world without God, the deepening moral individualism and relativism lead to a loss of social ties between the individual and the group, without which meaningful existence in society would not be possible. As a result, a process of desocialization takes place.”⁸ As human beings are above all social beings, the loosing (or even a significant weakening) of their social bonds

⁸ Maria Kardis, “The Chosen Aspects of Desocialization in the Context of Crisis of Postmodern Society,” in *Christian Churches in Post-Communist Slovakia: Current Challenges and Opportunities*, eds. Michal Valčo and Daniel Slivka (Salem, VA: Roanoke College Center for Religion and Society, 2012), 150.

will detrimentally affect their being as persons. The process of depersonalization is fueled mainly by the phenomenon of losing one's significant social bonds, having one's constitutive relationships depleted, and staying isolated in one's buffered, self-centered existence. Entering into relationships instrumentalized under these conditions, seen always as a means to an egoistic goal. The human being is conceived of here as a loosely connected, self-referential monad, rather than an organic, though still unique member of a community of love and mutual self-giving. A flattened conception of human being, i.e., one that disregards the human person's constitutive interconnectedness with other humans because of its intrinsic relationality and porosity, leads to a flattened, shallow vision of life, finally resulting in profoundly discontented individuals who are unable to socialize in meaningful, long-lasting, and deeply satisfying ways. Whether we subscribe to an attractive, liberal version of secularism perpetuated in liberal democracies, or to a strictly dictatorial version of secularism in the form of fascism, we seem to repeat the same fatal mistake by ignoring the depth of the human predicament. Human estrangement begins on the inside. The real root cause of the eventual failures of big secular ideologies lies in their false anthropology, not in any external alienations (though these, undoubtedly, contribute to the problem). The degenerated will of the egoistic and haughty self is what poisons the quality of individual life, interpersonal relationships as well as socio-economic relations.

The phenomenon of depersonalization shows its detrimental effects primarily among the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups in society. However,

even the economically and socially 'successful' individuals – who constitute a critical majority in most developed Western economies (especially in those of the social-democratic type, such as Germany) – are far from being beyond dangerous waters. They face the dangers of 'flattening' and manipulation. Human individuality and personhood seem to be lulled by the omnipresent slogans of freedom, especially in its economic and moral senses, only to be consumed and 'flattened' by the 'soft' totalitarian power of consumerism. The loss of authentic individuality⁹ goes unnoticed in this process, as individuals are

⁹ Authentic individuality arises from the fertile ground of intimate human relationships, on the basis of its relational connectedness to others (and the divine Other). One receives his/her uniqueness as a gift from the others/Other (since one's unique personality and capacities could have only developed in one's mutual interactions with other) for the others who continue to thrive precisely because of one's willingness to relate to them as a human person to other human persons with dignity (i.e., as to ends and not mere instruments of one's success).

being subconsciously influenced by the omnipresent normative images and messages of economic, political, and cultural marketing ads and media content. People are invited to celebrate their freedom of choice, ridden of the burdensome task of a true self-reflection. They are to devote their time and energy into solving ‘practical issues’ at hand and shy away from the ‘impractical issues’ of spiritual and moral integrity and deep moral responsibilities. These seemingly less tangible realities become less and less intelligible and increasingly perplexing, as individuals lose grip with the inner core of their being (their ‘authentic selves’), which urges them even more to flee into the more ‘intelligible’ and ‘real’ world of economic choices and instantly available gratifications. Thus, the vicious circle of economic realities intertwined with human insatiable desires and unquenchable fears closes in upon us.¹⁰

The forces of depersonalization and subsequent dehumanization therefore seem to be more at work today than a century ago. Once I strip someone of his personhood (subjectively speaking) by regarding him and behaving to him as if he were a mere faceless number in a crowd – of workers, customers, minority groups, refugees, etc. – this encourages me to treat this human being as if he or she were sub-human. History gives us a sad example of how this happens: the Jews were first discriminated against, and then stripped of their properties and their personal freedom; but it was only after they had been robbed of their names and had become numbers in the camps, that most of the guards could reconcile their consciences when they sent them to the gas chambers. While desocialization, depersonalization and dehumanization are not the same thing, they overlap and feed each other in a process of social entropy. Desocialization, both self-induced and imposed by others, destroys constitutive social ties and interpersonal relations. Once this process is well underway, depersonalization of the others, with whom I no longer have mutually upbuilding and satisfying relationships, becomes an option, especially in times of crises or intentional manipulation (when the society searches for a scapegoat or readies itself for a war, etc.). The process then culminates in the dehumanization of the others which gives us the license to treat them as sub-human. This may include a total annihilation in the most severe cases.

¹⁰ Michal Valčo, “Rethinking the Role of Kierkegaard’s ‘Authentic Individual’ in Liberal Capitalist Democracies Today,” *European Journal of Science and Theology* 11, no. 5 (2015): 135.

The Constitutive Function of (Meta)Narratives

To counter the forces of desocialization, Christian monotheists may argue for the rediscovery and re-appropriation by humans of a metanarrative approach to reality. Before we turn our attention to a possible content of that narrative, however, we need to come to a better appreciation of the power of language as such, as well as that of traditions that come to harness the power of language by connecting it with intentional practices that reinforce certain ideas and values. Let us not underestimate the power of language – because ideologies don't. Human language, especially in the form of a comprehensive, meaning-imparting narrative, annihilates old social realities and creates new ones. As Roy Rapport reminds us, “[h]uman systems are cultural-organic systems constituted by symbolic (linguistic) as well as genetic information.”¹¹ This is true, by the way, regardless of whether we gravitate philosophically to the realist or rather the anti-realist position. For even though one might argue that our knowledge of reality is tainted by our prejudices, conceptual schemes, and other cultural, historical, and linguistic contingencies, narratives create and convey meaning from which humans derive their identity.

Both secular and religious ideologies¹² build on such ideological abuse of language, pulling people into a story – into their version of the story of the world. Supportive tools are at hand: virtual reality with its games, reality shows, Internet social groups, interactive forums, black-and-white rendering of society that clearly marks their enemies in blogs, books and films, and even symbols and sacred rites. Fabricated stories spread by mass and social media may quickly become sacred myths about the other which, should they prove to be untrue or damaging, are difficult to uproot from people's minds.

We are thus confronted with a difficult task: How do we develop sound ethical foundations for multicultural societies in Europe today? Can we dilute it down to a common denominator like respect for life? Where is the call for forgiveness? Without it the possibility of true reconciliation is lost; where is the promise of hope – the hope that those who died as

¹¹ Roy Rapport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

¹² The term ideology can be used in a general, neutral way as a comprehensive system of reasoning built around a complex narrative, or vision of reality. Another word that could be used in this sense is that of metanarrative. When used in a more specific and critical way, we are hereby referring to an intentional construction of ideas about the meaning of reality and the human place in it to serve the goals of a specific group of people at the expense of the other, competing visions of reality. Such conception of ideology uses manipulation and indoctrination as tools in its 'ideological' struggle against real or imagined enemies.

innocent victims of historical struggles will ultimately be vindicated?¹³ The hope that evil, suffering, and meaninglessness will not have the upper hand in the end? Without such hope, people are losing their resolve to carry on and sacrifice. As Robert Jenson points out, “a world that has no story [...] cannot entertain promises.”¹⁴

But the world needs a story. Not an unfounded myth but rather a believable story. It needs a viable, realistic narrative, anchored in history and directed to eschaton. Or, more precisely, to an eschatological hope founded on a trustworthy promise.¹⁵ In fact, “the way in which the modern West has talked about human life supposes that an omniscient historian could write a universal history, and that this is so because the universe with inclusion of our lives is in fact a story written by a sort of omnipotent novelist.”¹⁶

The Western world, on the other hand, after having refused the inner substance of the archetypical narrative of the Bible, seems to have lost its modern narrative of progress – the Promethean dream of the Enlightenment – and now seems to be haunted by the nihilistic vision of Friedrich Nietzsche.¹⁷ Instead of admitting and, to some extent perhaps also, celebrating its being part of a grand narrative,¹⁸ it still pretends to be a

¹³ Cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Memoria Passionis: Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 2006), 252-257; Idem, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 40-41. As Metz writes: “Ultimately, no prosperity of the descendants can make up for the suffering of the ancestors, and no amount of social progress can reconcile the injustice which befell the dead.” Metz, *A Passion for God*, 41.

¹⁴ Robert W. Jenson, “How the World Lost Its Story,” *First Things* (October 1993), accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/1993/10/002-how-the-world-lost-its-story>.

¹⁵ This might be more evident in some cultures than others. If people expect to be able to make sense of their lives (in a sensible or, so to speak, narrative fashion) then they will be more prone to seek a dramatic rendering of their situation. There are cultures, however, that do not share this outlook, as Jenson rightly points out, naming specifically the “shamanist cultures [...] Confucian or Taoist China [...] or the high Indian religions.” Jenson, “How the World Lost Its Story.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ As Jenson so pointedly observes, “In Nietzsche’s vision, the nihilism in which Western civilization ends was to be at once a collapse into decadence and the fulfillment of an absolute freedom. There would at once appear the hollow ‘last man’ and the glorious ‘superman.’ The ‘last man’ is plainly on the scene, but superman is so far missing.” Jenson, “How the World Lost Its Story.”

¹⁸ Jenson argues that most modern intellectuals agree that “modernity has lived on a moral and intellectual capital that it has not renewed, and indeed could not have renewed without denying itself [...] and that] this intellectual and moral capital was built up by the Christian church’s long establishment in the West, also if they themselves do not share the church’s faith or even admire it.” Jenson, “How the World Lost Its Story.”

disinterested (and, therefore, allegedly objective) observer of reality, dissecting it systematically rather than being engaged in an open-ended dialogue with it.¹⁹ Such naked rationality, however, ultimately becomes a prostitute of human ideologies. The offspring that comes from this relationship will have the stench of either totalitarianism (Nazism, fascism, soft totalitarianism of consumerism, etc.) or nihilism, and sooner or later it will result in the destruction of many innocent people. Severed from faith, the pragmatic reason of the ideologists has “no convincing answer to the questions: *what constitutes moral action?*, and *why should I be moral?* – as Kant suspected in his doctrine of radical evil.”²⁰

The Enlightenment experiment had to fail, for it was an attempt “to live in a universal story without a universal storyteller.”²¹ Without such universal storyteller, there cannot be a universally valid story line. Even with all of its powers combined, humanity is not able to ascribe a narrative sense to the world. This, in turn, has far reaching implications for the self-understanding of human individuals and societies. There is a fast-growing number of people “who do not and cannot understand their lives as a realistic narrative,”²² and are thus unable to find their place – not even

¹⁹ This reminds us of MacIntyre’s critique, according to which the Enlightenment’s obsession with human autonomy inevitably implied denying a natural teleology for the human being and rejecting that humans are subject to a divinely instituted hierarchy (a social or political authority). This, in turn, results in the destruction of any objective basis of morality. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007³).

²⁰ Karsten Harries, *Between Nihilism and Faith: A Commentary on Either/Or. Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 21 (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 2010), 167. Our totalitarian experience validates Harris’s thesis that “[t]here is no argument that can make an evil person embrace the good, no good argument, e. g., that will force someone who finds the claim that we should strive to maximize pleasure and minimize pain in our own case quite persuasive, but sees no good reason to extend that principle to all human beings or perhaps even further, to change one’s mind. That would require a change of heart. Ethics presupposes faith in some power that calls us to that respect of others and their rights that found expression in Kant’s categorical imperative. In that sense when we dig into the foundations of ethics we will inevitably hit sooner or later on religious ground.” Commenting on *Either/Or*, Harries observes: “The devil would seem to be the incarnation of spirit that cannot bind itself. So understood the devil is the incarnation of what Kant called radical evil and understood as the natural tendency of human beings to refuse to be bound by the moral law. To accept this bond is to be religious.” *Ibid.*, 112-113. Harries proceeds to ask a critical and legitimate question: “[A]lthough the etymology that ties the word ‘religion’ to the Latin ‘religare,’ to bind again, is not generally accepted, despite the authority of Lactantius, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas, must a religious person not experience his or her freedom as bound by and to what is taken to matter unconditionally and most profoundly, bound, we can say, by what is experienced as sacred? Is it not only such a bond that can give substance to our lives?” *Ibid.*, 113.

²¹ Jenson, “How the World Lost Its Story.”

²² *Ibid.*

among their family members and peers, much less in the larger society. The words of Giovanni Reale could serve as a great source for further reflection on this issue:

The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion. [...] It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe that the Christian Faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning. [...] I do not believe that the culture of Europe could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian Faith. [...] If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. [...] The Western World has its unity in this heritage, in Christianity and in the ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, and Israel, from which, owing to two thousand years of Christianity, we trace our descent. What I wish to say is that this unity in the common elements of culture, throughout many centuries, is the true bond between us. No political and economic organization, however much goodwill it commands, can supply what this cultural unity gives. If we dissipate or throw away our common patrimony of culture, then all the organization and planning of the most ingenious minds will not help us, or bring us closer together.²³

Even despite problems that arose in history – for Europe was never a perfectly coherent society – it can be maintained that the Europeans managed to create a wholesome, coherent culture that values human life and the individual human liberties, as these are derived from the inalienable dignity of each human person. This concrete intertwining of civilizational metanarratives has produced a culture that respects and cherishes the natural world, a culture that is free to explore it, which we do not commonly see in all other cultural settings around the globe; a culture which has matured and arrived at the point of dividing power into three independent (yet accountable) branches – judicial, executive, and legislative – a democratic system that is not perfect but is functional and sustainable precisely because of the regulative, renewal mechanisms that are inherent in it.

Metanarratives have a constitutive function for moral deliberation and action. If moral philosophy abandons its teleological structure pro-

²³ Giovanni Reale, *Kultúrní a duchovní kořeny Evropy. Za obrození evropského člověka* (The Cultural and Spiritual Roots of Europe. Toward the Revival of the European Human Being) (Brno: CDK, 2005), 147.

vided by a constitutive narrative, it becomes nothing but a forum of inexplicably subjective rules and principles.²⁴ Such moral emotivism, as Alasdair MacIntyre came to call this phenomenon, results in the chaos of fragmentation which we witness today, spawning feelings of insecurity and fear of the emotive others.

Morality and values (both moral and spiritual) are integral parts of human communities which are necessarily (by definition) socially embodied, not individually based. There is no self-abstraction of the conscious self here.²⁵ For MacIntyre, virtues can only be understood in terms of their relation to the historic community in which they arise. In his book *After Virtue*, he asserts that in order to understand who we are we must understand where we come from as products of a living, historic tradition:

A central thesis then begins to emerge: man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question, ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question, ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’ We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters – roles into which we have been drafted – and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed.²⁶

Of utmost importance, then, is for one to be aware of the particular traditional narrative that (to a large extent) constitutes his/her identity and to carry on the moral and philosophical argument about the goods which constitute that tradition. MacIntyre thus argues:

I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and

²⁴ “How on an emotivist or projectivist view [are] the attitudes allegedly evinced or expressed in moral judgments [...] related to the assertion of sentences of the relevant type? Are those attitudes to be understood as psychological states which can be adequately identified and characterized prior to and independently of such assertions? If so, then the projectivist claim turns out to be an empirical psychological one and is, I believe, false. If not, then such assertions must be characterizable independently of any expressive function.” MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 16.

²⁵ For a more complex development of this topic, see Michal Valčo, Roman Králik and Lee Barrett, “Moral Implications of Augustine’s Philosophical and Spiritual Journey in His Confessiones,” *Communications: Scientific Letters of the University of Žilina* 17, no. 2 (2015): 103-108.

²⁶ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.

obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. [...] A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition.²⁷

Here we ought to heed MacIntyre's observation that "the present is intelligible only as a commentary upon and response to the past [...]" – the past understood as a complex historical process of embodied narratives (lived out traditions). This then "leaves the present open to being in turn corrected and transcended"²⁸ – but only after an intentional processing of the past. Hence, there is a necessary fluidity and continuity of our human identity, derived from a meaningful narrative: "Narrative is neither disguise nor decoration. [...] It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of a narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told – except in the case of fiction."²⁹ Being guided by some vision of the future – certain variety of ends and goals, these narratives also have a teleological nature, even though the unpredictable and teleological natures of narratives coexist, as MacIntyre points out.³⁰

Where Do We Go from Here?

The task before us, therefore, is intentional cultivation of empathy and charity through *education*, *public debates*, and, above all, real *projects of service*. Concrete projects of service provide an especially fertile ground for the cultivation of empathy and charity because of their highly experiential (I experience myself and the other in real-life scenarios as human beings; this opportunity to experience human mutuality is both humbling and uplifting), non-threatening nature (service projects are not about confronting or persuading the others), and tangible outcomes (i.e., real benefits that are desirable by the recipient). For this to take place, an objective, political condition must be met: Christians globally encourage governments to legislate, cultivate, and sustain true freedom of religion. In addition to this objective condition, two further subjective conditions need to be developed: a true intentionality in engaging in dialogues that start with careful and active listening to the other and an honest resolve to reflect critically (also self-critically) while debating divisive issues.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 146.

²⁹ Ibid., 211-12.

³⁰ Ibid., 216.

Hans-Georg Gadamer may provide the much-needed light here on the question of how to lead a meaningful dialogue that will be mutually edifying and enriching. Pointing out the epistemological and noetic challenges of hermeneutics, Gadamer calls for intellectual humility when interpreting texts/stories from sacred traditions:³¹ (a) As participants in a dialogue of traditions, we must, first of all, be open to what the traditional testimony is saying to us, even if it goes against our established ways of thinking and doing things. (b) The challenges and corresponding questions that the tradition poses to us should first of all encourage us to formulate other relevant questions. Our engagement with the text is truly dialogical only when we stop trying to provide the right (scientific) answer to all possible questions in place of our own openness to ask questions with the tradition. (c) The third rule is, perhaps, the most difficult one. We should find enough humility and honesty in us to allow the tradition to lead us wherever it might, instead of insisting on our own opinions. (d) The final purpose of our hermeneutic inquiry should not be the victory of our own position but a common experience of being influenced by the truth of the object in a new community:

This is not an external matter of simply adjusting our tools; nor is it even right to say that the partners adapt themselves to one another but, rather, in a successful conversation they both come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community. To reach an understanding in a dialogue [means ...] being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.³²

Humans are social beings who derive their identity from a narrative in which they grow up and perpetuate in their own beliefs, attitudes, and practices. Religious, cultural, and political ideologies will continue to offer their own, competing narratives about the meaning and purpose of the reality in which we live. If human individuals and societies wish to be able to defend themselves against every kind of ideological manipulation, they should have a solid appreciation of the power and the role of narratives in people's lives individually and collectively. Also necessary is a robust understanding of one's own narrative – of one's own tradition – that helps us appreciate our socially embodied existence, the roots of our moral starting point, and the reasons why one should not succumb to

³¹ Gadamer formulates these rules with relation to biblical hermeneutics, that is, our entering into a conversation with the biblical tradition – but I argue that we can use the same principles in a contemporary dialogue of narratives (traditions). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall (New York/London: Continuum, 2004²).

³² *Ibid.*, 371.

despair in a post-Holocaust world, overshadowed by nihilism. Christian faith communities, provided they remain true to their Biblical-narrative identity, have the potential to not only *show the way* of the Biblical Gospel but also *be the way* by embodying the story of life and forgiveness.

In addition to this communal narrative awareness, the Christian Gospel narrative may help cultivate an authentic subjectivity of the human person. From a Christian perspective, authentic subjectivity should be understood in its “dialectical relationship with the historical objectivity of God’s economy of salvation, including the communal nature of Christian faith.”³³ The turn to the subject in epistemology, cultural life, and ethics avoids the seemingly inescapable detrimental consequences of the multi-dimensional fragmentation of our postmodern world only if the individual subject is anchored horizontally in the social fabric of one’s community, and vertically in the transcendent and yet fiercely immanent narrative of divine self-revelation in the acts of creation, redemption, and sanctification. Christians will thus continue to argue that the meaning of life cannot be truly understood apart from narrative ethics’ interpretation of the doctrine of creation and redemption.

This search for a new anchor of human identity and experience offers something deeper and more radical than political allegiances. It offers an existential anchor in the universal order of things that will bring about a new quality of relationships among human beings, a new quality of human mutuality, in which the human individual ceases to be a mere instrument on the path of other’s success. Individuals are thus more clearly seen as genuinely irreducible to the political (totalitarian or not) order, while being organically interconnected with their embodied, traditional narrative in living human communities.

Conclusion³⁴

The acuteness of the task to enter into dialogue with religious meta-narratives while seriously considering their cultural heritage dawns on us once we realize the constitutive role of these narratives for the rise of Western civilization. Western civilization has been built on the Judeo-Christian ideals, along with the ideals of Roman law and Greek demo-

³³ Valčová, “Povaha a kontext kresťanskej viery,” 294.

³⁴ My concluding reflections are partially based on my previous research, parts of which have been published in Michal Valčo, “Responsible Socio-Political Action and Religious Motivation: A Case Study of the 1861 ‘Memorandum Events’ in Martin with Implications for the Present,” in *Ethics and Responsibility*, ed. Maria Klobusicka (Krakow: Ksiegarnia Akademicka, 2017), 159-179.

cracy. These ideals (or Traditions) grew together, intertwined with one another and influenced each other.³⁵

It can be argued that the so-called Republican *Tradition* of Roman Law and Greek Democracy and then the Judeo-Christian *Tradition*, which constituted the moral dimension of this civilizational heritage, produced a viable vision of life and ethos. They strove to create such a social and cultural fabric in Europe which would make living together in our European house possible and sustainable in the long term. The substantial level of success in this task achieved over centuries can be attributed to diverse factors, to be sure, including environmental, geopolitical, etc., factors. Nevertheless, the integrative factor of a viable, comprehensive metanarrative that provided humans in the Western world with a common vision of life and ethos, played a significant role in this process. This claim can be substantiated by pointing out the importance of a metanarrative framework for the interplay of epistemological, hermeneutic and ethical deliberations by humans in general. The metanarrative framework within which we exercise our epistemological activities determines not only much of our scientific methodology, including its scope, and general character, but also the nature and content of our ensuing ethical deliberations. Benne is thus right in observing that “since Christians have had thousands of years to reflect on the biblical narrative, they have built up elaborate systems of thought.”³⁶ Christian monotheistic reflection can therefore be described as “a field of inquiry that attempts to understand life and reality in the light of the knowledge of God,” which includes “a *comprehensive* account of life and reality. It contains insights into the origin and end of the world, the nature of nature and history, the human predicament, human salvation or liberation, and human purpose and conduct.”³⁷ Based on the above described nature of the Judeo-Christian metanarrative, a robust foundation emerges for further anthropological enquiries providing solid ground for a complex treatment of humans as persons with their inalienable dignity:

the human being [is understood] as a personal, holistic unity of [...] ontology and ethics as they were captivated by the Gospel narrative, integrating them with transcendent, spiritual realities. These provide an invaluable life orientation, inner motivational force, along with a structure of meaning and purpose. While the spiritual aspect of human existential experience can be expressed through biopsychosocial media, it should be disting-

³⁵ Robert Benne, *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

uished as a unique, separate anthropological entity that overlaps into transcendent reality. Spiritual etiology, among other things, adds valuable insight into the multifaceted socio-ethical discourse in the contemporary debate between the secularists and those who point out a world-wide resurgence of religious traditions and new forms of spirituality.³⁸

This author is not advocating any form of forceful or institutionalized re-enchantment of the world that has long gone on its secular course. What is needed, instead, is an open forum for honest dialogue/debate among various traditions of human thinking; an open forum where active listening within an honest dialogue of participating actors can be facilitated. Only an intentional, honest, and continuous dialogue of religious and secular entities in a given society may bring about an adequate understanding of the contemporary state of the human community on local as well as international levels and, at the same time, a realization of the acute nature of our need to cultivate a new vision and ethos in line with what Pope Francis calls “integral ecology”³⁹ – with the goal of sustainable development of socio-economic processes and life on Earth. In addition, social and political engineers need to more fully realize that similarities and common traits in foundational values “are conducive to greater trust between people. [...] Higher levels of trust encourage greater cooperation and economic integration.”⁴⁰ In order to promote a certain measure of value convergence, therefore, the notion of culture as the breeding ground of values should be interpreted according to a more complex anthropological meaning, and not a narrow idealistic vision that reduces cultural value to an aesthetic dimension, viewed merely for entertainment and not for increasing human capital through the knowledge of history.⁴¹ A complex anthropological meaning is what we should be after, and this includes the vitally important areas of studying human values, virtues and motiva-

³⁸ Katarína Valčová, Martina Pavlíková and Marie Roubalová, “Religious Existentialism as a Countermeasure to Moralistic Therapeutic Deism,” *Communications: Scientific Letters of the University of Zilina* 18, no. 3 (2016): 100-101.

³⁹ This term comes from Pope Francis’ Encyclical *Laudato si’*, where in Chapter 4 he writes: “Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an *integral ecology*, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions. (*I. Environmental, economic and social ecology*)” (emphasis mine); Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato si’* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), 103.

⁴⁰ Neil Nevitte and Ronald Inglehart, *North American Value Change and Integration: Lessons from Western Europe?*, in *Values in Western Societies*, ed. R. de Moor (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1995), 108-109.

⁴¹ Gaetano M. Golineli, *Cultural Heritage and Value Creation: Towards New Pathways* (New York: Springer, 2015), viii.

tions in their constitutive relation to life-visions as these are embodied in overarching cultural and religious narratives.

I dare to propose that the Judeo-Christian tradition appears to be a suitable foundation (though, of course, not the only one) for the cultivation of a constructive, prosocial, ecologically responsible behavior. This tradition points out the cultural and religious roots of morality, growing out of a narrative understanding of reality. Its moral norms originate from the internal values of humans as persons who are endowed with inalienable dignity. These values are then actualized in concrete virtues for the benefit and wellbeing of the whole human community. A tangible, historic Christian community that shares and embodies a common metanarrative and derives from it its vision of life and life-ethos constitutes an adequate context for the emergence and practical enactment of the new, pro-social and pro-ecological identity of human individuals.

If it can be firmly established that the fabric of human societies is closely knit by the threads of personal human narratives as these derive their substance from larger, cultural, political, and religious narratives, then these narratives must be taken more seriously in contemporary socio-political discourses. Policy makers and educators, in such case, need to ask the deeper cultural and civilizational questions that would lead them back to the kind of reflection that takes into account the historical argument that civilized societies raise around a given normative (or constitutive) life vision, derived from a foundational narrative. If Western civilization has indeed been built on the Judeo-Christian metanarrative, with the integrated ideals of Roman law and Greek democracy, then more attention needs to be devoted to their potentially constitutive function for a viable vision of life and ethos shared by our societies. Hence the need for a solid, competent reflection on what role human narratives (religious as well as overarching cultural narratives) play in the shaping of human lives and societies on a global scale.

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8.

The Sacred Character of Free Time as an Opportunity for the Recovering of Culture

Pavol Dancák

Introduction

In our times of rapid social changes at all levels, we hear the phrase ‘time is money’ ever so often. It might appear that people want to control time as their own property. Their rushed lifestyles raise the question whether they slave away at something that cannot be achieved anyway. Time is not only a one-way flow with differently perceived velocity but also an event that happens between birth and death. And it is a human being’s duty to live his or her life purposefully.

The importance of the philosophical reflection of free time arises in relation with the development of modern technologies which enable human beings to live faster and easier. On the other hand, the current cultural situation is marked by globalization, deepening individualization, consumerism, dehumanization, various forms of skepticism, indifference and the loss of interest in the public sphere. Erich Fromm points out that people have been diminished to things and human relationships are also becoming proprietary.¹ Whenever in history people felt in danger, they turned to education as a means (and an opportunity) for remedy of the actions of individuals and societies. In his significant work *De rerum humanarum emendatione consultatio catholica (General Consultation on the Improvement of Human Affairs)*, J. A. Comenius, as a witness of the crisis in the 17th century, urges people towards harmony created by God and towards social and moral responsibility for the state of the world.

The phenomenon of leisure is known not only in our times, but it has also been part of European culture to reflect on a philosophical-theological basis the importance of leisure ever since Greek and Judeo-Christian thinking. In fact, it is a condition for the development of culture. In spite of this, it is still unclear how to define leisure. In the current discourse, leisure is described from pedagogical, social, psychological, economic, political or hygienic points of view, that is, related, in a specific way, to the cultivation of human beings and society. However, cultivation in the

¹ Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (London/New Delhi/New York/Sydney: Bloomsbury, 1976), 58f.

sense of *paideia* or *educatio* is often not taken into consideration.² In this light, it seems that we may think about leisure from two angles.

The first is to think about leisure as a time segment, which is positively or negatively set against working time. This view was developed by Hermann Giesecke and Horst W. Opaschowski, though each of them explained the modern concept of “leisure” in a different way. Opaschowski claims that we can trace the origins of leisure back to J. A. Comenius who demands to make regular breaks between classes in his book, *The Great Didactic*. This idea of leisure is specified as a reaction to pietistic and puritan ethics, which considers sloth and idleness as a sin. From his part, Giesecke believes that leisure is a product of industrialization,³ thereby drawing on Karl Marx’s definition of leisure as disponible time.⁴

The second view is thinking about quality of activities (or sloth/idleness) that take place in people’s free time. In the English and French-speaking world,⁵ philosophers and sociologists approach leisure from the perspective of the social changes which cause society not to be interested in accomplishing working duties, but to focus on entertainment, experience, pleasure and freedom, thus leading to the idea of a civilization of leisure.

The phenomenon of leisure can be clarified by looking at ancient and scholastic philosophy in Josef Pieper’s work *Musse und Kult (Leisure and culture)*, which was published in Germany after the Second World War and became a disputed bestseller. Pieper famously stated that leisure is basically a condition of the soul. Leisure is not only disponible time or sloth, but space of atonement to the world-as-a-whole. At that time, Germany was full of reconstructing enthusiasm while getting over the effects of the war; however, Pieper warned that without time free for reflection, creativity, contemplation and cult there is no sense in human effort.⁶ After all, the human being does not live for the sake of work, because work is only a means to achieving the transcendent goal of human life. Jan Patočka reflects on leisure in a similar way as he argues that leisure is the

² Horst W. Opaschowski, *Pädagogik der Freizeit: Grundlegung für Wissenschaft und Praxis* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 1976), 195.

³ Hermann Giesecke, “Zur Geschichte der Freizeit und ihrer Erforschung,” in *Freizeit und Konsumerziehung*, ed. Hermann Giesecke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1974), 9-18. Opaschowski, *Pädagogik der Freizeit*, 21.

⁴ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953), 305.

⁵ See Thornstein B. Veblen, *Teorie zahálčivé třídy* (Praha: SLON, 1999). David Riesman, *Osamělý dav: Studie o změnách amerického charakteru* (Praha: Kalich, 2007). Max Kaplan, *Leisure in America: A social inquiry* (New York: Wiley, 1960). Joffre Dumazédier, *Vers une civilisation de loisir?* (Paris: Seuil, 1962).

⁶ See Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 1998).

space for looking into broader contents rather than only for perceiving the current position.⁷

Unfortunately, this idea of leisure as time for reflection, creativity and contemplation did not find general acceptance in industrially developed countries. Since the 1960s, leisure has been perceived as an opportunity for consumerist pleasure. Jürgen Habermas noticed this tendency when observing the life of workers in Ford factories.⁸ He said that they had to work monotonously (assembly line production) which was exhausting, but they earned enough money to compensate their frustration by pleasures in leisure. Therefore, hedonistic spending of leisure led to alienation, as Marx had already seen.⁹

The aim of this contribution is to highlight the sacred character of leisure as a means of developing individual and society. In the first part, we will introduce the historical-philosophical context of the sacred character of leisure, which significantly formed European culture. In the second part, we will focus on Pieper's reflection on the question "What sense does leisure have?" which was asked in Germany immediately after WWII, when many considered this question not relevant since for them to reconstruct the damaged country was more urgent. However, Pieper defended his views, explaining that "to build a house" means to recompose one's entire moral, intellectual and cultural heritage, one of its pillars is the reflection of the sacred character of leisure. Indeed, this topic is also highly relevant at present when the death of the subject is certified and posthumanism is pondered over.

Leisure and Education

Historical sources indicate that leisure time has always been opposite to working time which is a time for work and duties. For Thales of Milete a home is happy when the master of the house has enough leisure time. In the context of hierarchy in a slave society, Aristotle perceives leisure time as the opposite of work. Work is intended only for slaves and leisure time for free citizens so they could develop their virtues and dedicate their time to politics. Free citizens are not supposed to engage in mundane work, craft or trade since such a life is not noble and is in conflict with virtues.¹⁰ Leisure time is a space for cultivation, prayer, education or *paideia*, which

⁷ Jan Patočka, *Filosofie výchovy* (Praha: PedF UK, 1997), 5.

⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Soziologische Notizen zum Verhältnis von Arbeit und Freizeit," in *Konkrete Vernunft*, ed. Gerhard Funke (Bonn: Bouvier, 1958), 219-231.

⁹ Opaschowski, *Pädagogik der Freizeit*, 84.

¹⁰ Emília Kratochvílová, *Pedagogika voľného času. Výchova mimo vyučovania v pedagogickej teórii a v praxi* (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského, 2004), 75.

the Greek perceived as a unity of rearing and education, as well as of civilization, religion, culture, tradition and literature.¹¹

In modern times, *paideia* has become something that is difficult to comprehend if we define it as education and apply it to its modern meaning. Plato's *paideia* means the ability to be in relationship¹² and encompasses the idea of awe of the outside world. The idea of *paideia* can be found in a form of pansophia in Komenský¹³ as "education which is an introduction to the wholeness of the world," in the work of Jan Patočka¹⁴ as fundamental agogics and in the work of Radim Palouš as a way or style of life understood as a whole in its profound organic and transcendent order.

Paideia is related to everyday provisioning towards which every person is oriented. This human condition somehow chains the person. Yet one does not rid oneself of duties associated with this provisioning. By means of education, the everyday provisioning is located in its own unique place. Applying Plato's parable of the cave, a person's education is an upward and downward journey.

The mysterious authority of an educator shows the true face of the human situation in which a person discovers him/herself. *Paideia* is not an educational method but entails the extending beyond the situation in which we remain, despite all. It is breaking out of ordinary life. The human being is then educated, freed from constant occupation by various activities. The space for *paideia* is *schole*, which means leisure time, laying aside daily personal agenda and worries (a day off, holidays, a break from everyday provisioning). A Greek nobleman dedicates this time to care for his soul.¹⁵

It is thanks to the Sunday school that real education is carried out. *Schole* is not emptiness without shadows, but freedom from the reality of the world, releasing oneself from the numbness caused by the chains in the cave. It is the openness to the arrival of what is hidden behind the shadows; it is liberation so that we can live the true life.¹⁶ The prisoner in Plato's cave strives to make sense of the matters concealed by shadows.¹⁷ Yet, the worth of such knowing is very limited, because what one needs to know is on the other side of the cave. In *schole* there is no limitation by shadows because here a person "faces" the world that opens up before

¹¹ Werner Jaeger, *Paideia I* (Warszawa: PAX, 1962), 17-32.

¹² Zdeněk Kratochvíl, *Výchova, zřejmost, vědomí* (Praha: Herman & synové 1995), 28.

¹³ Radim Palouš, *Česká zkušenost* (Praha: Academia, 1994), 157.

¹⁴ Jan Patočka, *Aristoteles, jeho předchůdci a dědicové* (Praha: ČSAV, 1965), 370.

¹⁵ Kratochvíl, *Výchova*, 40.

¹⁶ Radim Palouš, *K filozofii výchovy* (Praha: SPN, 1991), 80-81.

¹⁷ Plato, *Politeia* 516a.

him/her.¹⁸ *Schole* as emptiness does not have a negative connotation but represents some positive value. It is liberation, a space for what is most typical for humans. Only through *schole*, through keeping our distance can we look at our everydayness as at the immersion in our worries about mobility, livelihood and survival.

Knowing one's own situation and one's way of understanding acquired through *schole* in which *paideia* comes into existence is not in the power of an individual who excels in matters pertaining to ordinary life. In Plato's allegory, a freed individual is not active. Indeed, it is some mysterious authority that frees one and pulls the educated one onto the steep path. The freed person is defined by an array of weaknesses: one is blinded, not adapted for change, allured back to the comfort of the former position one is accustomed to. *Paideia* does not mean a relationship between the stronger, able-bodied, wiser, more educated and older person – the educator, and the weaker person – and the one to be educated. What is strong here is only the anonymous, mysterious and unnamable authority, not a concrete person. Knowing one's own situation and way of understanding is acquired through *schole* in which *paideia* comes to existence. No one is able to obtain some sort of certificate for *paideia* through one's own natural talent, erudition, or experience. No human power can bring about the change. *Paideia* is a difficult and unusual turn, and a strenuous movement on a demanding path. The sanctity of *schole* understood as free time is also accentuated by the fact that there is not even one reference in the allegory of the cave to the shroud of mystery being lifted for this mighty authority of *paideia*.¹⁹

A substantial part of education happens within the interval of *schole*.²⁰ However, there is a great danger related to this opportunity. In fact, there is a tendency to fill the space of *schole* with various pseudo activities of shadowy character and therefore one single conversion (*periagoge*), one change or one surfacing does not suffice. What is needed is the constant turning to what is good (*agathon*) and see to the favorable ambience of leisure time, which does not create education but still it makes it possible. Plato's thought is still relevant today. It emerged at a time of decline, when the world of the *polis* was being replaced by the passive universe of our human world of freedom and responsibility. But this freedom is not perceived as an absolute freedom and boundless independence. Freedom is not a deity on the path to something divine.²¹

The sacred character of leisure time, which directs the human being to God, is evident in the Hebrew tradition too. The Sabbath has the

¹⁸ Palouš, *K filozofii výchovy*, 80.

¹⁹ Radim Palouš, *Čas výchovy* (Praha: SPN, 1991), 60-61.

²⁰ Radim Palouš, *Totalizmus a holizmus* (Praha: Karolinum, 1997), 114.

²¹ Patočka, *Filosofie výchovy*, 24.

greatest significance out of all feast days in the Jewish calendar; it is the most important day of the week.²² There are many references to the Sabbath in both the Torah and the Talmud. The first references to the Sabbath can be found in the Book of Genesis' description of the creation of the world. For in six days the Lord created the world, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day holy. God 'rested' on the seventh day, so humans should not work either. The Sabbath brings every day's work to a halt and provides a respite. It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money.²³ In the Book Exodus we read:

You must also tell the Israelites: Take care to keep my Sabbaths, for that is to be the token between you and me throughout the generations, to show that it is I, the Lord, who make you holy. Therefore, you must keep the Sabbath as something sacred. Whoever desecrates it shall be put to death. If anyone does work on that day, he must be rooted out of his people. Six days there are for doing work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of complete rest, sacred to the Lord. Anyone who does work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. So shall the Israelites observe the Sabbath, keeping it throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. Between me and the Israelites it is to be an everlasting token; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested at his ease (Ex 31:13-17).

The Sabbath is associated with the events of salvation in the history of Israel and it is a sign of keeping the covenant and a memory of being delivered from the slavery in Egypt. Israel leaves to avoid becoming similar to the peoples of any other nation; instead it leaves to serve God. God entrusted the Sabbath to Israel to keep it as a sign of the irrevocable covenant. The Sabbath is for the Lord, holy and set apart to praise God, his work of creation, and his saving acts on behalf of Israel.²⁴

The creation leads to the Sabbath, the day when both humankind and all creation were in peace with the Lord, when they were involved in His freedom. The Sabbath is a vision of freedom: a slave and his master are equal on that day. Suddenly, on the Sabbath, all forms of subordination disappear, and the burden of work is put aside for that time. The Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between God and humans. It embraces everything

²² Jaroslav Franek, *Judaizmus* (Bratislava: Archa, 1993), 43.

²³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997), 2172.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2171.

essential. The purpose of the creation is the covenant, the story of love between God and His people.²⁵ The center of the celebration of the Sabbath is the family. To keep the day of rest, however, is not required primarily for humans to rest; the Sabbath is the day of the Lord. For the Jews, the seventh day of the week, which differs greatly from the other days of the week, symbolizes the transition to another, sacred time which represents a promise of fullness and bliss of messianic times. The extraordinary status assigned to the Sabbath and its strict observance is one of the most typical manifestations of Judaism.²⁶

The sanctity of the seventh day of the week, be it the Jewish Saturday or the Christian Sunday, reminds us of the third commandment of the Decalogue. The first and foremost meaning of the *Sabbath* is to realize that everything leads to God and that the human being was created in relation to God and can find peace only in God. The Sabbath should remind us of the creation of the world and of the human being who, as the only creature, was made in God's image and participates in God's creativity and rest. A Christian Sunday is closely related to the Sabbath of the Hebrew Bible, but it does not bear the same meaning. The crucial reason is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ – on the first day of the new week. For Christians, Sunday is the day of resurrection. At the center of the life of the Church is the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. Participation in this celebration is a witness to adherence to Christ and His Church. To celebrate the Eucharist means to accept the offer to enter into God's celebration, encompassing heaven and earth and presenting oneself in the Cross and the Resurrection. The Christian liturgy is never an event of a specific circle of people or the particular Church. The journey of humankind to Christ is based on Christ's journey towards all people. He wants to unite humankind and the Church and to create God's communion of all people.²⁷ "Christians will also sanctify the Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of Christian interior life."²⁸

A traditional practice of scriptural reading, known as *Lectio Divina*, has contributed to the understanding of human's essential situation. The Christian understanding of leisure time is related to the Hebrew *Sabbath* as well to the Greek *scholē*. It is evident from the educational approach of the Church Fathers to the reading of the Bible as well as from other literary works.

²⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000), 19.

²⁶ Helena Pavlincová et al, *Slovník Judaismus, Křesťanstvo, Islam* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1994), 101-102.

²⁷ Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 39.

²⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2186

On Sunday, a Christian is freed from work and in this freedom, he/she *shall* always realize that he/she has been redeemed. “Like God rested on the seventh day after all previous days, human life has also its rhythm of work and rest. Setting of Lord’s Day (Sunday) helps all people to have sufficient rest and leisure time which enables them to pursue family, cultural, social and religious life.”²⁹

Leisure as a Condition of the Soul

In 1947 Pieper, inspired by Thomas Aquinas, wrote the book *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, in which he introduces basic elements of leisure, that is, to live leisure in its real freedom. Leisure is not time out of work, weekends and holidays. Rather it is a condition of the soul, as Pieper argues.³⁰ He observes that activity is overestimated at present, as our own views are opened to us in the state of non-activity, in the state of openness of the soul. We cannot own leisure but only feel it in ourselves, often without regard to surrounding conditions. In this definition, the dualistic, clearly defined notion of work vs. leisure is disappearing. Leisure is less tangible, less noticeable because our leisure does not depend on the number of hours without work. Pieper reflects on the concept of work and claims that leisure should be the opposite of work, which is not understood as an occupation only but as *activity, effort and social function*. He describes leisure, possibly experiencing leisure, with the help of opposite concepts by which he characterizes work.

The opposite of activity is *sloth and silence*. Becoming silent is a necessary preparation for receiving reality.³¹ This is realized by means of lowering the concentration on one’s self which will enable one to hear, sense and understand better. In this silence we can discern transcendence, hence admit that there are things that go beyond us and that we do not understand because of this going beyond which we cannot influence. Because we do not understand these things but know about them (in a sense of the medieval *Intellectus*), we must believe them. In that way, we come to some “blind faith which enables us to let things go their own way.”³² Silence is some indifference to the world and realizing that the burdens of the world do not rest on us; even if we were not here, the world would still have its pace. It is complete openness that is not held by worrying about something. It is absence of labor, effort and need to interfere in things that are going on around us. Pieper compares leisure to sleep, because in sleep we let things pass freely. If we are worried about what

²⁹ Ibid., 2107, 2186.

³⁰ Pieper, *Leisure*, 30-31.

³¹ Josef Pieper, *Tradition als Herausforderung* (München: Kösel, 1979), 191.

³² Pieper, *Leisure*, 31.

happens during our sleep, we will never sleep well and not give in to sleep. For Pieper, this is the reason why problems with sleep are closely linked to inability to cease our activity (to rest). Silence is necessary for living leisure, in some sense it may be compared to contemplation.³³

Feasting is an essential element of leisure. In order to feast, one must feel harmony in oneself and must be in harmony with the world, thus one must accept oneself and the surrounding world. This cannot be achieved in an everyday, ordinary way. The best way to achieve harmony with the world as such is the celebration of God. In Pieper's view this is typical of leisure. There is some silence and observation in feasting as well. This silence is similar to silence in the conversation of two lovers,³⁴ which contains a joy that cannot be expressed by words. And hence it is expressed by silence. The highest form of feasting is called festival, festivity. Festivity implies accepting the world and fulfilling human beings with a special spirit, different from an ordinary day. These conclusions of Pieper are a reminiscence of the Platonic *scholē*, where freeing oneself from everydayness is essential. There should be no sign of labor or effort in festival, in a play and ability to feast but, as Plato argues, one should connect effort with rest, or as Aristotle postulates, we work in order to have leisure. There must be an ordinary day in order to have Sunday. By being at the heart of leisure, festivity forms the basis of leisure and culture. If we fail to see feast as worship and if we tend to participate in false worship, then all the modern technologies and legal regulations will fail to save our culture.

According to Pieper, a break at work is a part of working process and necessary because it offers space for one to rest, to regenerate in order to go on with one's work. It is a part of an ordinary day, hence of work as such, it has its time limit because of which it is not leisure. Leisure does not have time boundaries, rather it is ongoing. It is not time for regeneration but is, in accordance with Thomas Aquinas, contemplation. Living leisure can provide us with refreshment after work, but this is secondary. The effect of leisure is that a person realizes and lives his/her humankind. This realization does not occur in our divided life out of work, but it is ongoing.³⁵

We may observe that sanctity is the focus of Pieper's understanding of leisure, which is closely linked to Christianity and worship. The harmony which one feels cannot be of human source only, but there must be another power, which is transcendent. Hence, harmony with the world can be achieved only by celebrating the Creator. A celebration that is without this feast of worship loses its authenticity, as it is the human who is

³³ Ibid., 32.

³⁴ Ibid., 33.

³⁵ Ibid., 34f.

celebrated, not God. Pieper claims that if we are separating leisure from worship, leisure becomes exhausting.³⁶ Aquinas calls this time *acedia* – sloth. Boredom emerges in such inauthentic leisure, that spiritual element of personality, which would have shown us a way to God, vanishes. Such a leisure is dreadful, in the end it is filled with destruction; it is a journey without end.

Pieper warns that this is not some accurate instruction but only an attempt to give hope. Leisure, because of its freedom, cannot direct someone to be free not even to follow one's own decisions. Nor it can command a person to "find leisure and way to God."³⁷

Conclusion

In his contemplations on leisure, Pieper draws on Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian thinking. Similarly, like Comenius and Patočka, he points out that the human being completes its authentic humankind in relationship with transcendence. Through God one finds his or her humanness, while leisure offers ways of searching for it.

Contemporary society with its desire to maximize economic production tries to present leisure as a senseless waste of time. Continual work duties place a "creative break" aside, causing a lot of damage to life and production. The current consumer atmosphere, trying to eradicate Sunday as a free day, may result in people losing their religious footing and being left to the mercy of economic and political powers. Historical experience with "subotniki" and "nedel'niki" (working shifts on Saturdays and Sundays established in the communist regimes) and our current experience with burnouts clearly indicate the counter-productivity of such endeavors. After reflecting upon the phenomenon of leisure it is advised to draw from experience but also necessary to reject the temptation of the totalitarian approach to the sophist reduction in its many forms. To accept philosophical openness towards reality and to reflect on the true meaning of free time lie in the personal responsibility towards the transcendent.

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³⁶ Ibid., 54.

³⁷ Ibid., 76.

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Witold Gombrowicz's Notes on the Experience of Strangeness

Dariusz Dobrzański

Introduction

The present study, based on instruments supplied by Alfred Schütz's phenomenology and Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, attempts to gain more detailed insights into the meaning of strangeness in the literary output of Witold Gombrowicz. Strangeness is one of the chief topics explored in his *The Diary Notes*. The theme of strangeness can also be found in Gombrowicz's literary debut – the short story collection entitled *Bacacay* (1933) – and in his final novel *Cosmos* (1965). It is also present in a number of his opinion pieces, like Gombrowicz's polemic with Emil Cioran, a Romanian-born writer living in Paris, published in *The Diary Notes* (1957). This polemic is the starting point of the discussion presented in my paper. The next step, based on Schütz's ideas, comprises the description of strangeness as an experience. The third step consists of the exploration of relationships between the ethnomethodological approach and communication experiments by Garfinkel and the experiments proposed by Gombrowicz. The conclusion includes a number of useful directives, stemming from Gombrowicz's creative life, complemented by an outline of their potential applications in mitigating fears and concerns of contemporary Poles in relation to emigration and immigration.

Gombrowicz's Polemic with Emil Cioran

The Polish émigré writer Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969) was throughout his entire life extremely sensitive to conventions and conventionalization of interpersonal relationships. In particular, he was interested in exploring the mechanisms by which people are driven to embrace specific forms, styles and conventions. On the other hand, in his works Gombrowicz took up the topic of efforts undertaken by individuals to create their own form and their unique individual style.¹

This is what he wrote about the form:

1. Man created by form, in the profoundest, most universal sense;

¹ Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969) was a Polish-born writer of novels, short stories and plays. His works have been translated into more than thirty languages.

2. Man as the creator, the indefatigable producer of form;
3. Man degraded by form (always being an “under” or an “un” – under-educated, immature).²

Form, as discussed by Gombrowicz, is similar in meaning to the classic concept of social fact, proposed by Émile Durkheim. In Durkheim’s view, social facts stand for manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual; these manners are invested upon the individual with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise the control over him/her.

An excellent illustration of Gombrowicz’s creative attitude to form, i.e., the way of approaching phenomena which accompany humans, is his standpoint on emigration (strangeness). He saw emigration as an opportunity and challenge. This opinion was in stark contrast to what Polish intellectuals and writers thought. To them, emigration was a phenomenon involving loss, exile, resignation and pessimism. An émigré writer himself, a member of a wealthy gentry family that lost all its estates during a turbulent period in history, Gombrowicz had a different view on the life of émigrés. For him, leaving one’s home country was an adventure and a chance to become immersed in a different culture. This is best seen in his polemic with Emil Cioran.

In 1952, Gombrowicz published a text in the Polish-émigré magazine *Kultura*, reviewing the article “The Conveniences and Inconveniences of Exile” authored by the Romanian essayist Emil Cioran. Cioran, living away from his homeland just like Gombrowicz, discussed the condition of the writer (intellectualist) in emigration.³ Cioran lists a number of everyday problems related to life in exile. For reasons of brevity, I will focus on the two major inconveniences listed by the Romanian writer.

The first inconvenience is the necessity to write in a foreign language. This was seen as a fundamental difficulty because a writer expressing oneself in a language other than his/her mother tongue is at a risk of losing his/her basic capital – his/her personality constructed in the creative effort.

The other major hardship of the immigrant’s life is solitude, understood as the absence of two communities: the community of the writer’s environment and the community of readers. Cioran notes that nearly always solitude leads to giving up as a writer, and adapting to new living conditions as someone else – an official, a politician, etc. These two universal inconveniences, starting a new life outside the comfort zone of

² Witold Gombrowicz, *Diary*, trans. Lillian Vallee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 290.

³ Emil Cioran, “Dogodności i niedogodności wygnania” (The Conveniences and Inconveniences of Exile), *Kultura* 56, no. 6 (July 1952): 3-6.

one's native language and loneliness, force émigré writers to devote themselves either to piety or sarcasm – depending on their temperament.

In his polemic with Cioran, Gombrowicz described the writer's observations as a story "reeking of a basement coolness and the root of the grave," about a writer "dying" in detachment from his society. In addition, Gombrowicz called Cioran "a writer in embryo"⁴ and, as was his habit, took the opportunity to give Cioran a brief lecture on the philosophy of emigration. Its main theses read as follows.

First, every artist's life is actually a life in exile. No matter what the geographical location or political system is, artists are always émigrés condemned to strangeness.

Second, artists are strangers not only abroad but also in their native country. All eminent writers (such as Rimbaud or Kafka) – Gombrowicz claims – were foreigners in their own home, and the reason was their outstanding talent separating them from the rest.

Third, as Gombrowicz states, readers are not an issue, for outstanding writers never write *for* readers but always *against* them: "Honors, success, reverberation, fame – note that they only became famous because they valued themselves more than their success."

Fourth, Gombrowicz argues, for a writer or an intellectual, radical emigration – understood as leaving one's homeland, ideology, politics, group, program, faith and community – represents a test of the universality of culture which they create and, in addition, a chance also for ordinary people, to "create themselves anew."⁵

Gombrowicz finished his mini-lecture on the philosophy of immigration (strangeness) with a praxeological accent. He put forth a directive to the intelligentsia, asserting that individual responsibility, determination and a certain "unceremoniousness towards our dearest feelings" may, but do not need to, produce conditions for the creative development of people and culture. Gombrowicz's harsh experiences in exile show that in order to change everyday life into the art of life it is not enough to be talented, educated and hard-working. What is also needed is the courage to determine what you are worth. Gombrowicz – both as a writer and as a human being – had that kind of courage and he almost won.

As Jerzy Jarzębski points out, Gombrowicz's commentary on Cioran's *Comfort and Discomforts of Exile* is essentially a presentation of his idea of exile, juxtaposed to Cioran's ideas. It is Gombrowicz's wish to emigrate with dignity and without a sense of personal failure. To the con-

⁴ Witold Gombrowicz, "Komentarz" (Commentary), *Kultura* 56, no. 6 (July 1952): 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

trary, exile is essentially the fate of every writer (intellectual) who must face the feeling of his/her painful standing out of the crowd and his/her distinct otherness, and constantly border on pathology.⁶

For lo and behold, the country's elite is kicked out over the border. It can think, feel, and write from the outside. It gains distance. It gains an incredible spiritual freedom. All bonds burst. One can be more of oneself. In the general in all the forms that have existed until now loosen up and one can move toward the future in a more ruthless way.

An exceptional opportunity! The moment everyone dreamed of! It would seem, therefore, that the stronger individuals, the richer individuals would roar like lions? Then why don't they? Why has the voice of this people faded abroad?

They do not roar because, first of all, they are too free. Art demands style, order, discipline. Cioran correctly underscores the danger of too much isolation, of excessive freedom. Everything to which they were tied and everything that bound them – homeland, ideology, politics, group, program, faith milieu – everything vanished in the whirlpool of history and only a bubble filled with nothingness remained on the surface. Those thrown out of their little world found themselves facing a world, a boundless world and, consequently, one that was impossible to master.

Only a universal culture can come to terms with the world, never a parochial culture, never those who live only on fragments of existence. Only he who knows how to reach deeper, beyond the homeland, only he for whom the homeland is but one of the revelations of an eternal and universal life, will not be incited to anarchy by the loss of his homeland.⁷

Strangeness as an Experience

In his essay "The Homecomer" (1945), Schütz, referring to the popular idiom "to feel at home" states that "it's is an expression of the highest degree of familiarity and intimacy." Life at home, he argues, "follows an organized pattern of routine; it has its well-determined goals and well-proved means to bring them about." By following these established patterns, a participant of daily life is able to cope with the

⁶ Jerzy Jarzębski, "Gombrowicz, the Émigré," in *The Exil and Return of Writers from East – Central Europe: A Compendium*, eds. John Neubauer and Torok Borbala Zsuzsana (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2009).

⁷ Gombrowicz, *Diary*, 50.

majority of day-to-day problems. One of the functions of objectively existing cultural patterns is “to eliminate laborious research” and to provide ready-made manuals.⁸

Cultural patterns, as Schütz points out, serve to “substitute convenient truisms for hard-fought truth, and the self-evident for the arguable.”⁹ More specifically, these patterns, consisting of ready-made formulas, provide typical participants of everyday life, who encounter typical problems, with typical solutions. This knowledge is self-evident, and it serves people as a means to: (a) interpret the social world; (b) show how to handle things and other people in order to function in the world.

In another article, entitled “The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology” (1944), Schütz analyzes the experience of strangeness by comparing it to the cognitive crisis affecting, for example, (a) “the immigrant” or (b) “the prospective bridegroom who wants to be admitted to the girl’s family.” The attitude of the stranger, he emphasizes, always precedes the processes of social assimilation and social adjustment. The practical effectiveness of these processes depends, on the one hand, on the type of attitude displayed by the stranger and, on the other hand, on the attitude of the group the stranger approaches.¹⁰

As Schütz claims, objective cultural patterns and unreflective knowledge of recipes make up what he terms thinking as usual which, in turn, is based entirely on a set of certain basic assumptions. As long as these basic assumptions are implicitly followed (i.e., not subjected to reflection), they are effective. Schütz characterizes more closely the basic assumptions accompanying everyday activities, pointing out that:

(a) people born or raised within a group accept the “ready-made standardized scheme of the cultural pattern handed down [...] by ancestors, teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all the situations which normally occur within the social world;”¹¹

(b) in everyday life, in most cases, it is enough to know something about the general nature of events encountered in the social world in order to be able to handle and control them;

(c) systems of recipes representing patterns of interpretation and expression (as well as the basic assumptions themselves) are not only a

⁸ Alfred Schütz, “Powracający do domu” (The Homecomer), in Idem, *O wielości światów. Szkice z fenomenologii socjologicznej* (*On the Multitude of Worlds. Sketches in Phenomenological Sociology*) (Cracow: Nomos, 2008), 205.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Alfred Schütz, “Obcy: esej z zakresu psychologii społecznej” (The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology), in Idem, *O wielości światów* (*On the Multitude of Worlds*) (Cracow: Nomos, 2008).

¹¹ Ibid.

private matter of the individual, but are also accepted and followed by others.

As Schütz notes, if at least one of the basic assumptions ceases to hold, then thinking as usual becomes useless. In such cases, people face the previously mentioned cognitive crisis which can be described as the experience of strangeness. This is, perhaps, the condition experienced by the émigré writer Cioran.

The Relationships between Garfinkel and Gombrowicz

Ethnomethodology is a discipline within social studies which focuses on the way people understand and produce the social order of their everyday world. The theoretical background of ethnomethodology comprises, among others, analyses of the life world (everyday life) by Schütz. In line with Schütz's theses, ethnomethodology has adopted the methodological thesis stating that the specificity of sociological studies is that their object, being a product of culture, has already been interpreted by the participant of everyday life. Thus, the objective interpretation of the researcher-sociologist is the interpretation of subjective senses and meanings of the actor and referred to as a second-order interpretation. From this perspective, for example, speaking, looking, observing, writing, thinking etc., represent activities provided with methods, the formal properties of which are to be described by the ethnomethodologist.¹²

Second, despite the ongoing evolution, and the emergence of separate fields within ethnomethodology (such as conversational analysis), scholars who identify with this research perspective agree with respect to the object of study defined by Harold Garfinkel in the late 1960s:

In contrast to certain versions of Durkheim that teach that the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle, the lesson is taken instead, and used as a study policy, that the objective reality of social facts as an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life, with the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being by members known, used, and taken for granted, is, for members doing sociology, a fundamental phenomenon.¹³

¹² A. Jasińska-Kania, L. M. Nijakowski, J. Szacki and M. Ziółkowski, eds., *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne (Contemporary Sociological Theories)* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2006), 863-866.

¹³ Harold Garfinkel, *Studia z etnometodologii (Studies in Ethnomethodology)*, trans. A. Szulżycka (Warsaw: PWN, 2007), 1.

Third, according to ethnomethodologists, communication and the performative function of language are the basic tools for achieving the sense of order among interacting participants. From this perspective, the objectivity of reality becomes a correlate and a product of subjective functions, activities and operations.

Fourth, when interpreting social facts, one must not forget the irremovable mutual relationship between the object being explained and its explanation. The relationship is referred to as reflexivity and can be understood as the effect of assumed – usually unconscious – knowledge on the meaning of the observed object. Garfinkel, in his *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), emphasizes that social scientists deliberately ignore the presence of reflexivity in their scientific explanations – or try to conceal its presence. This is because they see it as an obstacle and a disadvantage of scientific descriptions. Reflexivity, which accompanies all human descriptions of the world, and impacts the self-referential character of the sociologist's research practice, is irremovable. From the viewpoint of universalist claims of science, this fact is a problem, as it presents researchers (for example sociologists) with a dilemma: generalization at the expense of context omission or contextualization without generalization.

Fifth, referring to the methodological toolbox of ethnomethodology, Garfinkel suggests that the practicing sociologist should employ the following method:

Procedurally, it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble. The operations that one would have to perform in order to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation and confusion; to produce the social structured effects of anxiety, shame, guilt, indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction should tell us something about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained.¹⁴

Employing this method – and adopting this attitude towards reality – is referred to here as experimenting with the basic colloquial assumption about the self-evident nature of everyday reality.

Conclusion

Gombrowicz consistently campaigned for the appreciation of his literature: initially in his home, and later in Warsaw's cafés and among the elites, then in Argentina, and finally in Europe and America. He knew

¹⁴ Ibid., 54.

the importance of readers' opinions, both professional critics and people in the street. He was aware that the voice of the reader was necessary for a text to be absorbed into the cultural bloodstream. During his battles and struggles, he developed and applied a method of gaining audience (readership). He used it consistently in his *Diary*. The method is first articulated by Stefan, the protagonist and narrator of Gombrowicz's story entitled *Pamiętnik Stefana Czarnieckiego (Diary of Stefan Czarniecki)* (1926). At the end of the story, Stefan confides in the reader, saying: "I wander around the world, I sail through the abyss of incomprehensible idiosyncrasies and wherever I see a mysterious feeling, be it virtue or family, faith or homeland, I always commit some villainy there. This is my secret which I am imposing on the great mystery of being."¹⁵

Let us refer to the secret referred to by the protagonist as Stefan's villainy. From the perspective of ordinary life, Stefan's behavior may be, indeed, described as roguery or villainy. After all, who but a villain would be disturbed by virtue, family, faith or homeland. Stefan is definitely a rascal, but a very peculiar one, since he commits his villainous acts for cognitive purposes. He does not take virtue, family, faith or motherland for granted, but attempts to check whether they still have any value. The next step is either their acceptance or rejection. One could describe Stefan as a villain, that is someone who intentionally uses his cultural competence *not* to reproduce the cultural order in an unreflective manner. However, in fact Stefan uses his villainy in order to bring about a state of temporary cultural anomy. He does so in order to restore order after chaos, but this time on his own terms. Let me stress again that a similarly villainous attitude towards manifestations of organization, order, meaning, objectivity is expected of ethnomethodologists.

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¹⁵ Witold Gombrowicz, *Pamiętnik Stefana Czarnieckiego (Diary of Stefan Czarniecki)*, in Idem, *Bacacay*, ed. Z. Łapiński (Cracow: WL, 2002).

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Part III
Globalization and Crossing Boundaries

10.

Globalization: A Boon or a Bane?

Varghese Manimala

Introduction

Realizing our inter-dependence, we have come together to seek and generate ideas of cooperation and cordiality for building a new world in which boundaries should not be impregnable and their crossing without success. Rather, we need to become harbingers of a new society established in peace, justice, freedom and equality. This may sound high and almost impracticable, as the present day world leaders are self-conceited and megalomaniacs. Although globalization has brought nations together on a wider platform of openness to other cultures and societies, there seems to be a shrinking of space. A lot of encapsulation takes place, resulting in isolation and even anachronistic ways of performance. Many so-called great nations are responsible for this situation, although they do not have the courage and humility to recognize this. As we are persons open to questioning and challenges, we need to raise the question whether as philosophers and social thinkers we remain in the ivory towers of theoretical analysis forgetting the praxis altogether. Where theory is not accompanied by adequate praxis, it becomes a failure, as such a theory fails to challenge the contemporary situation.

Thus, our task should be to challenge ourselves with the question whether crossing the boundaries and fusion of horizons remain on an ideal level or whether they can trickle down to the concrete and practical level of life, affecting the life of the common people so that they can participate in such a process. In this paper, my aim is to ask whether the acclaimed globalization in the West is a boon or a bane. We will analyze this issue quite critically so that we can be impartial observers of the situation and unprejudiced judges. This does not mean that what is expressed is not open to questioning and probing, but we want to draw conclusions not from the point of advantages of a few privileged nations, but from the perspective of the global impact that globalization has brought about, especially on the developing and under-developed nations. Hence, the approach will be more from the victims' point of view than that of the oppressors.

An Analysis of Globalization

Humanity has entered into the new century with the so-called gift of globalization from the previous century. Globalization is a complex and controversial process of world-wide changes in economy, politics and culture. From a particular point of view globalization may be good, if it means to go beyond one's selfishness and limited horizons to reach out to the larger world. This has been made possible, no doubt, by the development of means of communication, travel-facilities, and other achievements of science and technology. But since the concept of globalization is practically only applied to economy, what is aimed at is a single, global economy to the detriment of all developing economies of the world. Thus, globalization is viewed as neo-colonialism, compromising national freedom and involving the total eclipse of indigenous goods produced by the developing and underdeveloped world. While the developed countries sing the praises of globalization, the third world countries have to carry the burden of this phenomenon, as a result of which they almost lose many of their sovereign rights. There is hardly any science which is not influenced by globalization. It is a fashionable concept in the social sciences, among journalists and politicians.

The global and futuristic rhetoric creates a euphoria about technologically determined economic growth as a panacea for all social problems, and the triumph of the Western model of development.¹ In contrast, globalization is criticized by many intellectuals and sociologists in the West and the Third World, including Latin America. This makes it amply clear that globalization is not totally positive, opening up new opportunities for communication and growth, but also negative, being accompanied by a homogenization of culture and a worsening of the ecological crisis, the widening gap between North and South, and the problem of underdevelopment in many regions of the world.²

Very often, social and ethical issues are sidelined in discussions about globalization. The upper and middle classes have a clear-cut economic advantage through globalization; hence they are silent about the disadvantages that globalization brings in its wake. What it promotes is a uniform economy, which requires one or two uniform cultures. Many consider globalization as the third phase of colonization. Local collaboration is essential for this; and lured by the possibility of immediate success and

¹ See Edward Demenshonk, "Intercultural Dialogue and the Controversies of Globalization," presented at an international seminar on "Interaction and Asymmetry Between Cultures in the Context of Globalization," Bangalore, India. Cf. also Varghese Manimala, *Toward Mutual Fecundation and Fulfilment of Religions: An Invitation to Transcendence and Dialogue with a Cosmotheandric Vision* (Delhi: ISPC and Media House, 2009), 149.

² Manimala, *Toward Mutual Fecundation*, 149-150

acquisition of wealth, people and nations are led into the trap of globalization in the narrow sense. There are attractive slogans and the goals appear to be quite palpable; hence people are easily lured into the web. The need of reducing all cultures to a single one – the culture of the free market – is arising. We see that globalization is endorsed by international politics, economics and cultural studies. The predominant tendency is the progressivist, technocratic interpretation of globalization, which describes it as primarily an economically driven process, secured by technology, which in turn determines the political and cultural spheres of society.³

Globalization and Market Economy

The advocates of globalization vociferously assert that the global economy has emerged or is in the process of emerging, that it is dominated by transnational or multinational corporations, and that nation-states, national economies, and cultures are in the process of dissolving or disappearing. Everything is now depending on “webs,” and the newest of these global webs – the Global Cultural Bazar – uses advanced communication technologies in the production and dissemination of mass culture. For some regions, globalization brings unprecedented prosperity, while others experience extreme poverty. Basic to globalization is control over production and over the market for the profit of a few. It requires the acceptance of a new culture that upholds the supremacy of the market and rejects those who are unable to cope with it. The homogenizing effects of the commercial global machine results in the devaluation of original cultures, and the disappearance of traditional communities. The most disturbing aspect of globalization is the polarization between rich and poor nations, and within advanced countries between a privileged minority and growing marginal social groups.⁴ For many people who have been uprooted from their land and traditions, globalization is a threat. As a result, there is a countertendency towards localism in all its forms, the deglobalization of world politics, and the rise of nationalism and ethnic conflicts. The prognosis of a new brave world of the global marketplace is perceived with skepticism and pessimism by well-intended scholars and thinkers. They try to show that the changes in the international economy are much more complex and ambiguous than the champions of corporate globalization imagine. Many scholars argue for a more integral approach which illuminates the overall landscape of economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political relationships.

The controversies of globalization become manifest in relations between industrially developed and underdeveloped countries. Globaliza-

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 151.

tion is an uneven process, and its polarizing effect concentrates the disadvantages on the underdeveloped South. What from a Western perspective looks like a spread of techno-economic know-how from the center to the rest of the world, leading to a global triumph of this model, results for the Third World countries in an additional challenge, complicating even more their economic and socio-cultural situation. They are forced by the twister of globalization to get involved more and more in processes that are out of their control. Economic policy and the rules of the game are set by imperial corporations and the world financial centers, and the peripheral countries are disadvantaged in the global market competition. Contrary to expectation, as a result of the progressive projects of accelerated development and integration of the world economy, sponsored by state elites and technocrats, the gap between advanced and developing countries is widening. As Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods have pointed out, “existing inequalities make more likely that globalization will lead to an increasingly sharp division between ‘core’ states, which share in the values and benefits of world economy and polity, and ‘marginalized’ states, some of which are already branded as ‘failed states’.”⁵

Another feature of globalization is the monopoly over the natural resources, the livelihood of the poor. To ensure control over the natural resources of the South, the countries of the North have in recent years finalized a set of Conventions and Agreements, through which they over-consume the resources but let the poor preserve the environment on their behalf. We refer to certain conventions and agreements like *Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)* signed during the 1992 Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; *The GATT Agreement* signed at Marrakesh, Morocco, on April 15, 1994; and the *Tokyo Protocol on Climate Change*. The CBD was an effort by the rich countries to take control of bio-diversity, most of which is in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The countries of the North have tried to legalize their stand that biodiversity belongs to the whole world. With the acceptance of this principle, they could have controlled the whole biodiversity as a common property. However, most of the countries of the South smelt the rat and came together to prevent such action and asserted their sovereign right over the natural resources. The GATT agreement does not even recognize the sovereign right of the countries of the South, much less that of the local communities. Its agreement on *Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)* allows mutated genes to be patented, though not living organisms in their natural form. Based on its claim that traditional knowledge belongs to the public domain, this agreement denies local communities the right over these organisms. Only what is called inventions can be

⁵ Ibid., 151-152. See Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, *Inequality, Globalization and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

patented. Often the new products are minor modifications of what these communities have preserved. At times, patents are to protect practices that are already prevalent among these communities. Consequently, the communities that have developed these knowledge systems over centuries do not have the right over them, while the corporate sector, which monopolizes biotechnology, patents them on claims of being new inventions. Thus, the economic forces that has until now tried to take control of the natural resources are trying to monopolize the traditional knowledge systems by delegitimizing the communities that have developed them. It is an attack on the very identity, going beyond impoverishment to dehumanization.⁶ As evident from the intention of framing the agreements and promulgating them all over the world, there is absolutely no regard for the people who are affected by these agreements. There is absolutely no trace of dialogue, what is prevailing is pure monologue.

Globalization and Culture

Although many scholars tend to see globalization as a phenomenon of economy and market, a lot of them do not tow this line of thought. They point out that it is more than a question of economy or politics and insist on the importance of culture. Many scholars have shown how globalization has begun with modernity and is driven by cultural or social imperatives. They emphasize the crucial role of universalized culture in the globalization of economy and polity. Globalization is seen as the culturalization of global and symbolic exchanges.⁷

Intrinsic to globalization is a consumerist society. Homogenization of culture, control over information and desensitization of the middle class go hand in hand. Culture is not merely meant the externals like language, music and dance, although they are part of it, but rather a value system, a worldview governing society. It constitutes the identity of community. The present system combines consumerism with a new culture and new laws. With globalization the focus has shifted to imposing a single market economy on the whole world. Change of culture is basic to this process. The tool today is information technology, which is highly manipulated to suit the privileged group. The most important value is consumerism. Linked to it is an absence of alternatives and the powerlessness of those

⁶ Walter Fernandez, "Globalization and the Ethics of a Single Culture," presented at the International Congress on "Interactions and Asymmetry between Cultures in the Context of Globalization," Bangalore, India. See also Manimala, *Toward Mutual Fecundation*, 153-154.

⁷ The ideas of authors such as Roland Robertson, Malcolm Waters, Arjun Appadurai, and various others are very important in this context. They have analyzed at length the impact of globalization on culture.

who lose out. With the de-culturation of persons and communities their very identity is mutated, and thus they find themselves in a quandary.⁸

While there is a growing tendency towards homogenization, as a reaction to it, there is also a growing interest in personal identity, cultural originality, and racial and ethnic differences. An emphasis on individuality and cultural specificity, and the need to protect people from the standardizing pressure of power structures and ideological manipulation overshadows the topic of universality. While some insist on the individuality and specificity of culture, there are others who emphasize the universalistic aspect of culture. It is claimed that there is a twofold process of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism. Today's world represents diversity and unity. Multiculturalism and poly-ethnicity do not exclude forms of cultural unity, but rather change them. An interaction among national societies resulted in the creation of a global culture.⁹

As Robertson has pointed out we have to address the epistemological problem of combining uniqueness and wholeness, discontinuity and continuity. A multi-faceted model of the global whole, which involves an interaction within a "global field" of four axes – individual selves, national societies, the world system of societies, and humankind – needs to be developed. As individuals are quite important in the globalization process, every human being is ultimately an actor of socio-cultural creativity; and the human-centered approach in the understanding of globalization is heuristically fruitful. The problems of multiculturalism and gender are among the factors that stimulated the search for fundamentals. There needs to be a greater effort to understand the globalization processes in a broad cultural perspective. We must take into serious consideration the special role of culture as the realm of human creativity and values which counterpoise the "instrumental rationality" of economy. Culture provides knowledge of both the means and the ultimate ends, and it establishes the human criteria of using techno-economic power for the best, and not for the worst. Thus culture, which is at the center of the human person, has to be taken into greater account if globalization has to become human in some respect.¹⁰

It is necessary to look at cultural globalization from an ethical point of view. As mentioned before, globalization is the third phase of colonialism, to which homogenization of culture is intrinsic. A major consequence of globalization is that the alternatives for the neo-colonial economy developed during the last four decades have been sidelined, in which a sense of powerlessness has overtaken the South, particularly the

⁸ Manimala, *Toward Mutual Fecundation*, 153-154.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 154-155. See Demonchonok, "Intercultural Dialogue and Globalization."

poor in these countries. This brings us to the first major ethical issue about culture and globalization. The role of culture in this global economy has been imposed in the name of the free market to get globalization accepted as the only alternative to ensure high profits for the producer. A sense of powerlessness of the poor is a consequence of the apparent absence of alternatives. It also legitimizes the consumerist society. We find that in most countries the middle class and the elite are the supporters of globalization. They accept foreign economic control as the only alternative; and since it caters to their needs, they view consumerism as being in their interest. The groups that do not fit into a consumerist society have to be excluded from the worldview of the middle class.¹¹

We see that marginalized communities make a transition from exploitation to exclusion. They do not even count as an object of pity. For the value system of the market to be effective, the middle and upper classes need to forget them and abandon all talk of poverty alleviation. The problem is presented in such a way that these classes do not at all feel responsible for it. What is callously propagated is that the poor are responsible for their own situation because they do not know how to respond to the opportunities offered by liberalization and globalization.

Cultural homogenization also has implications for the dominant classes that have for centuries thought of their own culture as genuine and have treated the rest as uncultured or uncivilized. Whenever possible, they have imposed their culture on the subalterns and considered foreign cultures as a threat to their domination. For reasons of survival the subalterns gradually came to a compromise with the colonizers and integrated the imposed culture into their system. However, to the oppressed a search for liberation is intrinsic to their status; an assertion of their culture, whenever possible, is a part of this search. They view an encounter with the outsider as a way of liberation; globalization is such an encounter. But the homogenization that is connected with globalization marginalizes them further instead of taking them towards their liberation. Until now they have been exploited, alienated from their livelihood and turned into suppliers of cheap labor. They are treated as nonhumans because in a global world humans are those who can be integrated into a consumerist society. Thus, the single culture emanating from globalization results in their social dehumanization. As such it goes against their economic right to share in God's creation, to a life with dignity.¹²

The dehumanization that accompanies globalization is also an attack on the identity of the subalterns. To them natural resources are not merely of economic use; they have built an economy, culture, social system, political structures and religious ethos around them. For the new economy the

¹¹ Manimala, *Toward Mutual Fecundation*, 155.

¹² *Ibid.*, 155-156.

sole aim is only profit, and it wants to control all resources under that banner. A culture of productivity is introduced in order to legitimize the alienation of the livelihood of people. The knowledge systems that they developed over centuries have been relegated to the common domain; they have no right over them. The single culture developed in the name of the free market further reinforces their subhuman status. Therefore, the second ethical issue concerns the right of every community to be human. The right to be human in the present context refers to their psychological and social being, their very identity.

In this context, fundamentalism also plays an important role. It is closely linked with market economy and consumerism. Fundamentalism is a mode of diverting middle class attention from the problems of the poor by desensitizing them to impoverishment. We find also in the society a suppression of those who side with the oppressed and give them hope of their liberation. At various stages of history they have used religion as a tool of liberation. Fundamentalism is an attempt to reinsert these people into a system that they perceive as enslaving. Thus, the fundamentalist revival that accompanies the single culture of globalization raises the question about the right and equality of subalterns. The effort to take control of land and other resources in the name of profit, negative employment that deprives people of their economic support and laws that relegate their knowledge systems and resources to the common domain and deprive them of the right over them will affect their very identity as a community. This process is reinforced by the fundamentalist revival that turns religion, which they held to be liberating, into a tool of oppression and subjugation. There is a manipulation of spiritual life, and money is turned into a god. With the pouring in of money churches and places of worship have been sprouting like mushrooms. There is a hidden agenda of globalization in this very process. The religious leaders live a life of affluence betraying their very spiritual role.¹³

Benefits and Disadvantages of Globalization

We would like to briefly indicate the advantages and disadvantages of globalization. We intend to point out a few, without claiming to be exhaustive.

The Benefits of Globalization

There is no doubt that globalization was a blessing to a minority, especially the powerful and socially higher positioned. Also globalization was a blessing in disguise as it brought in its wake the international travel-

¹³ Ibid., 156-157. See Fernandez, "Globalization and Single Culture."

facilities, thus linking nations together, so that the world almost became a global village. This proximity helped people to come to know new countries, cultures and peoples; and this knowledge widened their perspective and helped to go beyond themselves. This was considered as an expansion of one's own small world. This also brought in accessibility of media and means of communication. In the past, communication was so tardy and faulty, that Europe only came to know about the murder of Abraham Lincoln three weeks later, and Asia came to know about it more than two months later. In comparison, today everything that transpires in a small corner of the world becomes available to all people through social media and other means of communication. Even when there is suppression of information, there is the possibility of access to it through the law of the Right to Information. Also when tragedies or natural calamities occur, there are countries that come forward to be of assistance with groups of medicos (e.g., medicos sans borderes) or socially motivated people plunging into action to save people. Spreading of information and knowledge through the know-how process is playing a big role in the informal education of millions of people. The globalization process has also made even simple people aware of gadgets like mobile phones, computers, TV, etc. Through globalization a challenge is offered to be more modern and sophisticated.

The Disadvantages of Globalization

While acknowledging the benefits of globalization, we would like to point out its disadvantages as well, which in fact outnumber the benefits and destroy human life. (1) One of the main disadvantages is the dehumanization of the person. Although a person is a worker by vocation, his/her work has been alienated from him/her and turned into a commodity. One is purely a producer and is paid for one's task, and then the relationship is lost. There is a deprivation of one's dignity. (2) Money and Market have overtaken the importance of the human individual. Everything is calculated in terms of profit, the sole driving force in the economic sphere. (3) There is a colonization thriving at the center of the market economy, and only powerful nations can survive. (4) The culture of consumerism has overtaken all aspects of human life; it has even entered into the ethical and spiritual plane of human being's existence. (5) Ideology plays a big role in the grouping of nations, and nations with similar ideologies are willing to join to oppress the less privileged and seemingly opposed nations (e.g., U.S. and Israel). Blind support is offered to nations even despite their misdeeds, because they are basically part of one's group. (6) Objectivity and truthfulness are of no concern, provided the powerful nations achieve their objective by hook or crook. (7) Spread of nuclear knowhow and empowerment with nuclear weapons go on un-

abated, thus spreading a culture of hatred and oppression. Wars go on unhindered because of false pride of nations, and nations join hands in this, even though they know it is basically evil (e.g., Bush's war on Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.).¹⁴ (8) Globalization is a form of colonization, and can spread a monoculture and fundamentalism.

The Way to Move Ahead

Since globalization has become an inevitable and irreversible process, it is good to ask how to move ahead. We cannot advocate any single pronged solution; various ways need to be thought about to counteract the ill effects of globalization. As a result of globalization the human being is forgotten, and the poor are excluded from society. Even the culture has been so manipulated that it takes the form of fundamentalism and consumerism. Religion is used to support the culture of consumerism and profit. The apparent lack of alternatives reinforces this culture. It is in this context that the option for the poor makes sense as an ethical issue. The forces behind the dominant culture are also the ones that hide the impoverishment of the majority to the benefit of a small minority. Hence, our option in favor of the excluded has to be seen as a major ethical value. Against the present form of globalization that glorifies consumerism and profit, it has to propagate a new form of globalization that takes peoples and nations away from selfish profit seeking in favor of one based on sharing. A new concept of humanity has to be propagated, which questions the marginalization of the majority for the profit of a few. Search for new alternatives is imperative. The present sinful system condemns the majority to a subhuman existence. This search for alternatives involves cooperation with all people of good will. It is not enough to condemn the evils of globalization, one has to proclaim and identify a globalization that is acceptable. From there one needs to go to building up a new society based on the empowerment of the powerless.¹⁵

The necessity of dialogue has become all the more relevant today in the context of globalization, and the consistent oppression that is going on. Neo-colonialism has to be counteracted not merely by the method of attack, but by true propaganda against it. New opportunities to share information and advantages of technology, economy, and education have come to light. At the same time, the ecological crisis, thermonuclear weapons, and the underdevelopment of the Third World have become the global problems threatening the survival and future prosperity of hu-

¹⁴ Bush even claimed that God is asking him to declare war on Iraq. He telephoned to French President, Mitterrand, at midnight and requested him to join the war, and Mitterrand thought that Bush had gone mad.

¹⁵ Fernandez, "Globalization and Single Culture," 16.

manity. These global problems can be managed only before they reach a critical point. The aggravation of these problems can be controlled only by joint efforts of all nations. There is a growing understanding of the nature of these problems, related to the vital interest of millions of people and even to the survival of human race. We who form part of this human race, interrelated and universally bound by planet Earth, will survive or perish together. Hence, humanity needs to make a joint effort to find solutions for the existing global problems. Dialogue is a way of communication and a means of searching for agreement and for a solution to the problems.¹⁶

The tragedies of the last century show the vital necessity as well as the difficulty of dialogue, whether social, cultural, political and international. For the vital interests of humanity, it is necessary to break a traditional pattern – a vicious circle of relations based on force and dominance, on monological, authoritarian dictum and exploitation – and break through towards dialogue and partnership as equals. In short, dialogue has become a vital necessity for humanity, and an imperative for survival and enhancing the quality of life. The positive motivation for dialogue, related to human interests in life enhancement and prosperity, makes it more attractive to people. Humanity is discovering the dialogical nature of human consciousness, language, culture, and social relations. Many contemporary philosophers such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber, José Ortega y Gasset, Emmanuel Levinas, Jürgen Habermas, Karl-Otto Apel, Mahatma Gandhi, etc., have contributed much to the impetus of dialogue through their various theories. I see myself in the other as a mirror, for whom I am also a mirror. Dialogic relations with the other are the necessary conditions of language, meaning, thought, culture, and even existence. As Raimon Panikkar would say: “We are in an interdependent, independent existence.”

Dialogical discourse is also a basis for democratic social relations. The opposite, i.e., monological discourse, is related to a narrow, unilateral way of thinking and authoritarian power (e.g., this is what Trump was trying to impose on North Korea, and on Iran). A deeper understanding of the problem of dialogue requires new, more adequate concepts and approaches. Also the problems of dialogue are not only theoretical but also practical. Dialogue, as a principle of human relations, challenges obsolete, but still predominant in traditional social relations and structures, behavior patterns and stereotypical thinking. The movement from monological centrism towards dialogical polyphonic relations is for many frightening and painful. Such a step will have to face cynicism and obstruction from the powers of those whose interests are based on control, manipulation, and exploitation; they are not interested in dialogical demo-

¹⁶ Manimala, *Towards Mutual Fecundation*, 157-158.

cratic relations because they do not want to share their monopoly of power with others. Perhaps, we are in an interim situation between two ages, in which traditional monological structures are getting obsolete and dysfunctional but still predominant, and a new, dialogical type of relations is embryonic and in the process of formation and maturation.¹⁷

As final concluding words to this paper, I would reiterate what my guru and friend Raimon Panikkar used to say: "If the world has to survive, it is possible only through the mystical dimension." Such a mystical dimension can strike any person at any moment of one's life-experience. Panikkar puts in these beautiful terms his experience: "I left [Europe] as a Christian, found myself a Hindu, and returned as a Buddhist without ceasing to be a Christian."

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¹⁷ Demenshonok, "Intercultural Dialogue and Globalization." See also Manimala, *Towards Mutual Fecundation*, 159.

11.

Dialectics of Followership and Leadership in Relation to Globalization: A Case of Uganda

Robinah S. Nakabo

Introduction

We cannot deny the complex, multidimensional and uneven nature of the globalization process¹ which is considered in different perspectives according to the benefits and risks it imposes on humanity. Some perceive it as widening and deepening the flow of economy, finance and communication,² global interactions or the assumed connection between peoples of the world and the fading of natural and artificial barriers.³ However, the perception for the majority in a country like Uganda is rather the one-way flow of all these aspects, for this widening and deepening means for the least developed countries the export of cheap labor and the erratic consumption of global products. Natural and artificial barriers are not shrinking but rather thickening. Cultural influences for some countries are unidirectional, making many of them experience globalization only from the receiving end (mostly of the risks) instead of actively participating in the various opportunities of exchange. Why is this so? The answer I suggest is the nature of followership in some of these countries because this followership has led to various external influences, from the pre-colonial period, through colonialism to the present. Unless followership is active, effective and exemplary,⁴ Uganda will continue to go through globalization reaping only risks.

Meaningful participation in globalization is hindered by leadership that takes precedence over followership. If the two move in tandem, all people can benefit from globalization opportunities. Followership in this

¹ United Nations, "Meeting the Challenges in an Era of Globalization by Strengthening Regional Development Cooperation," *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* II, no. 1 (June 2004): 113-116.

² Thomas H. Lee and Proctor P. Reid, *Prospering in A Global Economy: National Interests in an Age of Global Technology* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 1991).

³ Solita Monsod, "Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities," unpublished paper (2000).

⁴ Robert E. Kelly, "In Praise of Followers," *Harvard Business Review* (1988): 142-148. Robert E. Kelly, "Combining Followership and Leadership into Partnership," in *Making Organizations Competitive: Enhancing Networks and Relationships Across Traditional Boundaries*, ed. I. K. R. H. Kilmann (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1991), 195-220.

context means the capacity and power with which every citizen is endowed so that she/he can act upon that capacity or exercise her/his power to keep leadership in check. According to Gautam Sen, the major actors in the globalization move are governments and multinational corporations.⁵ In Uganda, governments are a composition of a few leaders and are in most cases not representatives of the general will of the people. For instance, the Over the Top Tax (OTT) imposed on mobile money transfer and access to social media on July 1, 2018 and the constant modification of the constitution of Uganda, illustrate the conflicting interests between those entrusted with the responsibility of making laws, and those most affected by the same laws. The general reaction towards the mentioned laws suggested displeasure with the decisions, but leaders insisted that these are important measures. The question is, important for whom? This is why in all situations where decisions have to be taken to link Uganda to the global community, in this case mobile money transfer and access to social media, followers ought to be very keen and actively engaged in discussions and deliberations leading to such decisions. A representative government demands that the people be consulted. However, this aspect is overlooked or where consultation takes place, it is a formality which fails to collect representative views of the people.⁶

This paper is divided into four sections starting with a discussion of the pitfalls of globalization as an outward approach to development, the opportunities promised by globalization, a history of globalization in Uganda, and lessons learnt from elsewhere.

Inward or Outward, Which One First?

As a strategy towards development, there has been a tendency to look outward for assistance, a move that has facilitated the entrenchment of various global influences in Uganda. By outward I mean turning attention towards external sources of assistance or following externally designed programs and experiences beyond what exists within a nation, while inward means turning attention towards resources that exist within a nation's natural and human capacities as well as the results developed from those capacities. Julius K. Nyerere once stressed to his people in Tanzania that what they had was the land and the people as the only greatest resources which they had to utilize maximally instead of depending on outside assistance.⁷

⁵ Gautam Sen, "Is Globalization Cheating the World's Poor?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2000): 86-106.

⁶ Research is necessary to determine how effective and representative these consultative meetings are.

⁷ Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 49.

Globalization in sub-Saharan Africa by its nature tends to divert minds towards an outward focus on most aspects of a nation, thereby neglecting internal potentialities, afflictions and opportunities, especially concerning the role of citizens as followers in moving a nation forward. The rush to the external inhibits and frustrates internal capacities. The fact that only key people in leadership positions are mandated to make connections with the outside world and to make decisions on behalf of the majority, requires a high degree of professionalism and patriotism. This position requires the kind of leadership to be just⁸ and accountable.⁹ Although Plato provided features to identify ideal leaders, apart from mentioning that few can be guardians of the state and others simply have to follow, he did not give equal time to spell out the required natures of followership. Rousseau too pointed out that it is utopian to think that all citizens can assume leadership positions,¹⁰ but did not elaborate on the need for liberated followership. Since some sub-Saharan cultures emphasize on the rift between leaders and followers, leaders “have no reason to fear the judgment of the people,”¹¹ many ills are resulting from this neglect of followers and their needs or from considering only the priorities of the rich, who are fewer in number and exercise their power at the expense of the poor.

The challenge is therefore for followers to be vigilant in demanding for a balance between the inward and outward exploration of opportunities presented by globalization. This argument counters the one raised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)¹² that much of East Asia witnessed considerable development with outward policies as opposed to Latin America and Africa whose economies stagnated, resulting in an increase of poverty and inflation during the 1970s and 1980s. They rally behind Hegel and Marx as cited by Sen in arguing that some societies are in “stagnant equilibrium.”¹³ Sen points out that benefits from globalization are possible from internal forces: “The catalytic stimulus for the capitalist development of the non-industrial world could instead originate internally rather than due to an external ‘globalizing’ dynamic [...]”¹⁴ This aligns well with this paper’s argument.

⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. B. Jowett (1998), Section VI, Etext#1497.

⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (London: Profile Books, 2014), 24, 40.

¹⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Pinguin Books, 1968), 112

¹¹ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism/Uhuru Na Ujamaa: A Selection from Writings and Speeches 1965-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 26.

¹² IMF Staff, *Globalization: Threat or Opportunity* (April 12, 2000), www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2000/041200to.htm.

¹³ Sen, “Is Globalization Cheating the World’s Poor?,” 89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90

In agreement with Sen, who further notes that “[...] political stability resulting from the security and self-confidence of a ruling order [...]”¹⁵ is essential for bringing about economic development promised by globalization, I argue that this alone yields only a partial fulfillment of the task at hand. Security and self-confidence can only manifest themselves fully if followers are equally actively engaged in bringing about security and providing self-confidence, which the ruling order so badly needs. The shortsightedness that Sen refers to can melt away by simply developing an exemplary and, most importantly, a liberated type of followership at all levels of society. It might be complex to have this realized, but the citizens themselves ought to place themselves on the agenda. If economic transformation calls for more international economic interaction, followership must be among the major actors not limiting it to governments and multinational corporations. Since followers are the key in implementing the activities that yield products potentially destined for international markets, they should demand equal consideration in decisions that shape globalization politics at least at the national level. One way or another they should empower themselves to do so.

Regarding the inward-outward argument it is unwise to expect success with outward policies when there is strife within. The 1970s and 1980s were such a volatile period for Ugandans when their different leaders contributed to causing bloodshed and mayhem,¹⁶ whereas the situation was not the same in East Asia. At that time, Uganda as a nation had first to regain peace and stability, bring down discord levels, and then consider outward policies. This was indeed possible with the advent of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in 1986. However, even with that possibility on the table, it is evident that some pertinent elements necessary for a meaningful maximization of globalization opportunities were (are) not present. This especially regards appropriate¹⁷ democratic practices. Undemocratic practices such as tribalism/ethnicism,¹⁸ nepotism, repatriation and all other forms of corruption¹⁹ pose a grave danger to the maximization of opportunities. Perhaps the gravest of such is the appointment of the first lady Janet Museveni as the minister of education. These practices create divisions among the populace. This is why followership has

¹⁵ Ibid., 92

¹⁶ Joel D. Barkan, “Uganda: An African ‘Success’ Past Prime? Challenges and Change in Uganda” (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: Africa Program, 2005), 9-25, <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/challenges-and-change-uganda>.

¹⁷ By appropriate, I refer to democratic practice that highly values equal participation, respects freedoms, dignity and autonomy.

¹⁸ Mamood Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 23-25.

¹⁹ Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, 80-90.

to be more vigilant by checking in on leadership to see whether everyone is to benefit from the opportunities of globalization.

Regarding the questions of the IMF how poor nations can be helped, whether globalization exacerbates their conditions, or whether these nations are made more vulnerable to instabilities, I suggest looking into the nature and construction of followership. Certain recommendations and practices may not apply to sub-Saharan Africa due to the characters, environments and histories of people which may either limit or encourage opportunities for globalization. In this case, the nature and character of followership are deterrents to the exploitation of global opportunities.

According to Lee and Reid,²⁰ those who benefit from globalization opportunities do not link their benefit to globalization while those who lose out blame globalization as unfair. This might be true to an extent. However, it is simplistic to continue blaming forces beyond an individual nation's control. Globalization forces are propelled by numerous complex factors. This implies that histories, circumstances and individual characters both of the past and the present be reexamined as a way of dealing with today's challenges and adequately prepare for the future. Ahyatollahy rightly says that we are not passive, but rather have a choice to select best options in this complex process of globalization.²¹ Although his argument is directed towards a polemic in religion, media and globalization, it also applies to the followership on which this paper focuses. Followers are characters who need to understand their role by critically reflecting on, and actively taking up globalization opportunities. As Lee and Reid point out, if citizens are unable to make use of opportunities, globalization benefits will pass them by.²² They multiply risks for themselves, and yet are unable to afford quality measures to mitigate such risks, particularly those related to health and natural environmental destruction. It is best they consciously reap some considerable benefits in the process of accumulating unintended and unavoidable risks.

Followers need to vigilantly follow trends, new opportunities and potential dangers. The nature of followership practiced by the majority of citizens determines the level of costs that accrue from decisions made by leadership in outward policies. Leaders in Uganda are incapable of shielding their followers from the dangers of advancing globalization such as genetically modified organisms and women's beauty products on the market. If a country has insufficient human skills, many are sheep/passive, or alienated, pragmatists will take over decisions depending on their self-

²⁰ Thomas H. Lee and Proctor P. Reid, *Prospering in A Global Economy: National Interests in an Age of Global Technology* (Washington, DC: The National Academies of Engineering, 1991).

²¹ H. Ayatollahy, "The Role of Media in the Threats and Opportunities of Globalization for Religion," *Journal of Media and Religion* 7, no. 1-2 (2008): 34-44.

²² Lee and Reid, *Prospering in A Global Economy*.

interested pursuits. The costs will continue to rise for generations to come instead of paving the way for enjoying opportunities of globalization. It is therefore critical to develop inward capacities, to allow for individual initiative to grow so that meaningful followership emerges for the maximum enjoyment of globalization benefits.

Opportunities Promised by Globalization

Globalization brews an emotive force and promises many benefits²³ especially in economic, political and social areas.²⁴ Specifically, it opens up spaces, creates bridges and provides benchmarks for democratic political practice, at least for sub-Saharan Africa. It is crucial to recognize the benefits in accessibility to information and communication technology (ICT) in this process, which in turn have opened up other opportunities in the areas of education, health, environmental conservation and cultural exchanges. Women empowerment and attention to various human rights violations are also examples of the benefits of globalization. Similarly, jobs have been created to boost the incomes of many Ugandans. However, these benefits are unevenly distributed, resulting in inequitable shares of benefits and risks amongst global participants,²⁵ while some are gaining superfluously from access to ICT, trade, financial transfers and the like, others only hear about them or are even unacquainted with their existence. The government abolished the OTT having realized its unviability and with effect from July 1, 2021, all Internet users pay a 12% tax on data packages atop the 18% Value Added Tax (VAT). More people are going to lose out on accessible and affordable information exchange.

Global goods and services are flowing into the country before they are demanded. And although Ugandans contribute little to the world market besides cheap labor and a few raw-products for export, consumption of those goods is based more on impulse than need. As multinational corporations are gaining land and tax breaks in Uganda, the damage to the environment cannot be equated to the profits reaped in the process. This explains why Ugandans, who should be among those celebrating globalization, in fact lament the damage that continues unhindered. Indeed, Sen rightly puts it that “limited political salience,” together with governments’ interest that “placates very much wealthier foreigners,”²⁶ impedes the globalization benefits that would go to the poor. Is it still globalization? It might still be, as we get to taste what others are sharing. But in the event

²³ IMF Staff, “Globalization: Threat or Opportunity,” Section I.

²⁴ Amartya Sen, “10 Truths about Globalization,” www.mail-archive.com/pen-I@galaxy.csuchico.edu/msg59500.html (July 14, 2001), paragraph 5.

²⁵ IMF Staff, “Globalization: Threat or Opportunity,” Sections III-V.

²⁶ Sen, “Is Globalization Cheating the World's Poor?,” 95.

that some nations bring nothing significant to the table but impulsive appetites to consume, what kind of globalization is that; is there a global-consumptionization in sub-Saharan Africa?

Global-consumptionization, in this case, refers to the indiscriminate tendency towards desiring and/or accumulating foreign products both tangible and intangible, whether consciously or unconsciously in pursuit of a good life. It is true that happiness is in giving not receiving. Those who contribute meaningfully to the global market reap benefits more than those who show up with big consumption appetites. Although we qualify as global-consumers, the quality of what is consumed is questionable. It is like a testing or trial ground for inventions and innovations without signed consent. This is in the form of material goods, services, foreign investors and professional human capital. Who is really sure of the quality? The leaders determine, through certain institutions, what comes on the market. The rest only waits to dig into their pockets several times with a never quenchable thirst for more. However, economic progress promised by globalization is crawling at a snail pace, yet the “inter-national division of labor”²⁷ is quickly evident. Is globalization perceived, interpreted and shaped on level ground?

Uganda’s Historical Experience of Followership and ‘Global-Consumptionization’

It is true that globalization is not a new phenomenon.²⁸ If the globalization process involves the flow of ideas, people, goods, services and capital across borders,²⁹ most of sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, has long been experiencing globalization. This has been the case in terms of trade, cultural invasion, foreign religious contact, and political experiences. This was neatly branded as civilization.³⁰ Benefits are visible in education, health skills, and various information technological transfers (ITTs). From the earliest traders to present day neo-capitalists, Uganda has been exposed to globalization. What Uganda has had to offer on the global market is its favorable climate for agricultural raw materials for colonialists, cheap labor as well as the hospitality of Ugandan peoples, which enable the influx of whatever guests desire to share. The challenge is that the pace at which the sharing is done now is many times faster than before. This pace also drives consumption appetites. Whereas in earlier days leaders had opportunities and took time to consult with followers and

²⁷ Ibid., 86.

²⁸ Sen, “10 Truths about Globalization,” paragraph 4.

²⁹ United Nations, “Meeting the Challenges,” 113

³⁰ Though tempted to question what and for whom this civilization is, what parameters are used for measurement, this will be a question for another day.

probably deliberate with them on issues before decisions were taken, nowadays leaders make little effort for deliberations. While it is still debated whether an item is worthy to enter the country, that item has already been smuggled into the country through the back door. Most of the times, deliberations are rushed for accountability purposes but not exhaustively reflected upon. Many leaders are more concerned not to frustrate investors as mentioned above, or money sources, than their reputation, followers, environment and future generations. Perhaps this is not new as well.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate the point made above. When Kabaka Mwanga in Buganda signed the letter inviting missionaries to come to Uganda, was there a possibility of letting Ugandan traditional religious people share their knowledge of worship? When mirrors, beads and other petty shiny objects were presented to Ugandans, what was taken in exchange? What was the value of what was taken in exchange to what was given? Who determined what was to be exchanged? The sharing relationship from the beginning started off on a wrong footing. As soon as foreigners had stumbled on African soil, they investigated what was valuable, while Africans had no such opportunity of investigating what they possessed.

By all means, like blind people moving around in the forest, Ugandans were moving around in this global exchange with little cognizance, if at all, of what they were getting into apart from the few shiny objects. They were ignorant of the value of both what they were receiving and what they were giving away. The hospitable character of especially the Baganda people, together with their passive/sheep followership style already mentioned in previous sections, played a trick on all the others. Again, the foreigners were quick to study this and put it to their own advantage. It is this naive hospitality and passive/sheep followership style that opened the flood-gates to blind invitation of more foreigners. It led to foreign political control, laying the country down for easy plunder and exposure to new cultures, religions and information. The alterations were effectively, intensively and extensively carried out in such a way that by the time anti-colonial protests started, the damage (or possible opportunities) was irreversible. The challenge is that Ugandans were not quick to realize and therefore to harness these potential opportunities. Since a few people sat at the negotiation tables, and majority followers waiting for their decisions, the ignorance and naivety of the few leaders cost Ugandans various resources. The famous Uganda martyrs, and the attempt to get rid of Asians, for example, by Kabaka Daudi Chwa and Amin in 1972,³¹ are some reactionary efforts that resulted from effects of

³¹ Oliver Furley, "Education in Post-Independent Uganda: Change Amidst Strife," in *Uganda Now: Between Decay and Development*, ed. H. B. Twaddle (London: J. Currey; Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1988), 182.

passive/sheep followership and blind global-consumption. Reactions that came too late so that they were instead more injurious at the time. Even with such a history, there is less reflection on nuanced globalization trickery tendencies. Thus, with blind followership of main decision makers, history is to repeat itself.

Much of what took place shortly after the independence in 1962 is a clear evidence of the passive/sheep followership and the inequitable exchange during colonialism. All institutions that were in place were practically useless to the local people by design. Political structures were designed for foreign control, education was meant for cultural erosion and creating dependency, while the role of religion is contentious. Trade was mainly to satisfy unquenchable short-term bodily needs invented on arrival of products; whereas information was to create illusions of a mysterious world desirable for all Ugandans. It is no wonder that, for many years, blood shed and mayhem have dominated the political scene.

Until 1986 when the National Resistance Movement came to power, there was war, insecurity, scarcity, disease and the like. It almost sounds justifiable for President Museveni to brag about having introduced peace and security in Uganda. However, as Rousseau³² once noted, even in dungeons there is peace, but no one wishes to reside there. This peace might be undeclared war. While Uganda has been in power of Mr. Museveni and his regime for more than three decades, many issues began revealing the inequitable share in globalization opportunities. When in power, his main goals included revamping the economy, establishing peace and security, and introducing democratic governance. He seemed on track and many followed him religiously for the first five years in power. Observers commended him on having achieved the first two, but questioned his efforts on the last goal.³³

His challenges spring from the fact that he inherited a country that was not only damaged in its relations with identifying and exploiting globalization opportunities, but also with the blind followership. Already wounded from war and economic struggles, the solution was to harsh up the followers while they opened their eyes to the outside world for any assistance. Anything new coming up with minimal promise of salvation, people were ready to embrace with little or no deliberations and reflection. Such was the case with Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), affirmative action, *bona baggagawale* (operation wealth creation), *bonna basome* (education for all). Policies have been put in place to encourage foreign investors, and diplomatic relations established only with several countries, like China. All these are outward looking with imports and

³² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 54

³³ Barkan, "Uganda: An African 'Success' Past Prime?," 9.

exports in an asymmetric relation. If that is compared with what is sent out in value, one realizes that little has changed from the exchanges during pre-colonial and colonial periods.

Lessons from Elsewhere

Slaughter and Leslie³⁴ indicate that when the United States realized that it was challenged by the international market, the reaction was to retrospectively investigate the best options to create a niche on the global market. The solution was found in developing capacities that yielded technological progress which spear-headed further developments. It is this complex, autonomous, and adaptable kind of progress³⁵ that Uganda can learn from the US. Lee and Reid³⁶ make a number of suggestions for policy makers in the US, as far as harnessing opportunities from globalization is concerned. Suggestions prioritize development of human capital, building consensus, and involving the public and civil society among others. These are critical elements that are weak in Uganda. If we take the example of current topics under discussion in the country, where the public opinion suggests the reduction of the tax on data packages and mobile money transfers, these are important aspects, as already explained, in advancing globalization benefits. Mr. Museveni however, together with a handful of supporters see it differently. When the judiciary towards the end of July 2018 made a ruling that members of parliament (MPs) should not extend their term of office from five to seven years of service, Mr. Museveni again, like he has done numerous times, came out strongly against the judicial ruling. His argument was that MPs need the first two years to orient to their duties. This has serious implications on the quality of MPs in the first place and puts into question the interests of the President. These examples clearly show lack of consensus, weak human capital especially at top leadership levels, but most importantly, very weak and passive kind of followership.

It might be argued that what Uganda and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa needs is a good institutional framework. The three institutions, a strong state, rule of law and democratic accountability, that Fukuyama suggests are vital for development. If these institutions have been developed and have shown a potential of propelling different nations to prosperity, Fukuyama argues that not all states can go through similar pathways of development. Certainly, though globalization provides opportu-

³⁴Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

³⁵Fukuyama, "Political Order and Political Decay," 97-107

³⁶Lee and Reid, "Prospering in A Global Economy."

nities to learn from the histories of others, this does not imply appropriating systems and implementing them without due cognizance of why and how such systems evolved. Copying and pasting such institutions – “stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior that persist beyond the tenure of individual leaders”³⁷ but ignoring the nuances in histories of different nations can impede their effective and efficient operationalizing. Although Fukuyama thinks that nations are not trapped by their histories, colonialism in all its forms has trapped Sub-Saharan Africa, so much so that ill appropriation of foreign institutional frameworks damages instead of salvaging these nations. “The agency role of the individual as a member of the public and as a participant in economic, social and political actions”³⁸ is important especially in those decisions that open up nations to global interaction. This is why this paper suggests active and liberated followership to supplement existing institutions.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Globalization is here to stay, it is complex and tends to lure or cajole all into the snares set by its numerous tentacles. Its determination to provide no escape routes is not indicative of helplessness on the part of its victims. However, in the event that Ugandans are faced with an endemic degree of ignorance, passivity and laxity in political matters where decisions are debated, there cannot be meaningful globalization. Every situation moves along with its risks. However, saliency in political matters in all spheres of life provides safety nets, avenues for minimizing risks. This is why this paper has strongly argued for active followership because leadership alone is not enough to consider all necessary interests of the people they govern in relation to globalization benefits. There is a call for compassion and help from external sources, initiatives must be generated from within and supplemented by external advice or assistance.

As a way of benefiting from globalization, to curb consumption and increase space on the global market for meaningful exchange, there is need for further research into the nature of followership in Uganda as it dialectically relates to leadership especially in matters that link the country to the outside world. There has been too much focus on the risks of globalization. The noise of the risks deafens one from the potential benefits, partly due to low political salience of followers. This creates fear and timidity in attempting to explore existing opportunities. It is also dependent on the quality of education that raises individuals’ interests in matters that promise socio-economic improvement. Like the US, which has in-

³⁷ Fukuyama, “Political Order and Political Decay,” 6.

³⁸ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 189-203.

vested enormously in developing individual initiatives and innovations, there must be a balance between promoting both social and individual initiatives. There must be a considerable level of autonomy and freedom to take cognizance of and exploit potential globalization opportunities for every citizen. This in a way translates into meaningful followership to counter negative leadership excesses.

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12.

Culture and Globalization: Dialogue through Self-Giving

Asha Mukherjee

Introduction

Globalization is not a dream but a reality. Although it provides our everyday life with a sense of great achievement, globalization also divides people, giving rise to localities and various challenges including the process of globalization itself.

Globalization is basically about connectivity, everyone is to be connected with everyone – not only for needs but also for sharing pleasure and joy. Through connectivity we realize that not only our parts of the country are beautiful and prosperous, but other parts of the world are also equally beautiful. People enjoy their festivals, have their own celebrations, food, dresses and so on, even though there are many differences. This feeling of connectedness and sharing brings us closer to each other; we become neighbors in each other's yard by way of having television in our bedroom or mobile phones in our hands. This relatedness of the self gives us joy but also animosity. Just as globalization brings us together, it also divides people with a sense of loss, thus urging people to look for individual and cultural identity. Individuals feel lost in popular culture because such culture focuses on nation building through various representations of cultures with the basic concern to represent shared roots, although this idea of shared roots is illusory due to existing diversity and plurality. For example, Hindi movies across India give the impression that we are sharing the same culture, but this is artificial and constructed. McDonald's, Coca-Cola, all sorts of advertisements and the whole range of media are an example of how shared experiences are constructed. Internet, Facebook, etc., seem to be about the individual, but are rather about an imagined community as opposed to the historical community. As part of this shared identity selfie culture is about expanded identity in a vacuum, for ultimately it is about self-reinforcing narratives of the self.

As a consequence, nation and state are divided in the process of globalization, leading to differences and conflicts. We often feel that cultures are getting lost in the jungle of externalities. Can the everyday practical culture of local inhabitants giving way to global market products define globalization? Do we essentially need a deeper dialogue as part of globalization and not just exchange of consumer goods? I will mainly focus on this question in my paper and look for an answer using Rabindranath

Tagore's ideas on World Literature.¹ World literature, according to him, connects "everyone else in the broadest way." Drawing from the Indian tradition, I will argue that a deeper dialogue of cultures can take place by the process of "self-giving," helping us to a large extent to overcome the crises of global times and to survive, to remain meaningful and mutually beneficial. Through literature we can connect ourselves with each other in a much deeper way.

Home and the World

Tagore's lifelong writings can be summarized with the words "home and the world," which denote three overlapping but distinct levels of society – the domestic sphere vs. the public sphere, the community vs. larger society, and the nation-state vs. the rest of the world. All these intersecting levels create insiders and outsiders and boundaries that are constructed to create freedom for some at the cost of excluding others. Tagore attempted to contest all kind of dichotomies or boundaries in order to create harmony and connectedness similar to the idea that the personal is political. Let me begin with his distinction between nation and state.

Tagore's interpretation of The History of India² is the journey towards internationalism. For him the history of India is the history of harmonization. He wanted to show that "India did not have a political history but a cultural ideal." His vision of India's history is that:

History of India does not belong to a particular race but to a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed – the Dravidians and the Aryans, the Ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those central Asia. And last now has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither have the right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India. Therefore, what I say about the Nation has more to do with the history of Man than especially with that of India.³

Tagore argues that the political history of the West is actually a history of nation-states and so a history of greed, aggression, and therefore, must be self-defeating. He writes:

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, "Visva-sahitya," *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1936-37): 1-10.

² Satyendranath Ray, "Bharatbarsher Itihas," in Satyendranath Ray, *Rabindranather Swadeshchinta* (New Delhi: Granthalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1988).

³ Sisir Kumar Das and Sukanta Chaudhuri, eds., *Selected Writings on Literature and Languages* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 423-4.

The Nation of the West forges its iron chains of organization which are the most relentless and unbreakable that have been ever manufactured [...] not merely (for) the subject races, but you who live under the delusion that you are free, are everyday sacrificing your freedom and humanity to the fetish of nationalism.⁴

The cultural history of India is actually the unfolding of universal humanity. Tagore proposed a free dialogue of world cultures in his early essays on nationalism, published in 1917. In these essays he makes a distinction between the spirit and the nations of the West. The material success of the West is accompanied by spiritual poverty. People may form a group for material and economic gains but “society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself.” It is a spontaneous self-expression of man, a natural regulation of human relationship of cooperation to develop ideals of life. The material and mechanical concept based on greed of wealth and power which is called nation can never have a limit. “We Indians must remember that we are ‘Individuals with living sensibilities’.” We must remember that the spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and the center of Western nationalism. While talking of Japan, India and China, Tagore says that Eastern Asia has followed its own path which is “not political but social, not predatory and mechanically efficient, but spiritual and based upon the varied and deeper relations of humanity.” He contends that India “has never had a real sense of nationalism” and he hopes that the West would discover its true self, that is, by “teaching the ignorant and helping the weak.” In his essay “Meeting of the East and West” he recognizes the underlying humanism of the West after reading an English poem that he calls “the calling the massage of the heart.” But he was equally perturbed by the great countries in the 1930’s preparing for a war, spreading poison all over the world. He says “this poison is within our own selves.” Referring to the West he says: “They try, and try to find some solution, but they do not succeed, because they have lost faith in personality of man.” He also argues that West is necessary for the East:

We are complimentary to each other because of our different outlooks upon life, which have given us different aspects of truth. Therefore, if it is true that the spirit of the West has come upon our fields in the guise of a storm, it is nevertheless scattering living seeds that are immortal. And when in India we become able to assimilate in our lives what is permanent in Western civilization we shall be in position to bring about reconcilia-

⁴ Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: MacMillan, 1917), 16-19.

tion of these two great worlds. Then will come to an end the one-sided dominance, which is galling.⁵

Tagore on *Visvasahitya* (World Literature) as Self-Giving and Relating to Others

Tagore's essay *Visvasahitya* (World Literature) was written in Bengali and first translated into English by Surendranath. Tagore published it in *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* 1936-37, and then it was published again by Sisir Kumar Das and Sukanta Chaudhuri in 2001. In 2013, it was again translated by Rijula Das and Makarand R. Paranjape in *Rethinking Tagore*. This essay clearly presents his views on man, the purpose of human life and the role of arts in its fruition – human creativity.

Everywhere, the universe reveals in such joyous self-giving which exceeds any functional requirement of necessity. It is this plentitude of surplus that is beautiful and joyous; the artist in his/her self-giving is thus a part of the fundamental tendency of nature itself. We may call this the surplus value of art theory in which Tagore believes and enunciates so eloquently in this essay. Tagore contends that it is only in connecting with “everyone else in the broadest way” can we free ourselves:

Man is breaking and re-making himself only to voice himself in the universal. [...] we reveal ourselves in literature more profoundly than in mundane activities of self-interest and self-preservation. Moreover, it is only by giving ourselves to others that we can know or express ourselves. Such self-giving is effortless and joyous because in it lies the realization of our own nature.⁶

There are three ways through which we relate to the world according to Tagore – connection of the intellect, connection of the need and the connection of joy. The first lies in the way a scientist relates to the material world, in the understanding and discovering of laws and mysteries of nature. In doing so nature realizes itself. The second is the self that relates in need to others; when our self-interest motivates our connection with the world, we know and understand ourselves and others more, yet the barrier remains. But in joy, there is no doubt that it is direct experience. Joy lies in self-giving not in self-interest. We cannot realize ourselves without some form of self-giving and relating to others. “On our own we remain

⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, “Nationalism,” in *English Writings of Tagore*, vol. II, ed. S. K. Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1996).

⁶ Makarand Paranjape, “Tagore’s Concept of World Literature” in *Rethinking Tagore*, eds. B. R. Ananthan and M. G. Hegde (Belagavi: Prasaranga Rani Channamma University, 2013), 311.

restricted and unfulfilled. In fact, the sole purpose of our talents is to know others and give ourselves to them; without that we cannot reach the truth of our being, our human condition.”⁷ By extending the limits of the traditional Vedanta framework, which sees self being contained in and of itself, Tagore accepts the reality of the phenomenal world as essential for self-completion. The great souls need to do work for others. “Tagore considers knowing oneself through and among others as the *dharma* or categorical imperative of our times.” We cannot shut ourselves but have to know ourselves through and among others as our prime *dharma*. Self-interest is not the highest way of relating to others, and so is in the case of the relation of the intellect to the world. In creativity, joy, beauty the relation is of a different kind. The former is calculating, the latter is giving and liberating. The relationship of joy with the world is an outcome of the soul’s deep involvement in fullness. For a heart seeking to express itself, the world is full of enjoyment, relish and beauty which is “transmitted into its own creative self-giving that takes the form of literature or art.” Thus we, even at the risk of all practical values, participate in joyous sacrifice (*Ananda-yajna*) of life. Our heart’s deepest urge can only be realized in its meeting the outside world in an act of self-giving through which Tagore says:

The flower, we see is in no hurry to become seed; it transcends its need and blooms beautifully; the clouds do not rush off after raining, they languorously and needlessly catch our eyes with their colors; the trees do not stick-like spread their arms outwards as beggars for light and shower, but green thickets of leaves fill the horizon with their bounty; the sea, we notice, is not an immense office that transport water [...] and the mountain not only feeds water to the rivers of the earth but like Rudra deep in yoga, still the fears of those who cross the skies-then we find the *hridaya-dharma* (the heart-purpose) of the world. Then ever-wizened intellect asks, why this careless expenditure in needless efforts? The ever-young heart answers, just because it pleases me; I see no other reason.⁸

Again:

The heart knows: There is one heart that expresses itself every moment in the universe. Why else there would be so much beauty, music, gestures, signs, and signals, so much decoration across creation? [...] if the world was not flavorful (*rasamay*) we would have been small, insulted beings. Our hearts would

⁷ Ibid., 315.

⁸ Ibid., 317.

say, I am not invited to the world's sacrifice (*yajna*). But the whole world, surpassing its various duties has brimmed over with joy and is telling the heart, in so many different way, I want you; in laughter I want you, in tears I want you, in fear I want you, in assurance I want you, in anger I want you, in peace I want you. It finds its self-expression and fulfillment.⁹

Thus, in the act of self-giving of heart one finds its joyous self-expression in the world, realizing itself in the process of relating to others through uncalculating relish. The microcosm and the macrocosm are harmonized; their oneness is re-established through beauty and bliss all over the world. In this sense, literature is not the expression of an individual's creativity, instead it is the articulation of universal man (*Visva-Manav*), the essence of human nature as found in all ages and all people of the world, the deepest expression. Writers as being of all human persons, express the pain of every person. For Tagore, "world literature is the way in which the soul of man expresses its joy through the written word and the forms which he chooses to give to his eternal being."

India-China: An Example of Self-Giving and Relating to Each Other

Chinese intellectuals discovered Tagore much before he received the Nobel Prize in 1913. Tagore was the first Asian to receive such honor, and the Chinese could relate themselves with Tagore's writings especially due to the collapse of ancient monarchy and the uncertainties of the new born Republic. Influenced by the new Western ideals Tagore and Chinese intellectuals both were struggling to find ways to reconcile modern and ancient wisdoms. Tagore's ideas and China's modern awakening complemented each other and a new cultural movement that began in 1919 in China was met with equal enthusiasm.¹⁰

Seeing the merits and relevance of Tagore's poetry to China's awakening, Tagore's poems were translated and published in the journal *Shao-nian Zhongguo* (Young China) of the Young China Association founded by the Chinese Communist Movement, in particular by Li Dazhao, the Peking University librarian who was the member of the group including Mao Zedong. These translations stood for a serious realization of the power of the word of progressive thinking and of the patriotic appeal in Tagore's works.

⁹ Ibid., 317.

¹⁰ Tan Chung and Wei Liming, "China,," in *One Hundred Years of Global Reception*, eds. Martin Kampchen and Imre Banga (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2014), 38.

Chen Duxiu's translation of "Where the Mind is without Fear" from *Gitanjali*:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
 Where knowledge is free;
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow
 domestic walls;
 Where words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
 desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought
 and action;
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.¹¹

Chen with his mastery in adaptation translated this poem in Chinese. Just like in India, this poem inspired innumerable people to struggle for independence. In China, Chen selected it as the "song of Volunteers" (*Yiyongjun jinxingqu*) now the national anthem of China.

There are many other examples, such as three short stories of Tagore, *Holiday*, *Kabuliwala* and *Vision*, which were translated in 1917 in *Funu zazhi* (Women's Journal), the first ever journal started by Chinese women in 1915, and published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai. These translations extended Tagore's empathy for women's suffering, to which Chinese women would relate. In 1921, 1923 and 1924 several translations of Tagore's writings were published in Chinese.

We find translations of Tagore's writings in almost all the languages of the world, true to the spirit of his concept of world literature. To conclude, these examples are proof of the articulation of universal man's (*Visva-Manav*) essence, which have found in all ages and all people of the world as the deepest expression. For Tagore, world literature is the way in which the soul of the human person expresses its joy through the written word and the forms which one chooses to give to one's eternal being.

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¹¹ Rabindranath Tagore, "Song of Volunteers" (*Yiyongjun jinxingqu*), 35th poem, in Idem, *Gitanjali*, trans. Chen Duxiu.

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Non-Power Ethics in an Autonomous Digital Technology

Mikhael Dua

Introduction

Digital technology has assisted human beings in connecting with a vast virtual community in which human communication can be freely built around cultural identities, religions and races. This dream-like view appears to be true in the face of social media. Through the various internet-based platforms such as blogs (e.g., Blogspot, Wordpress, Tumblr), social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn, VK, Renren), user-generated content sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, Youku), microblogs (e.g., Twitter, Weibo), and wikis (e.g., Wikipedia),¹ social media can be used as new ways to promote democracy, cooperation, and sharing. For it provides a wider discussion-space, which is identified as a virtual public sphere based on the principles of equality and brotherhood. It is in the world of digital networks rather in a never ending horizontal communication that we find ourselves.

This optimistic tone toward digital technology reaches its peak in a famous work of Nicholas Negroponte entitled *Being Digital*. As a strong proponent of digital technology, he portrays human beings living in a digital age based on information. For Negroponte, the digital life is realized in three basic features.² First, everyone will be living in a space without place. Digital information overcomes geographic boundaries and the dependence on place and time. In front of a computer screen, one may find oneself to be in Jakarta listening to Russian music or to Javanese songs from Toronto. We find ourselves situated in imaginary spaces made possible by the digital transportation technology. Second, face-to-face meeting or telephoning is no longer reliable. Computers have alternated these personal meetings into an online process where everyone can communicate via email, which can be operated anywhere and anytime. Third, information and ideas may be achieved without relying on a single medium. Information movement through various media has enabled the process of

¹ Christian Fuchs, *Critical Theory of Communication: New Readings of Lukacs, Adorno, Marcuse, Honneth and Habermas in the Age of the Internet* (London: University of Westminster Press, 2016), 113.

² Nicolas Negroponte, *Being Digital* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), 163-168.

translation from one dimension to another, from one time and space or culture to another.

Yet, this optimistic view of digital technology does not prevent some objections to be expressed. Neil Postman penned a book entitled, *Amusing our Selves to Death*, in which he reveals that after the introduction of cell phones, we have stopped belonging to a community, for we are no longer living the value of togetherness. He argues that although digital technology does not ban democracy, too many trivial data have sunk truth into a sea of irrelevance. In Postman's prediction, "people will love their oppression, adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think."³

The same tone has been struck by Samuel Greengard when he talks about the data produced by the internet industry.⁴ With the ever-expanding chips and ubiquity of wireless networks, people are engaging only in internet data. Greengard concurs with the idea that knowledge is a product of human activity by collecting, analyzing, classifying, categorizing information and data. But as human beings are imperfect as ever, the creation of computers as means for information gathering, and being capable of replacing the role of human beings, is not without consequence. It is worth mentioning that we are now living in a world where nothing remains hidden, unnoticed or unregistered. Computer-based technology speeds up the chance that every detail, fact and feature are surveyed, captured, communicated, and archived. In other words, those in the world who used to be silent are now able to speak from behind a computer screen.⁵

Since human beings discover their voice through the use of computer, they have been barred from their function as natural spokespersons and isolated from their environment. Our daily praxis is governed by our surroundings, and my grasping of things lies in the very confidence and trust by which my body navigates and interacts with things that are in my most immediate surroundings. Herein lies the richness of what we call our environment. However, once the computer takes over our home, workplace, travel and city affairs, human involvement and interaction may be replaced by data exchange between machines without necessitating human direction or understanding. Intelligent machines will automatically remove human involvement. Once the accuracy and efficiency are enlarged, human-environment relationship will become more operational but less reliable.

Postman and Greengard seem to agree that digital technology has the power to create an atmosphere, which is unsynchronized with the human

³ Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death, Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), viii.

⁴ Samuel Greengard, *The Internet of Things* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2015), 20.

⁵ Anders Kolle, "The Roleless Role of Man," *Prajna Vihara* 18, no. 2 (Jul-Dec 2017): 39-40.

being. In the digital world the human being just becomes a passerby who has no concern with the presence of others but only speak to oneself by using a cell-phone in a digital street. Unlike traditional society in which people sent messages through bodily channels in a real space (in a specific territory and community), in the digital society relationships between humans are rather different because they live in a kind of community where being together is not only less important, but also replaced by ring tones. We live, then, in digital cultures. Although the relationship between technology and culture in human history has always been close, our relationship with digital technology is special. The digital technology has a great influence on our day-to-day way of life and on the way in which we teach sciences and organize politics, economics, our legal and administrative systems, etc.

This article aims at finding out the ontology of digital technology and the ethical reflection on its practical usage. It will explore Jacques Ellul's argumentation about the autonomy of technology as well as the idea of constitutional democracy as the ethical proposal to respond to hoax as the digital propaganda.

Technology as an Autonomous System

The rise of digital technology as a self-determining organism has been predicted by Ellul, a French social philosopher at the end of 20th century. Although he did not live long enough to witness the strong impact of digital technology on our society, his theory of technological autonomy has anticipated what we see now as the impact of digital technology on our culture, especially on politics, economy, and morals. In *The Technological Society*, Ellul states that technology does not rely on systems other than itself as a goal.⁶ In essence, technology maps its own route, in which technological elements have their own functionality in three areas of human life. In the first place, it is autonomous from politics. Against scholars who believe that the orientation of technological progress depends on politics or public discussion, Ellul is adamant to defend that political intervention cannot eliminate technological autonomy, but on the contrary, the state itself will have more power because of technological efficiency. Still in the line of this argumentation, the state is not the expression of the will of the people, nor a divine creation, but merely the result of the technological efficiency. For Ellul, the state becomes "a technological agent itself, both integrated into the technological system, determined by its

⁶ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), xxv.

demands, and modified in its structures by its relationship to the imperative of technological growth.”⁷

In addition to politics, the economy does not determine the development of technology either. Ellul knows that most Marxist economists believe that technology is simply in the service of capital, and that the principle of efficiency is not technological but rather the reflection of the need for profit. In his critique of this position, Ellul writes, “Technique appears as the moving force and the foundation of the economy.”⁸ More explicitly he says: “Like political authority, an economic system that challenges the technological imperative is doomed.”⁹ This means that it is not the economic law that determines the technological phenomenon but the laws of technology govern, direct, and modify the economy. Ellul acknowledges that economy is really an actor in operating all things within its scope, but it is not a decisive factor or principle that provides the orientation of technological development. In reality, technology is subject to its own determination.¹⁰

Finally, technology has its own autonomy towards our moral awareness. Ellul argues that technology does not develop moral ideals and does not maintain moral judgment. For Ellul, technology cannot be stopped for moral reasons. Conversely, technology has direct impact on moral views. In this sense, morality is defined as a technological matter.¹¹ Through social media, for example, we can create friends in a social network. But that kind of friendship is eroded; it is no more than an extension of personal needs, because in social media everyone can talk about friends without building friendship in a real sense. Such a kind of friendship differs from the classical one, which is built on the basis of social contract as proposed by Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. For Aristotle, to be called friend, one must have “common property,” evaluated by the level of truthfulness in a real space and time. It is because “friendship depends on community.”¹² From the perspective of social contract, friendship is based on promises, agreements, and responsibilities, whereas technology can destroy our morality because morality has its basis in the community’s experience of time, space and culture.

⁷ Jacques Ellul, “The Autonomy of the Technological Phenomenon,” in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition. An Antalogy*, ed. Robert Scharff (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2003), 390.

⁸ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 148.

⁹ Ellul, “The Autonomy of the Technological Phenomenon,” 392.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 394.

¹² Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, VIII. 9, 1159b. See also Michael Bugeja, “Digital Ethics in Autonomous Systems,” in *Mass Media Ethics*, eds. Lee Wilkins and Christians G. Clifford (New York: Routledge, 2009), 248.

However, according to Ellul technology is autonomous with the consequence that politics, economics, and morality are subjected to it. He draws our attention to what Martin Heidegger calls technological revealing. Ellul writes: “Autonomy is obviously not the outcome of a struggle between two personified divinities, i.e., Morality and Technology! It is a man who, becoming a true believer in, and loyal supporter of, technology, views it as a supreme object.”¹³ This means that technology is autonomous because man adores it as a powerful object. As a consequence, a person cannot will anything he/she likes, but rather his/her imagination and actions are shaped and limited by technology. Scales of values, processes of judgement, customs and manners are modified by technology.

Ellul in *The Technological Bluff* argues that we have to look more deeply at the process of what he calls the “seductive discourse of technique” and the growth of the technical world through an enticement of the individual into a permanent socio-technical discussion.¹⁴ In this “totally fictional” discourse we are surrounded and enveloped incessantly,¹⁵ and this discourse at the same time blocks our access to understanding techno-conscience. The point Ellul makes is not just the fact that we are dealing with machines or systems of behavior, but rather the way in which these things are discussed and imagined. Instead of being neutral, the language surrounding technical things has the capacity to seduce individuals, since behind the discourse of technics, there is power. It is the power that technology desires to appeal to. Ellul asks us to consider how the technicians in general say: “Here is the solution. There is no other. You will have to adopt it,” thereby “add[ing] authority to competence. This is what makes them technocrats.”¹⁶ Technocrats, then, offer their creativity to find the one best solution to a problem. For Ellul, this certainty is the main type of power offered by technology. Power, then, is the object of the technical system because there is something distracting and engrossing in power itself, regardless of what it is used for.

Having said that, Ellul seems to highlight that technology is a type of consciousness which is concerned with power. In *Technology Bluff*, he illustrates the technological power in three different ways. First, the physical power. Objects like television, computer, and gadgets offer modern people the simplest sort of power, the pure physical ability to dominate nature. Through these objects humans experience a feeling of control.¹⁷ Second, technology offers us the imaginative power to see the world in

¹³ Ellul, “The Autonomy of the Technological Phenomenon,” 395.

¹⁴ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 18-19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

terms of rates of growth, of GNP, of speed, of consumption.¹⁸ Finally, by generating certainty, efficiency, and rationality, technology provides power over the whole universe.¹⁹ As far as technology develops as a center, no one can escape from its realm. In the end, one finds oneself as being entrapped into an instrumental, technological point of view.

Ethics and the Problem of Technological Bluffs

Although technology is independent from morality, it should not necessarily prevent the ethics of technology to exist. Ellul writes blatantly: “In concrete applications, technology raises a certain number of moral problems to which a solution must be sought.”²⁰ This argumentation seems in flat contradiction with the previous sections. The primacy of technology implies that it is characterized by a constant innovation due to the belief that there are no limits to innovation and new findings. According to this logic, technological development has been made sterile from the demands of moral justification. The technological progress only wants to deal with the planned fact, not with the moral appraisal. But the application of technology has a great impact on human life and environment. To respond to this, Ellul suggests the importance of incorporating non-traditional ethical approaches as a way to deal with the hardheadedness of technology, and with this, to save social life.

Ellul’s argumentation is in line with many other philosophers of technology, ranging from Martin Heidegger to Hans Jonas. He does not rely on traditional ethics as a model for solving ethical problems in technology. For Ellul, traditional ethics departs from the double status quo, in which both the world and moral codes cannot be changed. While modern technology is characterized by a constant innovation, to deal with the problems of technology, a different ethical approach is needed.

In his essay “The Power of Techniques and the Ethics of Non Power,” Ellul reminds us that modern technology has become a virtue in the sense that it has its own values such as normalcy, efficiency, industriousness, success, work, and professionalism.²¹ According to these values, our society will be more dynamic, thus helps to increase the interdependence of its various parts, such as the intimate interconnection of individuals engaged in a common enterprise and the relation between one enterprise to another. We can also anticipate that technology and its values make our

¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

¹⁹ Ibid., 160, 162.

²⁰ Ellul, “The Autonomy of the Technological Phenomenon,” 296.

²¹ Jacques Ellul, “The Power of Technique and the Ethics of Non Power,” in *The Myths of Information: Technological Postindustrial Culture*, ed. Kathleen Woodward (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 244.

society more democratic than before.²² According to Ellul, such values are based on the characteristics of technology for a whole body of technologists (worshippers of technology like B. F. Skinner). However, what technology and its values offer us is power and the prospect of further power with a consequence that the technical values can be contrary to the value of human life.

For Ellul it is urgent to redefine a new ethics of technology. Instead of promoting the technological values which aim at efficiency, industriousness, and professionalism in society, he focuses on a traditional role of ethics as a reflection on technical power, thus aiming at reducing technological power, and giving space to life, social relations, and interpersonal relationships. This is what Ellul means by non-power ethics, i.e., an ethical model that allows humans to take into account unique experiences and circumstances when facing technology. In such a kind of ethics, the process is the most important element, because human actors have to think and respond to circumstances at each moment.²³

The basic imperative of non-power voices out the necessity of the human being to set limits to the use of technique. More explicitly a person should agree with the principle of “not to do all he is capable of.”²⁴ According to Ellul, limit-setting does not indicate the incapacity of doing something. Rather the true ethics has a different logic than the logic of technology. Technology tends to create power, but ethics should develop itself as a choice for the sake of living together and living itself.²⁵

To understand this imperative, Ellul refers to Ivan Illich’s insight that industrial society “leads people into the accessories of bureaucracies and machines.”²⁶ After tracing out the changes in language, myth, ritual, and law which took place in the industrious society, Illich concluded that a set of limits to industrial growth is needed. He argued that only within the limits can technologies take places as slaves. Within such limits, the triadic relationship between persons, technology, and the new collectivity can be created. Illich called this kind of relationship a convivial one: “Such a society, in which modern technologies serve politically inter-related individuals rather than managers, I call convivial.”²⁷

Limit setting, then, is not just individual but a social normative. No society and culture can exist if there is no limit setting. For limit setting is “constitutive of society and culture.”²⁸ In whatever ethnic, economic and

²² Bertrand Russell, *The Impact of Science on Society* (New York: AMS Press, 1998), 67.

²³ Ellul, “The Power of Technique and Ethics of Non-Power,” 245.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (Glasgow: Collins, 1973), 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Ellul, “The Power of Technique and Ethics of Non-Power,” 246.

political situation people govern their own lives. These situations exist not only in material conditions but also in normative systems. It is only by virtue of their normative qualities that people live in social and cultural unities. When a person learns to be free he/she becomes capable of limiting him/herself in a series of normative coercions.

In such an ethical normative, a person is recognized as the subject. Under the ethical limitation, “technique has come to represent both necessity and fate for modern man.”²⁹ With this proposition, Ellul demonstrates a particular concept of human will. He pays attention especially to the point that an individual can only commit an action which one first finds conceivable. Whenever the technical mind sees the entire world having only one meaning that has to be accepted as necessity, the human will promotes a different perspective on things in which a person is considered as capable of accepting different ways of seeing things. The rediscovery of meaning is conditional upon the choice of non-power ethics.

Enhancing Human Freedom

The main purpose of non-power ethics is to enhance human freedom. Ellul’s argumentation does not depart from philosophical assumptions about human freedom, but from human experience of technology. He shows that the relation between humans and technology is paradoxical. When one is heavily determined by the forces of nature, one needs the aid of technology to attain one’s freedom: freedom from primary wants, from danger, and from illness. But since nature was already conquered by the aid of technology, humans found themselves heavily determined by society. After being liberated from nature and society, humans cannot be free from technology. As a unifying and totalizing system, technology influences and dominates all the creative power and traditional morality that live in our minds. In other words, liberating humans from the slavery of technique is the main concern of non-power ethics: “It is not technology which frees us but rather it is from technology that we must free ourselves.”³⁰

Like Heidegger and many other philosophers of technology, Ellul anticipates the possibility of conflict between humans and technology: on the one hand, technology tends to determine human life and promote conformity and unity, but on the other hand humans are longing for freedom and survival of the entire humanity. In enhancing freedom, Ellul criticizes the illusion of progress which emerges from the economic doctrine that technology is the primary resource of economic growth. The problem of this doctrine lies at its deep-rooted illusion about the coincidence between the material and the spiritual. Based on the false conviction that techno-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

logy can lead us from one achievement to another, we tend to think that human freedom may be achieved by technological liberation in the area of mundane and material needs. Ellul considers this as a real illusion, since although technology liberates us from one thing, it deprives us of another thing at the same time, usually in the spiritual domain. Ellul realizes that technology is important for economic progress, yet economy is not the only indicator for human well-being.

The non-power ethics is an ethical reflection on technological systems aimed at defending human freedom. This ethical proposal is basically rooted on Ellul's concept of technology. He proposes that technology has its own existence; it is the place where we live. Smartphones and computers are not merely technological instruments, since they form the digital world-wide-web, they become the new world for human beings as being-in-the-world. In such case, the digital technology enriches human experiences in time, space, and culture.³¹ Ellul is also aware that all technologies are the function of power. It means that smartphones and computers are not neutral. Their presence in business reflects the intentions of their interfaces with human nature, as well as reducing them to the demographics and psychographics of marketing. Given the expanse of digital technology across cultures, non-power ethics is not merely a reflection of moral duty (Immanuel Kant), or happiness (Jeremy Bentham), or the natural law and the common good (John Locke), it must focus on human desire for freedom. True, freedom is associated with human nature and generally speaking with the free will, but it is not just an a priori in nature. For Ellul, freedom is a desire, but it is also possible that humans can be framed by technology.

The goal of Ellul's technology ethics is to provide space for greater freedom for humans. A free relationship with technology cannot be built on traditional ethical principles, but with more operational ones, such as reducing technical power and rebellion against the illusion of technological progress. For Ellul, a free relationship to technology is a way of living with technology that does not allow it to warp, confuse, and waste our nature.

Ethics of non-power does not intend to reject technology. Rather, it is a criticism of the appetite for technological innovation which leads to enlarge technical power and undermines human relations. It is also a criticism of the logic of digital technology which transforms our space, time, and culture, and eliminates values such as truth, privacy, and solidarity which are important for personal and social life. With this critical mindset, Ellul urges us to accept a drastic change in our way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The imperative of non-power ethics means that we have to

³¹ Rafael Capurro, *Homo Digitalis, Beiträge zur Ontologie, Anthropologie, und Ethik der digitalen Technik* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017), 189.

learn to submit to Reason rather than obeying our honor and ambition. Non-power ethics asks us to think and act rationally, but also to take into account the prudential ways of thinking and feeling about the costs and benefits of technological progress according to our culture and morality.

Recently, this ethics of non-power has got its echo in the thought of Rafael Capurro in his analysis of *homo digitalis*. As Capurro writes, the development of digital techniques today has challenged contemporary philosophy to rethink ontology, anthropology, and ethics. Digital techniques have changed not only our life-style, but also our understanding of reality, of ourselves, and of our morality. Through the digital techniques, we are no longer *Homo sapiens* but become *Homo digitalis*. We are no longer the subject of “I think” but the subject of “I browse.”

Homo digitalis is yet still in the process of becoming. By following digital acts, such as uploading, chatting, posting one becomes Being-in-the-www. In this way, one is entrapped into the digital entities and living in an *Informationsgestell*, and consequently one is easily injured by words and language.³² This kind of *Informationsgestell* hardens people to become an actor in the digital world. And since the digital world is not under control, it is mostly possible that one can be entrapped in it. Living in such a realm, one finds it difficult to be free as a rational being. It is clear now that digital technology hinders human beings to be the master of it. In the digital technology era, everyone is part of an informational organism, by which one’s existence is perceived as an organism-environment rather than as autonomous situation.³³ Digital technology appears to be a meta-physical framework, which determines our way of life. It also seems to understand the human and natural world.³⁴ But, as Capurro says, *homo digitalis* is still a moral being who seeks truth and justice through digital communication. The digital technology can help us to meet each other in the horizontal and symmetrical communication which is susceptible to be destroyed by political or vested interests.

Digital Propaganda in a Democratic Society

Like other revolutions, the digital revolution releases people from the grip of the old order in gaining new freedom. In this situation, moral control and supervision that limit and discipline the corporeal communication may be ignored. Now exhibitionism, narcissism, and adventurism actually get their stage in the digital space without moral supervision. *Homo digi-*

³² Ibid., 82.

³³ Ibid., 97.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper, 1977), 14.

talis finds itself in a new world without a state, in which nobody knows about the necessity of fairness in communication.

The central issue in the ethics of technology is the way in which we decide to act and the role imagination plays in our decisions. If a smartphone in the hand, like a wand, can bring pizza, masseurs, taxis or goods from online stores in a few minutes, of course, it will humanize and even deify the users, but not necessarily those who are called by the phone. As has been predicted, the smartphone can change interpersonal relationships, from the communal into the instrumental.

Especially in politics, the digital revolution changes our political landscape. Political ideals such as the public sphere, equality, freedom of communication and social justice are still a utopia if hoaxes are spread everywhere and the truth is suppressed by various post-truth demagogues. With a target to master the construction of the existing social reality, a propagandist delivers his/her information in an uncommon way. The more sophisticated techniques are used in propaganda transfer, the more successful the masses are formed by that information.

Hoax, then, is the irony of democracy. It is only in this society that demagogues identify themselves as leaders of the masses. In their hand democracy can become ineffective and paralyzed. By producing hoax, one can do anything except creating good human behavior, such as respect, justice and fairness which are honored by free human beings. The real danger of hoax is the creation of authoritarian personalities who would go to almost any extreme to hold and expand their power. In such a situation, modern people are beset by anxiety and a feeling of insecurity.

From an Ellulian perspective, hoax in essence is a new form of propaganda which is used by a group of people to mobilize the masses for certain political targets.³⁵ Ellul realizes that it is not neutral: "Propaganda is the inevitable result of the various components of the technological society, and plays so central a role in the life of that society that no economic or political development can take place without the influence of its great power."³⁶ Today it is considered a greater danger to humankind than any of the other more grandly advertised threats hanging over the human race.

What Ellul puts forward concerning the danger of propaganda has a resonance in Michael Signer's observations. The latter discusses the emergence of demagogues in the history of democracy from Creon of Athens, to Huey Long and Adolf Hitler. For Signer, a demagogue is a symbol of the current political behavior who takes democracy into the wrong direction. Since "all demagogues begin with a distinctly ruthless, inexorable

³⁵ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda, the Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

ambition,”³⁷ logics will be used as their weapon, and the relationship which is built between themselves and the people will never produce understanding. Signer argues that for them people are only a means and will never become an end. The question then is how can we salvage the goal to free ourselves from demagogues? Can the digital communication make us more human and less brutal?

Imagine if the Leviathan controlled these hoaxes and propaganda, it would erase the freedom of communication because this Hobbesian approach does not need truth. For the sake of human freedom and the freedom of communication, the new brutality in digital technology needs a kind of democratic management. In defending this position Ellul writes: “Democratic propaganda is subject to certain values. It is not unfettered but fettered; it is an instrument, not of passion but of reason. Therefore, democratic propaganda must be essentially truthful. It must speak only the truth and base itself only on facts.”³⁸ From a non-power ethical perspective which gives space to conviviality, what we really need is to empower people with constitutional values which cultivate a sense of both the gift and the burden of freedom and encourage people always to chasten authority in their own countries.

With this idea in mind, Ellul steps further than the deontological ethics that suggests the regulation of various legal activities through law. His proposal assumes that every new activity, such as online business, is a no-man’s land; it is a state of nature that needs to be governed by law. Digital communications are included in the virtual territory. Jurisdiction in this sense is part of the process of rationalizing the world of life.

Jurisdiction, however, is not enough; internal motivation is needed to obey the law. This can be given by morality. Therefore, jurisdiction needs to be accompanied by a socialization of digital communication ethics that calls for the moral consciousness of the users of the device to do the good. The golden rule, which is recognized by almost all cultures can be applied in digital interaction, because under this rule the sender should treat the recipient as one wishes to be treated. Based on this golden rule other principles of ethics, such as justice, goodwill, respect are also to be specified. The core problem in digital communication is that in telecommunication the involvement of the physical body disappears, thus it is difficult to feel the situation and be responsible for it. This makes people lose trust and commitment. For this reason, the ethics of digital communication is needed to resolve the problem.

In terms of conviviality, Ellul suggests the solidarization of digital community networks in carrying out a comprehensive and continuous de-

³⁷ Michael Signer, *Demagogue, The Fight to Save Democracy from Its Enemy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 43.

³⁸ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 239.

bunking strategy for hoaxes. The term debunking refers to the process of proving falsehood or lies of controversial topics, such as UFOs, paranormal activities, and mythical claims. In digital communication, disinformation and hoaxes often produce logical fallacies or false data aimed at provoking public sentimentalization. Logical fallacies and false data must be investigated before being disclosed as incorrect so that the public may identify them as a hoaxes. It is necessary that the debunking act can be exposed to precede the hoax's attack, so that the public gets immunity to hoax.

The communicative capability, however, is not a natural process. Digital communication as a whole requires a model, and this model can be given either by a racist demagogue or by a pluralist democratic elite. A demagogue, as Signer reminds us, is a symbol of today's political behavior which brings democracy in the direction it should not be. Having a charisma which brings him/her close to people, being familiar with their hopes, aspirations, dreams and anxieties, a demagogue often utilizes propaganda and hoax as a method of scooping, extending and maintaining power. As Signer predicts, the relationship built between the people and the demagogue ends in the collapse of freedom. Hoax and propaganda never bring understanding but only undemocratic beliefs to totalitarian people, who never change their behavior. No one can make propaganda and hoax with good intentions.

Since hoax always comes from the fragility of the heart as an entrance to evil, pluralist leadership is needed to empower people to appreciate human and national values. Rather than spreading lies in social media, especially in anonymous telepresence, people should be required to promote compassion and sincerity. Alienation reduction may become one of the best practices in digital communication. There is no other way to cultivate the public will to tolerance except by exemplary leadership.

Closing Remarks

It is clear that the digital revolution does not erase the subject of communication, as predicted by poststructuralists; it also does not bring humans to total oppression or slavery. As has been suggested by Ellul and Capurro, the digital revolution gives hope for the creation of a public space that allows the creation of communication and social relations between members of the community.

Public sphere, however, is not automatically created by digital technology. In fact, technology has its own autonomy in the sense that it upholds instrumental value and efficiency in such a way that all other spheres of life such as economy, politics and even morals are truly determined. This is why digital technology can become the medium for fascists

in building hoaxes to destroy the cooperation between people. In this case, freedom and democracy become ethical concerns.

Reducing the dominance of technology is the concern of non-power ethics. By the principle “not do all the things that can be done” Ellul’s ethics aims at reducing technological power and enhancing the ability to think and speak as humans. This imperative is not as abstract as is often thought. The technological myth of Prometheus in Greece, Faust in Germany (Goethe), and Ghatotkacha in India suggest that harmony between technological power and human freedom must be established. Especially the Eastern tradition, which recognizes the principle of societal harmony, asks us to see balance in all angles. The ethical principle of “not do all the things that can be done” is not just a historical and sociological fact but an imaginative idea.

This ethical imperative needs societal solidarity and participation. Electronic participation involving grass-root digital democracy that has long been developed by many NGOs should be encouraged by strengthening cognition, communication, and cooperation. Of course, this is possible only if the lack of access in the mental and material skills can be overcome in the first place. The spontaneity of human action as suggested by Hannah Arendt can give hope that there will be more free individuals who can guarantee the new beginnings of the world.

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Understanding Social Stratification and Organization: Revisiting Hegel and Nietzsche

Astrid Vicas

Why Hegel?

Social inequality is ubiquitous. It has been entrenched for so long that most people now assume that it is a necessary feature of human existence, or at least a necessary feature of human development beyond the stage of bare subsistence. Empirical studies suggest that nowhere was social inequality more deeply established and more extreme than in the hybrid communities that ranged over the Eurasian steppe and the societies that developed in contact with them.¹

Some of the earliest philosophical accounts of the formation of social organizations and the problem of freedom and inequality that attempted to integrate an historical understanding of peoples and cultures, Hegel's and Nietzsche's, perhaps unwittingly drew on Eurasian societies as their models. Hegel relied on Herder's earlier formulation of the history of peoples,² while Nietzsche followed in Schlegel's footsteps.³

The Eurasian models they implicitly accepted as what-society-is-like led Hegel to see the ultimate plan of social-historical development as the dampening of inequality and the violent instability that accompanies it. The institution of a State that enables participants to be their own master and servant – a formula borrowed from Jean-Jacques Rousseau – is what accomplishes the taming of violent instability.⁴ Nietzsche, however, believed that violent social inequality is permanent and the only route to excellence. Neither Hegel nor Nietzsche questioned the assumption that societies of the Eurasian steppe and their contact zones were the real starting point of human development.

The purpose of this paper is to recast a Hegelian-type historicism in light of developments in anthropology, archaeology, and human popula-

¹ Timothy A. Kohler, a.o., "Greater Post-Neolithic Wealth Disparities in Eurasia than in North America and Mesoamerica," *Nature* 551 (2017): 619-622.

² Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London: Bergman, 1800).

³ Friedrich von Schlegel, "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," in Idem, *The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel*, trans. E. J. Millington (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 425-526.

⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, vol. 171d, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1920).

tion genetics in order to see what is and what is not a matter of conceptual presupposition in the claim that inequality is essential to developing human culture. The discussion of the Nietzschean approach, which espouses authoritarianism, will be very brief, since, as we shall see, Nietzscheanism is too much at odds with the evidence from the more recent social and biological sciences to be of much use.

Why dig Hegelianism out of its grave? Because it has certain features that make it attractive and, for the moment, unavoidable. Otherwise, we would look to evolutionary sociobiology for guidelines to understanding human society. Indeed, for certain aspects of human social life, sociobiology has important insights to offer.

Sociobiology proposes an individualistic, cost-benefit approach to analyzing social action and organization. Human action is guided by strategies aimed at optimizing outcomes for the individual agent. Society is built out of aggregates of individuals motivated by individual benefit. This view and its application to understanding society have been summarized by anthropologist James Boone.⁵

The sociobiological approach treats human societies on a par with animal societies, in the sense that it ignores symbolic communication, which it reduces to signaling. By extension, sociobiology fails to see the link between symbolic communication and the capabilities it enables: reciprocal sharing, complex complementarity in cooperative action, which allows for division of labor, and an understanding of symbolic relations of kinship.⁶

All social animals, we could now say, have culture. But here we are interested in social beings that have a symbolic understanding of living in a space shared with others – a public space – and transform themselves collectively as a result of this understanding. Collective self-transformation in a public space is what makes Hegel's approach to history distinctive. Hegelian World History is in some ways quaint. Seen as a way of understanding a collective process of auto-transformation, it is not. The position adopted here is that Hegelianism can be recast as an umbrella theory that allows us to tie developments in the social and biological sciences in a coherent pattern.

A Hegelian historicist approach to understanding human social organization and the beginnings of inequality can be contrasted with a static individualistic, cost-benefit way of analyzing animal social organization. Yet, there is something of use that can be retained from the latter. It has

⁵ James Boone, "Competition, Cooperation and the Development of Social Hierarchies," in *Ecology, Evolution and Social Behavior*, eds. E. A. Smith and B. Winterhalder (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 301-337.

⁶ Morton H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: Random House, 1967), 48.

to do with the connection between restricting access to resources and social inequality. This will be incorporated in the discussion below, which will primarily build on ideas and facts that have accumulated in the social and biological sciences.

This paper takes the view that Hegel was right in seeing inequality and its taming as the fundamental problem of social organization. By extension, the position taken here is that Herder was right in seeing the taming of inequality as the fundamental problem of social organization, since Hegel got that idea from Herder. Hegel's primordial battle for recognition is best seen as a way of setting the stage for conveying this basic Herderian insight.

In light of the problem posed by inequality, Hegel was also right, in a certain way, to focus on Eurasia, although he could not have known that he was right at the time. He was wrong in giving non-European cultures short shrift or thinking that they were in some way defective. What he got right about Eurasia, however, is that extremes of inequality are woven into its prehistory and history, more so than other parts of the world, as contemporary social scientists can confirm with quantitative methods.⁷ If World History is the taming of inequality, then the parts of the world where inequality has been the most extreme – Eurasia – provide good examples upon which to reflect about social organization. To examine Hegel's conception of a World History anew, as a thought experiment, we will situate Hegel's beginning of History in what is known about societies prior to the beginnings of socially organized warfare in a part of Eurasia, the Pontic steppe and areas to the southwest. We will also draw on facts from archaeology and population genetics applied to ancient DNA, beginning with the Neolithization of parts of Europe in the seventh millennium BCE, those in closest contact with the Pontic steppe. Hegel himself probably would have done the same, had he known about these facts.

There are many things Hegel got wrong about social organization, although they are not fatal to the overall project of thinking about Hegelian reflective history as an umbrella theory. Hegel implicitly appeared to believe that, excluding familial bonds, relations of subordination are primordial. Here, we will draw on concepts that were developed by anthropologists since the 1960s to gain greater clarity on social organization and hierarchy. They will assist us in making distinctions between egalitarian, ranked, and stratified social arrangements. They will also help us to think about their relation with ways of making a living: that of the hunter-gatherers, the horticulturalists/stockbreeders, and the pastoralists. The set of concepts developed by anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s will be especially valuable in distinguishing between societies that are organized into segmentary lineages and those that are not.

⁷ Kohler, "Greater Post-Neolithic Wealth Disparities," 619-622.

Synthesizing this material will assist us in seeing that there is a conceptual relation between stratification and restricted access to resources needed to make a living within a society. Moreover, since the most effective social organizations for excluding others from access to resources are segmentary patrilineal, there is an empirical relation between patrilineal segmentary organizations and social stratification. There is, in addition, no effective exclusion without violence, and indeed patrilineal segmentary organizations are effective formations for the wielding of violence.

With very few exceptions, not enough attention has been given to ideas concerning social organization developed by anthropologists in the 1960s, whether in social and political philosophy, archaeology, or ancient DNA studies. Thus, in an examination of facts and ideas from archaeology and ancient DNA studies, I will focus on the issue of what role differential social organization may have played in what is plausibly the earliest large-scale spread of the most extreme form of social stratification known worldwide. The review of ideas about social organization will set the stage for situating Hegelian historicism in Eneolithic Eurasia.

Hegel's view, unlike Nietzsche's, still contains a kernel of truth, provided it is updated with concepts and facts from more recent social and biological sciences. This paper will suggest that social stratification is not necessary to the cultivation of human civilization. It is rather the result of a confluence of contingent matters of fact and social regularities that are at best empirical. This is one of the main messages of this essay. The only conceptual relation is that between social stratification and exclusion of access to resources needed to making a living.

The paper will conclude with two factors that are still useful to us, today. What can we gain from a look back at Hegelian World History as the story of the taming of inequality? The answer is a reminder of a pair of important factors that stand in the way furthering human civilization: exclusion and social organizations that promote it.

Back to Beginnings

The most famous section of Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the story of the beginnings of social organization. It is situated in a reflection on the transformation a being endowed with self-consciousness undergoes in an encounter with another center of self-consciousness as they both engage in the first stage of a process that will eventually lead to the understanding of self as being part of a political community.

Nothing better demonstrates to another that one is a bearer of self-consciousness than the willingness to risk everything, up to and including

life.⁸ The recognition by another of one's status as a self-conscious being bears fruit only in an adversarial encounter in which one of the protagonists, fearing for his/her life, backs down. The victor is the lord; the defeated must accept bondage. Servitude in a relation of inequality, in subordination to a master, is what starts off the process of human civilization.

The defeated protagonist enables the development of civilization by learning to delay gratification in producing the things that the lord demands for consumption. Moreover, as bondsman, he must learn to be productive. Agriculture, crafts, and the understanding of how things work are the accomplishments of bondsmen, not lords.⁹

Hence, violent confrontation is a necessary stage in the process of socialization. It leads to a primordial inequality. It is the losers who become farmers, craftspeople, and innovators. The development of agriculture, the crafts, and the rational understanding of Nature requires violence and inequality. The history of humanity is the history of various peoples, as they try out different forms of imperfect, violent, and unequalitarian social arrangements. It is a brutal process. Hegel nevertheless remained confident that the social and political structures in which violence and inequality are embedded are transient. They are not permanent fixtures of the human condition.

Some of these ideas show up in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, published in 1886, although they are given a different twist. Nietzsche asserted that almost anything deemed to be culturally superior is based on cruelty.¹⁰ Nietzsche associated cruelty with rank, which he assimilated to social stratification, as will be characterized later in this paper: "Every elevation of the type 'man' has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society and it will always be – a society believing in a long scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form or other." Nietzsche founded this necessity in the experience of a "pathos of distance" that grows out of a "constant out-looking and down-looking of the ruling caste on subordinates as instruments." Without distancing, Nietzsche continued, "that other more mysterious pathos could never have arisen, the longing for an ever new widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, further, more extended, more comprehensive states."¹¹

Inequality and violence are not just artifacts of social organization. Nietzsche read social relations back into Nature, believing that one cannot

⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 113-14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 117-119.

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Helen Zimmern (Project Gutenberg Ebook, Ebook #4363, 2013), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4363/4363-h/4363-h.htm>, § 229.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, § 257.

live outside of relations of dominance and subordination.¹² Those who are dominators are aristocrats and it is aristocrats who create values. Moreover, nobility is associated with the violence of warfare. The good man is a warrior.¹³

What Hegel and Nietzsche both saw is that social life, and by extension political life, is not only a matter of economic calculation. They also saw the connection between inequality and violence. Were they right on both counts? The answer provided here is that they were right in thinking that social life is not entirely reducible to economic calculation. They were also right in seeing a connection between inequality and violence. In what ways were they wrong? They were wrong in thinking that inequality and violence are necessary for human culture.

For a more detailed look at inequality and social organization, we will need to make a detour through some ideas stemming from anthropology and sociobiology.

Social Organizations, Ways of Living: Anthropology's Legacy

Looking back from the vantage points afforded by what can be learned from a combination of anthropology and archaeology, we can see how certain assumptions of the Enlightenment, at least as conveyed by Immanuel Kant, were detrimental to understanding the development of stratification in human societies and would have hampered both Hegel and Nietzsche.

Kant, writing in 1786, believed that the arts and crafts could not develop without a State. He also thought that pastoralists were peaceful, while plant cultivators introduced instability and violence. Moreover, he thought that pastoralism arises before plant cultivation. Kant did not even consider that there was a distinction to be made between hunter-gatherers and pastoralists.¹⁴ These were perhaps commonplaces in this time, which it has taken about two centuries to upend. We can say that there has been some progress in understanding social stratification and social organization in general. Here are some ideas that we can take away from the contemporary social sciences.

The sense of inequality used here will draw on Morton Fried's characterization,¹⁵ since it makes a clear distinction between the recognition of differences and stratification, something that contemporary discussions

¹² *Ibid.*, § 258.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, "Conjectures on the Beginnings of Human History," in *Idem, Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbeth, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221-234.

¹⁵ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 109-226.

of social order typically neglect to do. Many papers in archaeology today seem not to make distinctions between rank and stratification, but group them as an undifferentiated form of inequality, which is contrasted with egalitarianism. Fried is quite helpful in this regard. He is also helpful in summarizing the relation between egalitarian, rank, and stratified social organizations and ways of making a living, such as foraging, horticulture and stockbreeding, and pastoralism.

Marshall Sahlins – on whose ideas Fried drew – and other anthropologists offer insights into the relation between stratification, segmentary lineages, and socially organized predation.¹⁶ Raymond C. Kelly, in particular, has focused on the relation between war and what Sahlins had called segmentary lineages.¹⁷ Finally, all of these authors admit that there is an important connection between stratification and the restriction of access to resources needed to make a living. That restriction of access is a source of conflict is the one point of clear agreement with individualistic, cost-benefit approaches to social organization, which for our purposes are usefully expressed in Robert Axelrod and William Hamilton's treatment of the evolution of cooperation¹⁸ and James Boone's summary of the concepts and tools of methodological individualism applied to social organization.¹⁹

Egalitarianism, Rank, and Stratification

An individualistic, cost/benefit account of behavior can help us understand the seeds of social stratification in conflicts over goods that are structured in such a way that they are divisible, excludable, plentiful, and predictable.²⁰ Nevertheless, it is not able to capture a distinction that anthropologists, notably Morton Fried, made among non-stratified social organizations, that between egalitarian and ranked societies.

In fact, Fried believed that the study of animal societies had led us to conflate status or prestige with dominance hierarchy. In human societies, there can be one without the other. The key is to make a distinction between authority, which can devolve from status or prestige on the one

¹⁶ Marshall D. Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," *American Anthropologist* 63 (1961): 322-345.

¹⁷ Raymond C. Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Robert Axelrod and William D. Hamilton, "The Evolution of Cooperation," *Science* 211, no. 4489 (1981): 1390-1396.

¹⁹ Boone, "Competition, Cooperation and the Development of Social Hierarchies," 301-337.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

hand and on the other hand, power, which requires an integrated hierarchical order and the ability to impose sanctions.²¹

Most societies, according to the ethnographic record, make distinctions in terms of prestige, typically assigned to age and sex. An egalitarian society is one in which there are as many positions of prestige or valued status in any age-sex grade as there are persons capable of filling them.²² Typical egalitarian societies are bands of hunter-gatherers.

By contrast, a society in which there is ranking is one in which there are fewer positions of valued status than persons capable of filling them. Rank has no necessary connection with economic status, in the sense that individuals with rank do not have the power to exclude others from resources needed to make a living. The major shift to rank societies, according to Fried, occurs with the transition to a domesticated food supply.²³

Finally, a society that is stratified is one in which status differences are tied to economic differences. A stratified society is one in which adult members enjoy differential access to basic resources, either basic consumable resources or things needed to obtain consumable resources.²⁴ Differential access to resources requires the exercise of power, which implies the ability to punish. One cannot have a stratified social arrangement without the power to impose sanctions, which enforces restrictions to resources.

Where there is no power of compulsion, there are only situational positions of leadership that depend on one's ability to influence others. Others can always walk away. Perhaps one might view primordial relations among individuals in egalitarian and rank societies as encounters where an individual may attempt to influence the other, and the other can choose to follow or not. This is far from the Hegelian battle for pure prestige.

Nevertheless, in all forms of social organization, there is prestige of some kind. In all ethnographically known societies, there is individual property in nonstrategic objects.²⁵ Things can be property on two accounts: while they are being used, they may not be removed from the user without social disruption. Moreover, the user can give things away and create by that act an obligation of return. It appears that the notion of property is implicitly of something that can be given away. The giving away creates an obligation of return, which is prestige generating.

According to anthropologists, all societies have this form of exchange and way of generating prestige or influence. In hunter-gatherer so-

²¹ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 30-33.

²² *Ibid.*, 33.

²³ *Ibid.*, 48, 52, 115.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 52, 110, 186.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

cieties, it is the only form of economic distribution. In societies with rank, typically societies that are productive, prestige can also accrue from acquiring a following by taking on the role of redistributor. What is distinctive of stratified societies is that prestige accrues by enforcing limitations on access to goods and resources, while in non-stratified societies prestige can accrue with distribution or redistribution without prior restriction to goods needed to make a living. We will look a bit more closely at these distinctions in the next section.

*Ways of Making a Living: Hunter-Gatherer, Horticulturalist/
Stockbreeder, Pastoralist*

Hegel's characterization of a primordial struggle for recognition between two centers of self-consciousness not bound by relations of family affection leads us to think that he believed he could jump directly from family groups, in which individuals are linked by affective bonds, to relations of domination and subordination between non-kin. He skipped over hunter-gatherer societies organized along the principle of co-residence, rather than kinship, and around the sharing of resources.²⁶ These societies also typically have ways of reducing differences among their members by randomizing the sharing of outcomes of hunting and gathering activities.

Hegel also skipped over societies that have rank, but are not stratified, and that are organized around the redistribution of resources that result from productive activity. Indeed, some of these societies, for instance at Çatalhöyük in Central Anatolia, may have developed customs that had the effect of blending family lineages in order to facilitate the sharing of resources among households.²⁷

We can find in anthropology of the 1960s ideas that complement a Hegelian outlook perhaps better than Hegel himself could have imagined. Fried had identified symbolic learning as essential for understanding the reciprocal arrangements in hunter-gatherer societies, which go beyond the promotion of self-interest. In social groups in which symbolic learning is possible, withdrawal of support is a form of withholding reciprocity and can be viewed as "the basis of social organization."²⁸ In hunter-gatherer societies, there is authority without the application of sanctions. What authority amounts to in such arrangements is the ability to influence others, which means to gain their support, without the use of threats or sanctions.

²⁶ M. G. Dyble, a.o., "Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands," *Science* 348, no. 6236 (2015): 796-98.

²⁷ British Institute at Ankara, "A Backward Looking Curiosity: 25 Years of Research at Çatalhöyük by Ian Hodder" (February 14, 2018), https://youtu.be/7jR0XqrHL_M.

²⁸ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 12.

That much is still the case of societies in which there is rank. These are societies that are larger than bands of hunter-gatherers and are typically organized for subsistence farming. They are organized into villages or, when complexity increases, into networks of villages. The major economic organization of societies with rank is integration of production by member households through a process of redistribution.

These relatively egalitarian productive societies would have been organized into networks featuring individuals who filled impermanent but prestige-bestowing roles of redistributing goods and services for the benefit of the community. These roles could also have extended to underwriting craft production, supporting trade and the construction of larger-scale buildings projects, subsidizing community ceremonies, or providing hospitality and help during shortages.²⁹

Nevertheless, in rank societies, all individuals, including those who have rank, are engaged in labor tasks typical of their age and sex. That productive societies engaged in small-scale farming are not stratified is confirmed by more recent anthropological studies.³⁰

Anthropologists of the 1960s and 1970s noted that, if anything, the holders of rank work harder than anyone else, because they are expected to be more generous.³¹ That the holders of rank work harder than others is especially notable in societies that have an emergent ranking system but are still substantially egalitarian. This would be an effect of their prestige being dependent on generosity. But it is also due to the fact that what they give away is a result of their own labor or that of their household. The holders of rank are facilitators of intercommunity activities, which integrate villages in a network of exchanges for goods produced in households. The most effective way of facilitating these activities is for redistributors and their household to produce these goods themselves.³² Hegel had not seen a connection between productive work and prestige, nor had Herder before him. Certainly, the Hegelian battle for recognition is not a competition between farmers or craftsmen.

The tendency even among contemporary writers is to confound any kind of prestige with the power that comes from benefiting from a position in a stratified arrangement. We gain conceptual clarity in following Fried's distinction between rank and position in a stratified social order. In stratified societies, the redistribution of goods is confined to a portion of the population only. Members of the same sex and equivalent age status

²⁹ Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton, 1972), 190.

³⁰ Michael Gurven, a.o., "Domestication Alone Does Not Lead to Inequality: Intergenerational Wealth Transmission among Horticulturalists," *Current Anthropology* 51, no.1 (2010): 49-64.

³¹ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 115.

³² *Ibid.*, 131, 178-179.

do not have equal access to resources needed to make a living. Differential access is accomplished by imposing some kind of restriction in the form of payment, where the payment might take the form of personal services, military assistance, or drudge labor.³³

What kind of social compulsion is effective in enforcing a stratified social order? Contemporary analyses have found that there is a causal relation between human sacrifice and social stratification. Human sacrifice is rare in egalitarian societies. It substantially increases the likelihood of stratification arising in the first place and prevents its loss once it has set in.³⁴ The function of human sacrifice is thus to enforce inequality in a nascent stratified society and sustain it once it has been instituted.

In the modern ethnographical record, pastoralist societies are typically stratified. The point is relevant to the next part of the paper. Pastoralist production systems are defined by a reliance on herding domesticated animals for subsistence and exchange. Such systems typically have a patrilineal organization, in which men are the owners of livestock wealth. Pastoralism incorporates hereditary slavery and tends to exhibit a cultural outlook of male valor, which also promotes a warrior ethos.³⁵ The combative outlook of pastoralist societies is consistent with the importance they give to raiding, especially for raising bride payments in order to acquire wives. This increases the labor pool of a household, which can increase the status of its head and attract dependents and political allies. One can note that the internal organization of the family is directly related to relations between groups, which is something that Hegel had not seen.

It is in a stratified organization that prestige can be tied to the power to punish. Yet, peace is not achieved with the ability to impose punishment. On the contrary, stratification is a “provoker of war.”³⁶

Segmentary Organization and War

Egalitarian and rank societies are not conflict-free. Conflicts in such societies, nevertheless, typically have no issue if the offended party does not do much besides resorting to social humiliation of the offending party.³⁷ When violent conflict occurs, it does not lead to bouts of revenge

³³ Ibid., 186, 189.

³⁴ Joseph Watts, a.o., “Ritual Human Sacrifice Promoted and Sustained the Evolution of Stratified Societies,” *Nature* 532 no. 75-98 (2016): 228-31.

³⁵ Monique Borgerhoff-Mulder, a.o., “Pastoralism and Wealth Inequality: Revisiting an Old Question,” *Current Anthropology* 51, no.1 (2010): 36; Clare Janaki Holden and Ruth Mace, “Spread of Cattle Led to the Loss of Matrilineal Descent in Africa: A Coevolutionary Analysis,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 270, no. 1532 (2003): 2425-2433.

³⁶ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 215.

³⁷ Ibid., 72-73.

killings. Anthropologist Raymond Kelly argued social violence of a systematic kind, which leads to warfare, requires the principle of segmentation.

Kelly believed that hunter-gatherers are typically organized in non-segmentary societies of bilateral kindred formed out of local family groups. Their mode of organization is adequate for colonizing previously uninhabited zones. Kelly also recognized that lack of segmentation is not restricted to hunter-gatherers, but can also be a feature of societies practicing other kinds of economic activity. He probably meant the non-stratified societies with rank that Marshall Sahlins had identified. A significant point that Kelly raised about nonsegmentary societies is that their members have an understanding of capital punishment, which is not present in nonhuman primates. Yet they do not engage in warfare brought about by blood feuds. That kind of conflict requires social substitutability in segmentary groups.³⁸

In segmentary societies, the individuals pursued and killed are not the ones who committed an offense, but people equivalent to or substitutable for them, because they belong to the same segment. Segmentation allows individuals to see themselves as part of a group and pursue group interests. It is segmentation into groups of substitutable individuals that underlies the logic – if one can call it that – of revenge killing. Thus, a significant aspect of Kelly's study is that it brings out the point that tit-for-tat cycles of revenge killings require segmentary social organization.³⁹

Yet discussions of tit-for-tat aggression are common in sociobiological explanations of human society. Given the assumption that human behavior is an individualistic calculation of costs and benefits, which can be measured in survivability, tit-for-tat is thought to be a stable evolutionary strategy. The strategy of tit-for-tat does better than others in promoting the interests of individual survivability. Hence it can be used to explain how social stability arises out of a combination of individualistic calculations, in any collection of social animals, in which there is bound to be conflicts of interest.⁴⁰

This thesis does not sit well with the ethnographic evidence that Kelly brings to our attention, according to which revenge killing occurs not just in any human society, but in those in which the principle of social substitutability is operative. A fortiori, it is not known to occur in animal societies. Social animals can kill too. Segmentary organization, however, presupposes not just causal signaling but also symbolic communication, without which social substitutability is unintelligible. An underlying

³⁸ Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*, 128-129.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁰ Axelrod and Hamilton, "The Evolution of Cooperation."

weakness of sociobiology is the problem of addressing the distinctive character of symbolic communication.

The point also affects some forms of religious anthropology. In René Girard's view, primeval societies are beset with revenge killings. The only way out of endless cycles of bloodletting is to direct violent outbursts onto a human scapegoat. By means of human sacrifice, a beneficial social hierarchy is enforced that preserves order.⁴¹ This is all well and good and quite Nietzschean in spirit. The problem is that, while all human societies can experience outbreaks of violence, they do not necessarily engage in rounds of revenge killing. Only societies organized into segments do. The ethnographic record does not support the idea that such societies are primordial. If any group deserves the title, it is the hunter-gatherers, and their organization is nonsegmentary.

It appears that evolutionary biology and at least one form of philosophical-religious anthropology unwittingly share the assumption that all societies have a segmentary organization. But they do not.

Kelly stressed that the principle at stake is the substitutability of individuals into groups. He did not address principles for deciding group membership or what constitutes a segment, but in Sahlins' discussion a principle is identified. It is descent from a common ancestor, or lineage.⁴² From a perusal of the examples that both he and Kelly present, it is clear that they had in mind not just any segmentary lineage system but patrilineality.

This transpires in Kelly's discussion of the connection between segmentation and bridewealth, payment made to the kin of a bride. Societies in which bridewealth is accumulated and transferred are societies that think of marriage in group terms, which is characteristic of segmentary organizations.⁴³ It is also typical for patrilineal segmentary systems to see the value of a woman in terms of the labor she and her offspring bring to the group, which is compensated in brideprice paid to the bride's kin.⁴⁴ Brideprice and bridewealth are characteristic of not just any society but segmentary patrilineal ones. This point is relevant to the next part of the essay, which will revisit Hegel's battle for recognition. Hegel had not only not seen that familial and social organization are intrinsically related, he had not seen the distinctiveness of segmentary organization nor the distinctiveness of segmentary organization into patrilineal ones.

⁴¹ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

⁴² Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," 328; Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember and Burton Pasternak, "On the Development of Unilineal Descent," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 30, no. 2 (1974): 69-94.

⁴³ Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*, 60-64.

⁴⁴ Frank W. Marlowe, "Marital Residence among Foragers," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 2 (2004): 277-284.

One of the things we can take from Kelly's study is that no society is peaceful in a utopian way. Nevertheless, if a killing occurs in nonsegmentary societies, limited hostility arises, because members attribute responsibility to an individual, do not engage in bouts of revenge killings, and are prone to reestablish peaceful relations.⁴⁵ We can take something else from Kelly's study, which will be relevant to understanding interactions between nonsegmentary and segmentary societies. Among nonsegmentary societies, an intrusive group is hard to dislodge.⁴⁶ Sahlins made a complementary point: "The segmentary lineage system consistently channels expansion outwards, releasing internal pressure in an explosive blast against other peoples."⁴⁷ By the example he chose to illustrate the point, it becomes clear that Sahlins meant patrilineal. That can help us understand how a segmentary society can spread into and gain control over other societies, especially those that are not segmentary. The Hegelian struggle for recognition will be reconfigured as the "explosive blast" of which only certain kinds of segmentary societies are capable.

Restriction of Resources and Segmentary Organization

We can keep from sociobiology a factor that explains what can undercut reciprocal exchanges typical of hunter-gatherer societies and move them toward incipient social stratification: the character of a resource that is important to the band's way of life – its excludability, whether it is predictable, and whether it is concentrated in a location that is defensible. Conflicts over such resources can occur in any society, even non-stratified ones.⁴⁸

Unilineal descent groups have been found to gain preponderance when social value is attached to entitlements in durable property. Matrilineal descent groups arise in connection with women's work groups and the resource bases those groups control. Matrilineal descent groups tend to disappear when the subsistence base is dependent on movable property, such as herds and slaves.⁴⁹ Spearfishing is typically carried out by men and moveable resources such as herds are also typically controlled by men.⁵⁰

The segmentary descent system that is relevant to thinking about the social organization of hunter-gatherers controlling an excludable re-

⁴⁵ Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*, 160-161.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁷ Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage," 337.

⁴⁸ Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*, 96, 135.

⁴⁹ Rae Lesser Blumberg and Robert F. Winch, "Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity: Evidence for the Curvilinear Hypothesis," *American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 5 (1972): 901.

⁵⁰ Borgerhoff-Mulder, "Pastoralism and Wealth Inequality."

source, such as prime fishing spots, and transitioning to controlling another kind of excludable resource, such as moveable herds, is patrilineal rather than matrilineal. Societies whose subsistence rests on fishing and herding can develop social complexity without a corresponding development in technological complexity.⁵¹ These factors are relevant to retelling something like a Hegelian story of the beginnings of social inequality in the West Eurasian steppe. The story implies that we keep in mind all the elements reviewed: The distinction between rank and stratification; ways of making a living; segmentary organization; and a relation between all of these factors and familial organization. Hegel could not have known about them. Now we do. In the meantime, additional facts from archaeology and archaeogenomics have come to light, which complement the factors reviewed in this section.

The Hegelian Primordial Battle Revisited

The preoccupation of this section will be to see how some of Hegel's insights are borne out – even as they are renewed by combining ideas gathered from the social sciences in the intervening centuries – in providing an outline of the beginnings of the most extreme inequality registered worldwide in areas connected by the Eurasian steppe. We will zoom in on its western range, beginning roughly in the sixth millennium BCE. The protagonists, so to speak, on one hand, are what were most likely egalitarian-rank societies that brought the Neolithic way of life to areas west of the Black Sea. They were descendants of Anatolian farmers who gradually admixed with local hunter-gatherers. They are the Early European Farmers (EEFs) in studies of ancient DNA.⁵² On the other hand, we find the societies of hunter-fishers of the neighboring Pontic steppe, who eventually transitioned to pastoralism.⁵³

⁵¹ Blumberg and Winch, “Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity,” 903.

⁵² Wolfgang Haak, a.o., “Ancient DNA from European Early Neolithic Farmers Reveals Their Near Eastern Affinities,” *PloS Biology* 8 no.11 (2010), e1000536; Iosif Lazaridis, a.o., “Genomic Insights into the Origin of Farming in the Ancient Near East,” *Nature* 536, no. 7617 (2016): 419-24; Iain Mathieson, a.o., “The Genomic History of Southeastern Europe,” *Nature* 555 (2018): 197-203; Chuan-Chao Wang, a.o., “Ancient Human Genome-Wide Data from a 3000-Year Interval in the Caucasus Corresponds with Eco-Geographic Regions,” *Nature Communications* 10, no. 590 (2019), doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-08220-8.

⁵³ Wolfgang Haak, a.o., “Massive Migration from the Steppe Was a Source for Indo-European Languages in Europe,” *Nature* 552, no. 7555 (2015): 207-11; Iñigo Olalde, a.o., “The Beaker Phenomenon and the Genomic Transformation of Northwest Europe,” *Nature* 555 (2018): 190-96; Wang, a.o., “Ancient Human Genome-Wide Data.”

Europe Southwest of the Pontic Steppe: Organization and Accomplishments

The Early European Farmer societies, which formed dense networks of population in southeastern Europe by the fifth millennium, are likely to have been transitioning toward a social organization with rank.⁵⁴ In egalitarian and rank societies, there can be instances of leadership, understood as the ability to influence others, but they would not have been supported by the power to punish. Some individuals could have achieved influence over others in order to accomplish certain tasks, such as building palisades, the existence of which is well attested,⁵⁵ but this might not have translated into a central position of leadership, as there may have been different influencers for different tasks. All members are likely to have been involved in the activities required to make a living. Even influencers in societies with rank would have participated in productive activities. A case in point could be the man in grave 43 at Varna, in present-day Bulgaria, interred with the richest collection of gold objects known to humanity at the time. He was a metalworker, a craftsman, and probably gained community recognition through his work.⁵⁶

If horticulturalism is characterized by small-scale, low-intensity agricultural production, including animal stockbreeding, societies of horticulturalists would have been organized into networks of redistribution of goods. In such societies, the role of central redistributor is that of a central reciprocator. Where receiving creates the expectation of having some kind of indebtedness, taking on the role of central giver also creates a following among those who are receivers of one's largesse. As Sahlins pointed out, exercising the influence that comes with the role of central reciprocator is very hard work. He even called it a form of economic auto-exploitation.⁵⁷

What the redistributor gets out of self-exploitation is prestige. Prestige in this organization is having others owe you something in a network of reciprocation. There is no battle for pure prestige in which the result is a relation of mastership and subordination. There could be a conflict of interest between one who wishes to collect followers and one who has to

⁵⁴ Marko Porčić, "Social Complexity and Inequality in the Late Neolithic of the Central Balkans: Reviewing the Evidence," *Documenta Praehistorica* 39 (2012): 167-83.

⁵⁵ Sabin Adrian Luca and Cosmin Ioan Suciu, "The Eneolithic Fortification System of Turdaş-Luncă, Hunedoara County, Romania," in *Pradziejowe osady obronne w Karpatach* (Prehistoric Defensive Systems in the Carpathians), ed. Jan Gancarski (Krosno: Muzeum Podkarpackie, 2015), 43-60.

⁵⁶ Raiko Krauß, Steve Zäuner and Ernst Pernicka, "Statistical and Anthropological Analysis of the Varna Necropolis," *Tagungen des Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle* (Meetings of the National Museum of Prehistory) 11, no. 2 (2014): 371-388.

⁵⁷ Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 133-139.

decide whether to become a follower or not. There can also be a contest of prestige between individuals who vie for the position of redistributor, although there can be more than one redistributor. There can be more than one individual who can vie for the position of redistributor, but not everyone in the community can do so. This is another way of stating the more formal principle that in societies with rank there are more individuals wishing to fulfill positions of prestige than there are such positions available.

The competition is more a popularity contest than an attempt at domination. It would be strange to call a popular redistributor a master of any kind since he works harder than anyone else. Certainly, the sense we get of masters and bondsmen in Hegel, which is also the sense he inherited from Herder, is that it is bondsmen who do the hard work, not masters. It looks like we will have to amend the Hegelian master-bondsman dialectic in the face of evidence from societies with rank.

What is lacking, which is central to the original Hegelian master-bondsman dialectic, is the element of compulsion. One cannot force followership. If others don't want to follow, they simply do as they please. There could have been disagreement and conflict among individuals, and local and non-permanent responses to disruption and violence. Surely, there would have been flare-ups of violence as the Anatolian immigrants encountered local hunter-gatherers, and lethal outbreaks amongst themselves, but no organized mode of waging war, which requires segmentation. The Neolithic and Eneolithic societies of the Early European Farmers that edged closer to societies of the neighboring steppe were probably of this kind. They were most likely horticultural-pastoral, non-segmentary and non-stratified societies that would have been familiar with episodic, deadly conflicts but were not organized to wage war.

They were organized into villages featuring housing that incorporated distinct functional spaces and multiple rooms.⁵⁸ They had a develop-

⁵⁸ Aleksey G. Korvin-Piotrovskiy, "Tripolye Culture in Ukraine," in *The Tripolye Culture Giant-Settlements in Ukraine: Formation, Development and Decline*, eds. Francesco Menotti and Aleksey G. Korvin-Piotrovskiy (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 6-18; Svend Hansen and Regina Uhl, "Vom Debris Zum Fundament [...] Neue Erkenntnisse zum Bauen in der Kupferzeit Südlich und Östlich der Karpaten," in *Mensch, Kultur und Gesellschaft von der Kupferzeit bis zur frühen Eisenzeit im Nördlichen Eurasien (Beiträge zu Ehren zum 60. Geburtstag von Eugen Sava)* (Man, Culture, and Society from the Copper Age until the Early Iron Age in Northern Eurasia [Contributions in honor of the 60th anniversary of Eugen Sava]), eds. Aurel Zanoci, a.o. (Chisinau: Bons Offices, 2016), 25-39; Mehmet Özdoğan, "A New Look at the Introduction of the Neolithic Way of Life in Southeastern Europe: Changing Paradigms of the Expansion of the Neolithic Way of Life," *Documenta Praehistorica* 41 (2014): 33-49.

ed and varied toolkit.⁵⁹ They knew how to process a variety of resources, such as milk from domesticated animals⁶⁰ and salt.⁶¹ They possessed elaborate symbolic artifacts that featured complex relations among humans and animal figures, and exhibited relations between people and living spaces in clay models.⁶² They had developed important technological innovations, such as the use of the ard and the harnessing of domesticated cattle for traction.⁶³

Some of the elaborate artifacts the Early European Farmer societies produced most likely had an important role to play in community displays of redistribution. Archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel argued persuasively that, in these societies, community circle dance enjoyed a central function in conveying social norms without compulsion. He believed that this function can explain fine-quality ceramic pottery and figurines that depict dancing figures.⁶⁴

Probably, what most impressed their neighbors in the Pontic-Caspian steppe was their metallurgical know-how. Local production of copper objects begins around 5200-5000 BCE in Bulgaria.⁶⁵ By 4650 BCE, complex tin bronzes are being produced in the Balkans.⁶⁶ According to anthropologist Evgeny Chernykh, the Carpatho-Balkan Metallurgical Province – a label he introduced to denote the earliest known zone of metals extraction and processing – included the territory occupied by the Chalcolithic cultures of Karanovo VI-Gumelnița, Vinča-Pločnik, Karanovo, Sălcuța

⁵⁹ Korvin-Piotrovskiy, “Tripolye Culture in Ukraine,” 14-15; Özdoğan, “A New Look at the Introduction of the Neolithic Way of Life.”

⁶⁰ O. E. Craig, a.o., “Did the First Farmers of Central and Eastern Europe Produce Dairy Foods?” *Antiquity* 79, no. 306 (2005): 882-894.

⁶¹ Dan Monah, “Salt Springs: Places for Salt Recrystallization and Ritual Centres for Exchange with Steppe Populations,” in *Salt Effect: Second Arheoinvest Symposium: From the Ethnoarchaeology to the Anthropology of Salt: 20-21 April 2012, Al. I. Cuza University, Iași, Romania*, eds. Marius Alexianu, Roxana-Gabriela Curcă and Vasile Cotiuğa (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015), 111-120.

⁶² Adam N. Crnobrnja, “Arrangements of Vinča Culture. Figurines: A Study of Social Structure and Organization,” *Documenta Praehistorica* 38 (2011): 131-144.

⁶³ Igor Manzura, “Steps to the Steppe: Or How the North Pontic Region Was Colonized,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 24, no. 4 (2005): 313-338, 327; A. Shukurov, G. Sarson and M. Videiko, “Productivity of Premodern Agriculture in the Cucuteni-Trypillia Area,” *Human Biology* 87, no. 3 (2015): 235-282.

⁶⁴ Yosef Garfinkel, *Dance at the Dawn of Agriculture* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 91-92, 221-226.

⁶⁵ David W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 162.

⁶⁶ Miljana Radivojević, a.o., “Tainted Ores and the Rise of Tin Bronzes in Eurasia, c. 6500 Years Ago,” *Antiquity* 87, no. 338 (2013): 1030-1045.

II-III, Tizapolgár-Bodrogkeresztúr, Petrești and Cucuteni-Tripolye.⁶⁷ The main centers produced heavy tools, such as ax-hammers, ax-adzes, and adze-chisels, and well as awls in large numbers. Some of these metal objects made their way into burial sites of steppe cultures of Sredny Stog II and Khvalynsk.⁶⁸

There is plenty of material to argue for the technological know-how and symbolic sophistication of the Early European Farmers. Yet, looking at the archaeological evidence of Early European Farmer societies from the Late Neolithic in the Central Balkans, anthropologist Marko Porčić found that it did not support social stratification, although some of the evidence is compatible with ranking. With respect specifically to metal production requiring a stratified social arrangement, he suggested rather that incipient specialization in copper production was enabled by demand for metal products in networks of exchanges among communities. No elite patronage needs to be assumed.⁶⁹ It is perhaps the proximity to others and greater opportunities for interpersonal communication that the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic modes of living offered that enabled a relatively accelerated transmission of ideas about how to do things among members of networks of farming and stockbreeding communities. This could have fueled technological innovation and sophistication in symbolic expression without requiring stratification.

The general point is reinforced by more recent ethnographic studies of small-scale, low-intensity agricultural production, or horticulture. Contemporary anthropologists have found that horticultural production does not generate social stratification. The social organization evidenced varies from relatively egalitarian to ranked. In relatively egalitarian horticultural societies, there can be older charismatic adult men with many kin ties and allies who function as village headmen. Nevertheless, they carry no power to reward or punish, but instead coordinate activities, events, and negotiate relationships with outsiders. In addition, craft and ritual specialists are not uncommon. In societies in which rank is displayed, there is a generation of surpluses created by labor recruitment efforts, competitive feasting, and redistribution of items effected by leaders.⁷⁰ These remarks coincide entirely with ideas we can gather from older anthropological studies of the 1960s and 1970s.

The descriptions of horticultural societies we find in recent anthropological studies would probably apply to the various Early European Farmer communities west of the Black Sea. It is quite plausible to think

⁶⁷ E. N. Chernykh, *Ancient Metallurgy in the USSR: The Early Metal Age*, trans. Sarah Wright (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 40, 49-50.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁹ Porčić, "Social Complexity and Inequality," 177-178.

⁷⁰ Gurven, a.o., "Domestication Alone Does Not Lead to Inequality," 52-53.

of the man buried in Grave 43 in the Varna necropolis, mentioned earlier, and whose remains are dated to 4683-4406 BCE,⁷¹ as a redistributor. That he was a craftsman is inferred from osteological analyses. He worked very hard in a crouching position.⁷² The man in Grave 43 at Varna was neither master nor servant. He was, most plausibly, the kind of self-exploiter Sahlins described in modern ethnography and probably collected social influence through his role as an expert metalworker.

There is as yet no persuasive evidence to think that he was the head of a segmentary lineage. In contrast, segmentary lineage is probably what the neighboring Eneolithic steppe seekers of the kinds of goods the Varna individual was manufacturing had. But they did not originally possess the knowledge of how to make the sophisticated artifacts and, especially, the metal objects that were being produced among their Early European Farmer neighbors.

Interaction between Pastoralists of the Pontic Steppe and Societies West of the Pontic Steppe

Ancient DNA studies help us understand distribution patterns in Y-DNA lineages – transmitted from father to son – that are currently observable among contemporary northern and western European males. If one assumes patrilineal segmentary social systems among steppe tribes of the Eneolithic west of the Urals and follows their advance into Europe in the Bronze Age, one obtains the distribution currently observed: Eneolithic Steppe Y-DNA lines have virtually wiped out previous Early European Farmer Y-DNA lines. But the spread of steppe populations into Western Europe did not affect mitochondrial DNA lines – inherited exclusively from women – in the same way.⁷³

This point is relevant to the Hegelian thesis that what sets the stage for History is a primordial battle for recognition between individuals. In nonsegmentary societies, individuals might fight and even kill each other. There is conflict. But, often enough, nothing much comes of it. The losers, if they survive, do not become the servant of the winner.

Things are different in societies in which there are excludable resources, such as favorable fishing spots,⁷⁴ which can be defended through the use of force. The situation changes especially when interacting societies are organized along different principles: into segmentary groups

⁷¹ Mathieson, a.o., “The Genomic History of Southeastern Europe,” Supplement.

⁷² Krauß, Zäuner and Pernicka, “Statistical and Anthropological Analysis of the Varna Necropolis.”

⁷³ Tian Chen Zeng, Alan J. Aw and Marcus W. Feldman, “Cultural Hitchhiking and Competition Between Patrilineal Kin Groups Explain the Post-Neolithic Y-Chromosome Bottleneck,” *Nature Communications* 9, no. 2077 (2018), doi:10.1038/s41467.

⁷⁴ Blumberg and Winch, “Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity.”

versus nonsegmentary. A society arranged in segmentary groups has a hierarchical social organization that it is capable of enforcing and allows it to redirect the flow of goods stemming from neighboring nonsegmentary societies with productive economies.

What might have been destined to redistribution among village inhabitants of a nonsegmentary society can now be redirected as tribute or goods surrendered to the elites from a neighboring segmentary society, which has the advantage of an organization designed for taking control over previously occupied territory.⁷⁵ The effectively intrusive segmentary society is patrilineal, and its patrilineal lines swamp out those of the nonsegmentary societies in which it intrudes.

The term of elite should, strictly speaking, be reserved for societies that have a segmentary organization on the basis of lineage. Thus, to bring the relevance of the point to the primordial Hegelian master-bondsman relation, but also to the Nietzschean conception of the overman, technological and cultural development is not brought about as a matter of quasi-logical connection by the patronage of an elite to satisfy its desires. Rather, it is a contingent matter of fact that technological and cultural development attracted the attention of a contiguous, at least incipiently stratified society, which had the organizational ability to take over a non-stratified neighbor, precisely because stratification requires the institution of an organization through which the power to control and exclude can be exercised. Stratified societies have an elite that can exercise power. Societies with rank have only individuals who have authority. The only matter of conceptual necessity is the connection between stratification and the exclusion of some members of society from access to resources needed to making a living.

Chernykh had pointed out that there was an extreme disparity in technology and quantity of metal goods between the network of Early European Farming cultures and the neighboring steppe groups of the Pontic Caspian area. He also noted that the extreme level of disparity in contiguous geographical zones was unique to this earliest period in the dissemination of metal production and metallurgical know-how.⁷⁶ By around 4200-3900 BCE, distinctive Early European Farmer settlements in the southern range of the network of exchanges for metal products disappeared. What replaced them after 3800 BCE were hybrid cultures. The quantity and technical proficiency of metal and ceramic production in Southeastern Europe declined.

These changes were concurrent with a pattern of long-distance raiding by groups that belonged to the steppe Eneolithic horizon. Archaeolo-

⁷⁵ Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 232; Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage," 337.

⁷⁶ Chernykh, *Ancient Metallurgy in the USSR*, 50.

gist Nadja Kotova dates the presence of metal and other prestige objects in some steppe graves in present-day Ukraine to before 4800 BCE and thinks the crucial period of interaction between steppe cultures and Early European Farmers ranges as early as 5300-4800 BCE.⁷⁷ By the mid-fifth millennium, intrusive objects typical of steppe cultures, such as maces, appear in areas leading to Carpathian metal deposits.⁷⁸

Domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats, which arrived with the Early European Farmers in the sixth millennium BCE, become widespread in steppe societies after about 5200 BCE.⁷⁹ It is probably after 5300 BCE that steppe societies around the Dnieper Rapids area in Ukraine undergo a transformation that would lead them to reorganize from competitive foragers controlling predictable and rich fishing resources to a patrilineal segmentary organization, perhaps in response to the social problem of gaining control over coveted resources produced by neighboring productive societies. In effect, it is a hypothesis of this paper that the vicinity and influence of Early European Farmer culture catalyzed the internal transformation of the neighboring steppe communities around the Dnieper area in Ukraine into fully-fledged patrilineal, segmentary societies. The hunter-fisher societies of this region were not the only groups involved in the genesis of steppe pastoralist societies. The process is not currently wholly understood, although it is likely to have taken place somewhere in the interfluvial zone between the Volga and Dnieper Rivers. What is known is that there are individuals from Stredy Stog culture, from the mid-fourth millennium Dnieper area, that already show significant Early European Farmer ancestry.⁸⁰

Hunter-gatherer societies tend to organize into bilateral kin associations and reside with many unrelated individuals.⁸¹ Models of hunter-gatherer behavior have found that one can account for a pattern of co-residence among unrelated individuals in terms of pair bonding and sex

⁷⁷ Nadja S. Kotova, "The Contacts of the Eastern European Steppe People with the Balkan Population during the Transition Period from Neolithic to Eneolithic," in *Der Schwarzmeerraum vom Neolithikum bis die Früheisenzeit (6000-600 v. Chr.): Kulturelle Interferenzen in der Zirkumpontischen Zone und Kontakte mit Ihren Nachbargebieten. Prähistorisches Archäologie in Südosteuropa, Bd. 30 (The Area of the Black Sea from the Neolithic to the Early Iron Age [6000-600 BC]: Cultural Interferences in the Circumpontic Zone and Contacts with Neighboring Areas. Prehistoric Archaeology of Southeastern Europe, vol. 30)*, eds. Vassil Nikolov and Wolfram Schier (Rahden/Westf.: Leidorf, 2018), 311-320.

⁷⁸ Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language*, 254-255.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁸⁰ Individual I4110 dated 3634-3377 cal BCE from Dereivka I is a case in point. Mathieson, a.o., "The Genomic History of Southeastern Europe," Supplement.

⁸¹ Kim R. Hill, a.o., "Co-Residence Patterns in Hunter-Gatherer Societies Show Unique Human Social Structure," *Science* 331, no. 6022 (2011): 1286-1289.

equality in residential decision-making.⁸² How, then, can one explain the transition among hunter-gatherers in the Eneolithic Pontic steppe from an egalitarian pattern of co-residence to one in which a patrilineal segmentary lineage system prevails? From ethnographic evidence, we know that pastoralism is associated with inequality of wealth. Where pastoralism is understood as a heavy but not exclusive reliance on herding domesticated animals for subsistence and exchangeable products, pastoralist systems in the ethnographic record are found to be commonly organized into patrilineal clans, where men are typically the primary owners of livestock wealth.⁸³ Pastoralism can include social strata made up of individuals who live and work in pastoral households without owning livestock. Thus, some individuals are excluded from access to the resource that defines wealth.⁸⁴

Things might not have been very different in the fourth millennium BCE. The accumulation of wealth by some was done by drawing on the labor of the majority, who were excluded from access to the resources that defined the society's understanding of wealth. The accumulation of wealth in patrilineal systems was also enhanced through the accumulation of the work of women, paid for in brideprice.

Cattle need not have been the major source of food for cattle herding to have played a role in increasing stratification in social groups of the Pontic steppe. In sites on the Dnieper Rapids, domesticated cattle were not a predominant source of food as late as the mid-to late-fourth millennium.⁸⁵ Their restriction as a food item is in keeping with the exclusionary organization of a stratified society. This is the pattern of organization that was to spread to Europe and much of Eurasia, up to the Altai mountain range.

Ecological factors play a role on the reliance on pastoralism in the Pontic Caspian steppe, but we should backtrack to what we have learned from 1970s anthropology about the importance of prime fishing locations in setting the stage for segmentary organization.⁸⁶ Sahlins had argued that a segmentary lineage system is a social means of occupying and competing in an already occupied ecological niche.⁸⁷ He described it as an

⁸² Dyble, a.o., "Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands," 797.

⁸³ Janaki Holden and Mace, "Spread of Cattle Led to the Loss of Matrilineal Descent in Africa."

⁸⁴ Borgerhoff-Mulder, a.o., "Pastoralism and Wealth Inequality," 36.

⁸⁵ Simona Mileto, a.o., "Differing Modes of Animal Exploitation in North-Pontic Eneolithic and Bronze Age Societies," *STAR: Science and Technology of Archaeological Research* 3, no. 1 (2018): 112-125.

⁸⁶ Blumberg and Winch, "Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity."

⁸⁷ Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," 323.

organization for successful predation that arises between the less-developed band and the more organized chiefdom and state. Bands are small autonomous groups of twenty to fifty people, consisting of families, but otherwise undifferentiated and unintegrated. A tribe is characterized as a segmented society, composed of equivalent multifamily groups. The segments are the residential and usually proprietary units of the tribe. The primary tribal segment is the smallest multifamily group that exploits an area of tribal resources and forms a residential unit. It seems to range in size between 50 and 250 people.⁸⁸

Sahlins drew a connection between ecological circumstances and conditions in which segmentary lineages develop. They are found in the repetitive or periodic use of restricted, localized resources. The rule of descent links a social group to a valuable resource, access to which the social group can deny to others.⁸⁹ That description fits the conditions of living around the Dnieper Rapids.⁹⁰ This an important point, and Sahlins brings it out: "Lineages do not form in the absence of long-term exploitation of restricted domains."⁹¹

Moreover, since it is complementary opposition that is the structuring element in segmentary lineages, the character of the opposition is a factor in the level of organization achieved by a segmentary lineage.⁹² Stratification can intensify in reaction to the task of prevailing over rival groups. Thus, stratification develops in reaction to the presence and characteristics, such as size, of rival groups. Unilineal kin groups need not be more culturally or productively sophisticated than the target of their aggression. We might pause for a moment to reinforce the relation between unilineal descent groups and warfare. Such groups have an advantage over non-unilineal societies, in which groups overlap and are nondiscrete. Unilineal kin groups can call on individuals who have no conflicting loyalties and respond to or initiate aggression more quickly and more effectively.⁹³

Using 1960s anthropology, we might expect to see incipient stratification along segmentary lines arising among hunter-gatherer bands competing over fishing resources along the course of the Dnieper. This might have had the effect of spreading the propensity to adopt segmentary organization among hunter-gatherer societies further east and north. By the sixth millennium BCE, the presence of Early European Farmer societies producing coveted goods could have intensified the ongoing

⁸⁸ Ibid., 325.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 330.

⁹⁰ D. Y. Telegin and I. D. Potekhina, *Neolithic Cemeteries and Populations in the Dnieper Basin* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1987), 132.

⁹¹ Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," 330.

⁹² Ibid., 333.

⁹³ Ember, Ember and Pasternak, "On the Development of Unilineal Descent."

process of social stratification into segmentary lineages among steppe societies. The competition for coveted goods would have been a phenomenon internal to steppe societies, which drew them closer to the source of the goods they were seeking, as recent findings of ancient DNA support.

Beginning in the fifth millennium, but in larger numbers in late-fourth millennium and onward, the descendants of these stratified societies spread out of their initial zone of development in the Pontic-Caspian steppe and brought their social organization with them. Given the genetic traces that this expansion has left, we have good reason to infer that their segmentary organization was into patrilineal. It is suggested here that steppe societies might not have achieved social stratification as thoroughly and as quickly had they not interacted with more developed, although nonstratified, societies over whose goods they could compete internally amongst themselves. The suggestion is an instance of Sahlins' point that the nature of internal competition depends on the organization of the competing parties and the opportunity to prey on a neighboring society.⁹⁴

The Early European Farmer societies that exhibited at most rank but not hierarchical lineage had a greater quantity and diversity of goods, developed more sophisticated forms of symbolic expression, and achieved greater degrees of innovation. They were not organized to withstand the sustained aggression of which a segmentary society is capable. The spread of diseases, such as *Yersinia pestis*, in networks of trade among Early European Farmers could have been a factor in weakening them.⁹⁵ It is, however, unlikely to have been a determining factor without the difference in social organization with steppe groups to their east.

Far from stimulating cultural and technological sophistication, the success of stratification as an organizing pattern led to cultural and technological regression, which took centuries to overcome. What emerged from the merger between Early European Farmers and migrants from the Pontic-Caspian steppe were hybrid, stratified societies that retooled the innovations of their previously non-stratified hosts. Animal domesticates, modes of transportation, and metals eventually figured prominently. All of them were made to further the needs of a stratified type of organization. In steppe societies of the Middle Volga, by 3000-2900 BCE, burials of victims of human sacrifice indicate a high degree of social inequality.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," 326.

⁹⁵ Nicolás Rascovan, a.o., "Emergence and Spread of Basal Lineages of *Yersinia Pestis* during the Neolithic Decline," *Cell* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2018.11.005>.

⁹⁶ Nina L. Morgunova and Mikhail A. Turetskij, "Archaeological and Natural Scientific Studies of Pit-Grave Culture. Barrows in the Volga-Ural Interfluve," *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 20, no. 2 (2016): 128-149.

The fact is in keeping with the finding that human sacrifice substantially supports social stratification.⁹⁷

Our best bet for playing the role of Hegelian masters in the master-bondsman dialectic are the leaders of hierarchically organized segmentary patrilineal societies. What the Hegelian schema captures, and that we find again in anthropologists of the 1960s such as Sahlins, perhaps without their realizing it, is the Hegelian relational character of the conflicts that set the stage for the development of a social organization that was to spread over Eurasia and bring in its wake unprecedented levels of inequality and violence.

The Hegelian struggle for recognition was never intended to be understood as an animal contest for dominance. But it needs to be reinterpreted in light of concepts and facts uncovered in the intervening centuries. The Hegelian concept of recognition can be reinterpreted to incorporate an adaptive response to how competitors are organized. It is relational in that sense. The Hegelian schema receives a new twist that Hegel did not anticipate, because the protagonists are not just individuals, but individuals in a social organization.

The non-stratified societies neighboring the patrilineal segmentary societies of the steppe, because they were more developed, enabled the appearance of more potently aggressive segmentary organizations in zones contiguous to those in which they were settling. The more sophisticated products stemming from non-stratified societies were prized in the competition for control over resources among steppe groups and within them. In competing for control, societies from the West Eurasian steppe also intensified their own stratified character. In doing so, they eventually took control over adjoining non-stratified, productive societies. But the competition was not between productive, non-stratified societies and groups organized in incipient forms of stratification. It was within and between groups that were stratified or undergoing the process of stratification. Because segmentary lineages have the property of directing aggression outward, they have the power to overtake their neighbors without being technologically or culturally more developed than they are. If a Hegelian-style History is the narrative of the problem of subservience, it is a recounting of the tale of the outward spread of stratification. Culture and civilization is another matter. The story of the outward spread of stratification is not limited to the Eurasian steppe, although the Eurasian steppe happens to be the locus of the most extreme forms of stratification found worldwide.

The process of the spread of stratification could not have started without some ecological factors, such as areas of predictable, rich food

⁹⁷ Watts, a.o., "Ritual Human Sacrifice Promoted and Sustained the Evolution of Stratified Societies."

resources from which others could be excluded. This is most likely the earliest precondition for stratification in the Eurasian steppe. A later factor would have been the availability of large animal domesticates, not initially tied to their function in a horticultural system of food production, but suited to the ecological conditions of the steppe. This too is a resource from which others can be excluded and supports competition among segmentary lineages.

The latter points suggest that a Hegelian schema for the beginnings of inequality must be complemented with an idea taken from the individualistic cost-benefit approach to thinking about society. Excluding others from sharing in a resource that is predictable and divisible is relevant to the development of inequality as stratification. If stratification requires, by definition, restricting access of some members of society to resources considered essential, then exclusion must be fundamental to any account of the origins of inequality. This is also something we must integrate into the Hegelian schema. Coercion is a means of restricting access to what is considered essential to being a member of society. Prestige, or recognition, does not require exclusion. Both egalitarian and rank societies attest to the difference between prestige and excludability. Egalitarian societies and societies with rank show us that there can be a sense of recognition and prestige that does not require excluding others from the basic goods needed to thrive in a society, yet it is not what the Hegelian struggle for recognition is about. It must be about exclusion. That's what sets up the process of spreading stratification.

The extreme forms of inequality recorded in Eurasia can be seen as the distinct contribution of steppe pastoralists, who spread technologies of transportation and metal production throughout an entire continent in the process of competing amongst themselves for elite status in a stratified social organization. This is what Hegel's battle of recognition amounts to. It was a battle that played out in the Eurasian steppe. Its spread was the "explosive blast" that Sahlins ascribed to patrilineal segmentary lineages.

Conclusion

A revised Hegelian conception of the possibility of implementing the project of self-governance for all, which is the denial of servitude, is feasible, but it will need to be recast in the light of insights gained since Hegel on what are contingent geographical and social facts and empirical regularities. Only the connection between exclusion and stratification can be seen as a conceptual matter.

What do we learn about the possibility of promoting greater individual and social flourishing – promoting culture and civilization – from this backward look at early forms of social stratification? It is that two things are needed:

- Counteracting exclusion. Typically, this incorporates counteracting restrictions of access to resources required to be a functioning member of society.

- Enabling a greater variety of personal social relations, not restricted to patrilineal organization. Patrilineal social segmentation is still a widespread mode of organizing individual human relations at the sub-State level. It is not the same thing as effective restriction to resources, but it tends to go hand in hand with it. This is one of the empirical regularities identified by anthropologists of the 1960s and 1970s.

The spectacular development of stratification in Eurasia illustrates both the significance of access restriction and segmentary lineage, which were the initial means of introducing and enforcing inequality. In failing to address these two factors, we will always fall short of taming violence and inequality.

Social inequality understood as stratification, although pervasive, is not essential to cultural refinement. Nietzsche was so wrong about this that his views can be dismissed from a constructive approach to the problem of human flourishing. Hegel, amended with insights from more recent social and biological sciences, still has something to offer. The idea of a narrative of human social existence is not total nonsense, for us, as beings capable of a concern for flourishing. It has to do with how we deal with the problem of social subordination. Subordination is not written in the nature of things. That is the enduring message we get from Hegel.

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List of Contributors

Joseph C. A. AGBAKOBA is professor of philosophy at the University of Nigeria. He is a former president of the Nigerian Philosophical Association; a Regional Coordinator for Africa for the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP); a Vice President for Africa of COMIUCAP (Conférence Mondiale des Institutions Universitaires Catholiques de Philosophie); and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP). He was a team leader in a research group that held a Volkswagen Foundation Grant/Fellowship (2005-2009); he has held the prestigious Georg Forster Fellowship for experienced researchers of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (2010-2012) and the Bayreuth Academy Fellowship (2020) among others. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Cape Coast and the Goethe University Frankfurt. His current research interest is in the field of development philosophy and ethics in relation to Africa and intercultural philosophy. His most recent publication is the book: *Development and Modernity in Africa: An Intercultural Philosophical Perspective* (Cologne: 2019).

Bernd BULDT did his doctoral work on Gödel's theorems with Gert König at the University of Bochum and his habilitation on probabilistic reasoning in the nineteenth century with Wolfgang Spohn at the University of Konstanz. Currently, he is Professor of Mathematical Logic and the Foundations of the Exact Sciences in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Purdue University Fort Wayne, United States. He works primarily in mathematical logic and its philosophy as well as the history and philosophy of science, where his concentration areas are mathematics and probabilistic reasoning in the 19th century. He is the author of numerous publications, a teacher who hopes to make a difference, married to his wife Brigitte with four children, and an outdoor enthusiast. Current book projects (as editor) include a volume on Carnap's Collected Works (the *Logic* of 1954), a collection and translation of Bernays' essays on the foundations and philosophy of mathematics (all with Oxford UP), and (as sole author) a monograph on Johannes von Kries.

Pavol DANCÁK was born in 1965 in Bardejov (Slovakia). He graduated in theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava in 1988 and in the same year he received the priest's ordination. In 2001, under the supervision of Professor Karol Tarnowski he defended his doctoral dissertation in philosophy at the Philosophical Faculty of Papal Theological Academy in Krakow (Poland). In 2005, he qualified in the history of philosophy by defending the work *Historical and philosophical reflec-*

tions of paideia in work of Karol Wojtyła, at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov in Prešov (Slovakia). In 2011 he was appointed as a professor of history of philosophy at that university. At present he is the head of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. He has been a visiting professor at several universities in Poland, USA and Romania. He publishes in the fields of philosophical anthropology and philosophy of education from a historical perspective.

Dariusz DOBRZAŃSKI is an associate Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He has authored numerous articles in Polish and English in the field of social and political philosophy. He is the author of *The Principle of Solidarity: A Study into Social Philosophy* (2013).

Mikhael DUA is an associate professor of philosophy of science at the Faculty of Psychology in Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta Indonesia. He completed his study in philosophy at Ledalero School of Philosophy and Theology, Maumere, Flores, Indonesia (1986), at Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines (1996), and at the Hochschule für Philosophie, Munich, Germany (2003) with a dissertation entitled *Tacit Knowing, Michael Polanyi's Epistemological Exposition*. As a phenomenological philosopher he is doing research on social phenomena in Indonesia. As the Head of the Ethics Development Center at Atma Jaya University, he organizes philosophy and ethics courses at that university. From 2004 to 2011 he was Chairman of the Indonesian Ethics Lecturer Association, and was responsible for organizing the annual discussion on ethics. Recently he has been involved in international discussions organized by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

FU Youde (傅有德) is professor of Jewish thought. He has a PhD from Beijing University, and did post-graduate studies at the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and at Leo Baeck College, London. He was a visiting scholar in Boston University, USA, and Sydney University, Australia. His academic interests are in Jewish thought, comparative studies between Judaism and Confucianism and history of Western philosophy. Major publications include the *History of Jewish Philosophy* (two vols.), *Essays on Jewish Religion and Philosophy*, *Studies in Berkeley's Philosophy* and numerous articles. He is the founder and director of the Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies at Shandong University, as well as of the Institute of Jewish and Israeli Studies at Shandong University and Tel Aviv University. He is vice-president of China Religion Society, and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Jewish Studies.

Ananta Kumar GIRI is Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, India. He has taught and done research in many universities in India and abroad. He has an abiding interest in social movements and cultural change, criticism, creativity and contemporary dialectics of transformation, theories of self, culture and society, and creative

streams in education, philosophy and literature. Some of his most recent publications: *Practical Spirituality and Human Development: Alternative Experiments for Creative Futures* (editor, 2019) and *Transformative Harmony* (editor, 2019). His forthcoming publications include *The Calling of Global Responsibility: New Initiatives in Justice, Dialogues and Planetary Realizations*; *Pragmatism, Spirituality and Society: Border Crossings, Transformations and Planetary Realizations* (editor); *Pragmatism, Spirituality and Society: New Pathways of Consciousness, Freedom and Solidarity* (editor); *Cross-Fertilizing Roots and Routes: Identities, Social Creativity, Cultural Regeneration and Planetary Realizations* (editor); *Roots, Routes and A New Awakening: Beyond One and Many and Alternative Planetary Futures* (editor); *Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo* (editor).

Peter JONKERS is emeritus professor of Philosophy at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. His teaching and research expertise are on philosophy of religion, metaphysics and history of modern philosophy (especially Hegel and his contemporaries). Currently, his research is on questions regarding religious truth, tolerance, religious and cultural diversity and wisdom. Some of his recent publications: “Lost in Translation” (2017); “A Revaluation of Wisdom as a Way to Reconnect Philosophy With the Life-World” (2017); “The Boundaries of Intercultural Dialogue in a World ‘After Babel’” (2018); “Philosophy and (Christian) Wisdom” (2019); “How to break the ill-fated bond between religious truth and violence” (2019); How to Respond to Conflicts over Value Pluralism? (2020); “Self-awareness of Life in Western Philosophy” (2020); “Philosophy and Wisdom” (2020). He is member of the Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies and member of the board of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Varghese MANIMALA holds a PhD from Madras University, and a BL from Andhra University. He is a registered advocate. Since his ordination (1974) he has been engaged in teaching various subjects like philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology, English, etc. He did his post-doctoral studies under the guidance of Raimon Panikkar, the result of which was published under the title: *Toward Mutual Fecundation and Fulfilment of Religions: An Invitation to Transcendence and Dialogue with a Cosmotheandric Vision* (with an Introduction by Panikkar). He was the director of Henry Martyn Institute: International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation (Hyderabad). He has written as well as edited several books, including *Being, Person and Community: A Study in Intersubjectivity with Special Reference to Marcel, Sartre and the Concept of Sangha in Buddhism* (with a Foreword by Panikkar), and *Faith, Reason and Science*. One of his latest works is *Mysticism, Spirituality and Secularism: An Indepth Search for Meaning and Authenticity in a Pluralistic World*.

Asha MUKHERJEE (Dubey) is professor in philosophy (since 2001) at the Department of Philosophy and Religion, and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at Visva-Bharati Central University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India. She has been teaching philosophy at Visva-Bharati, since 1981. She has a PhD from Rajasthan University, Jaipur, India, was a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellow during 1984-85 at Indiana University, Bloomington and has been Visiting Professor at various universities. Her areas of specialization are logic, analytic ethics, applied ethics, Jaina and Buddhist philosophy, religious studies and gender studies. Her recent publications include: "Philosophy and Crisis: An Eastern Solution," in *Philosophy and Crisis: Responding to Challenges to Ways of Life in the Contemporary World* (2018); "Interfaces of Philosophy and Public Policy in India," in *Emerging Interfaces of Social Science and Public Policy in India* (2017); "Globalization-Dynamics and the East-West Dichotomy" in *Warp and Rags of Religion* (2016).

Robinah S. NAKABO is a research fellow with the School of Post Graduate Studies and Research, the Gender Equity in Research (GERA) Central Region Coordinator, and Association of Research on Civil Society in Africa (AROCSA) Fellow. She holds a MA in Philosophy (Makerere), MA in Organizational Leadership (Eastern University, Pennsylvania), and a BA in Social Sciences (Makerere), majoring in gender and development. She has gained teaching experience at the Department of Philosophy at Makerere University and is an awardee of the Gerda Henkel Foundation and Makerere University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences doctoral fellowship. Topic: Followership and Women's Empowerment to Sustainable Development: A case study of women in the National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda. Her research interests are rooted in applied philosophy, specifically, philosophy of gender, political philosophy, philosophy of education, and philosophy of economics. This is coupled with interest in research methodology and theories of knowledge.

William SWEET, FRSC, is Professor of Philosophy and Jules Léger Research Chair at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada. He is a Past President of the Canadian Philosophical Association and of the Canadian Theological Society, President honoraire of the Istituto Internazionale Jacques Maritain (Rome), and a Vice President of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (Washington). The author or editor of some 30 volumes, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society in 2013 and of the Royal Historical Society in 2014, and an Academician of the Canadian Academy of Arts and Humanities (Royal Society of Canada) in 2017.

Michal VALCO is professor of Theology at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. His doctoral studies were completed in 2005 at

the Lutheran Theological Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, and he received his habilitation in religious studies at the Greek Catholic Theological Faculty of Prešov University in Prešov, Slovakia (2013). In 2015, he became a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Salzburg, Austria and in 2019-2020 he worked as Senior Research Fellow at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland. His main areas of academic interests are philosophy of religion (especially Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer), the theology of Martin Luther and Leonard Stöckel, and the situation of the churches under and after the era of totalitarianism. His most important publications include: *Theological Legacy of Luther's Reformation and the Challenges of the Present Age* (2012); *The Concept of Subject and Faith in S. Kierkegaard and D. Bonhoeffer: Ethical Implications* (2016); *Existence in Crisis* (2016).

Astrid VICAS is an Associate Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Saint Leo University, Saint Leo, Florida, USA. She received her PhD in Philosophy from McGill University, Montréal, Canada. Her research draws on texts from a variety of cultures and methods from various disciplines to broaden our philosophical understanding of agency, language, narrative, human excellence, and social organization.

WANG Qiangwei (王強偉) holds a PhD and is assistant professor of Judaism and comparative studies. His main research interests include Judaism in general, and comparative studies of Judaism and Confucianism. His dissertation on Hebrew Prophets and Confucian Sages won the prize of Shandong Province in 2019 and to date he has published six articles on Judaism. He is the assistant of the director of the Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies at Shandong University.

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Purpose

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

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