

Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural Dialogue:
In Search of Harmony in Diversity

Edited by

Edward Demenchonok

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FOREWORD

EDWARD DEMENCHONOK

The theme of this volume is promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as the way toward a more peaceful, just, and harmonious world.¹ Readers may hear the words “in search of harmony” in the title as a bit too idealistic. Invoking such powerful notions generally runs the risk of meeting suspicion and misinterpretation. In today’s polarized and conflicted world, permeated with escalating violence, massive injustice, gross material disparities, and ecological crisis, they may ask: What “harmony” are you talking about? Why even mention this term “harmony,” which, like other humane and nice-sounding notions such as “peace,” “justice,” “human rights,” and “democracy” has been compromised by ideological abuse in hypocritical political language and reduced to a euphemism for manipulative purposes, becoming nothing more than Orwellian “doublespeak”?

Should we abstain from using these notions because they have been heavily abused by politicians and loaded with connotations associated with dominant ideologies? Or should philosophy assume a critical role in clarifying these notions, unpacking their distortions, restoring their genuine meaning, and regaining their role in the ongoing struggle of people for a better life, for peace, human rights, and more harmonious relations within society, within their inner selves, and with nature?

Critical social inquiry should distinguish the genuine meanings of social ideals and conceptions from their ideological distortions. Social ideals must not be trivialized or inflated by their casual use in political discourse or identified with any claims that their fulfillment is “just around the corner.” We need to keep ideals in mind, but hold them accountable to actual circumstances. We also need be wary of political campaigns using mass media sound bites and calculated gestures of propagandists and pundits in the service of governments and economic elites that suggest we are already living in a near-just or almost-harmonious world. These imply that the full realization of the declared goals and ideals requires only blind, unconditional trust, conformity, and loyal subjection to the government.

Perhaps one of the more pernicious forms of ideology of the status quo is the claim that there are no alternatives to present institutions.

Ideals of a free, just, peaceful, and harmonious society guide philosophers in critically analyzing and evaluating existing societies and their problems. Humanistic thinkers approach social and world problems from the perspective of their concern about the plight of individuals and the long-range interests of humanity, indicating possible solutions through non-violent means. In rethinking significant past intellectual achievements, we can rediscover their rich heuristic and philosophical potential and creatively apply them to contemporary experiences.

One classic, yet still relevant, source of guiding light for thinking through these problems is found in the philosophical legacy of Immanuel Kant. He said that the greatest evils are the results of war. He provided a philosophical grounding for the ideal of lasting peace and offered a project to achieve its practical realization through a solution to social and international antagonisms that would lead toward planetary harmony.

Kant accurately diagnosed the dangerous tendencies of modern civilization that remain with us today: authoritarian and paternalistic power structures in society, wars among nations, and the imperial ambitions of powerful states. He warned against a "world republic" for fear that the hegemony of a powerful state would be like a despotic "universal monarchy." He rightly considered all of these to be threats to freedom *as such*, and he warned that they might someday imperil the future of the human race unless they are properly confronted and dispatched. His solution was to relate the prospect of lasting peace to the advancement of a lawful society of free, morally conscious, and enlightened citizens. He believed that within a political community organized around a republican constitution, citizens can deliberate and decide on major political decisions, including those of war and peace. He also believed that most people would prefer to avoid suffering the calamities of war, so that they can be united with other peoples within a peaceful federation of free states. An international system would eventually evolve toward a cosmopolitan order of law and peace.

Kant envisioned a dilemma for humanity. On one side is the continuation of politically organized violence, leading to collective suicide: "destroy one another, and thus find perpetual peace in the vast grave that covers all the horrors of violence along with their authors" (1996, 328). On the other side, the only rational way to avoid such destruction is through a peaceful alternative, to aim for lasting peace through a lawful international order and federation of nations, and a realization of the ideal of a cosmopolitan order. This dilemma is even

more relevant in the Nuclear Age, when perpetual war threatens to turn our entire planet into a graveyard.

Kant's proposed solutions remain as apt and urgent today as they were in his time. His project, however, remains largely an unfinished agenda. So far, humanity has paid a heavy price for the delays and inconsistencies in its implementation, which fail to constrain the escalating violence.

After the end of the Cold War, many hoped that humanity would at last come to its senses and embrace new opportunities for peaceful and collaborative relations among the nations as equals, for the solution of social and global problems. These escalating problems, such as gross material disparities, third-world underdevelopment, stockpiles of thermo-nuclear weapons, and the ecological crisis, threaten the future of humanity.

However, these hopes were soon dashed. Instead of a world order grounded in the rule of law and comity among nations, the world—even before the tragic events of September 11, 2001—confronted the spectacle of a heavily militarized superpower that espouses a strategy of global hegemony. This shift in world politics was a result of the neoconservative “revolution,” of the Bush Doctrine and its implementation in a boundless “global war on terror,” the invasion in Iraq, and so on.

The hegemonic project is pursued as alternative to international law and institutions, opposing to them “moralization” of international politics based on the ethos of a superpower. Many theorists are concerned about the emerging “hegemonic international law” and the possibility of hegemonic capture of humanitarian and universalizing concepts and their distortion into “humanitarian imperialism” or “imperial cosmopolitanism.” In the words of Jürgen Habermas, “The Bush administration has laid the 220-year-old Kantian project of *juridifying* international relations *ad acta* with empty moralistic phrases,” and the neoconservatives impose “the vision of an American global political order that has definitively broken with the reformist program of UN human rights policy” (2006, 103, 28).

Currently, the military preponderance and hegemonic policy of the world's sole remaining military superpower is perceived as a threat by nations that do not want to be dominated; this provokes their defensive reaction. Facing a threat to their security, they try to counter the policy. It triggers counter-alliances, a geopolitical competition, and the arms race, increasing the risk of war. But the real alternative will be not *for* the dominating power to change hands, but for a world free *from* any hegemonic domination.

The problem of war continues to lie at the heart of many other contemporary problems. This creates a vicious circle of violence against human beings and nature, with little room for positive programs of social

and cultural development, disarmament, and preservation of the environment. In this atmosphere of disenchantment, the themes of peace, justice, and preservation of unique cultures have almost disappeared from public discourse.

The twenty-first century seems to be repeating the violent pattern of the past century. But now things are different. These developments are not limited to a sole country. They are on a global scale, threatening the future of the human race. We can no longer deny the obvious, which is that humanity finds itself today on a planet with a rapidly deteriorating ecology and the potential risk of nuclear Holocaust. There exists not only the immediate threat of living on the “powder keg” of the stocks of weapons of mass destruction, which can be detonated by regional wars and explode at any time, but also the “time bombs” of the escalating ecological crisis and of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in the underdeveloped countries. The “end of history” of humanity can come “not as a bang but as a whimper”: an entropy-like, agonizing process of degradation.

The complexity of world problems poses challenges to philosophy and calls for its transformation. Philosophy can critically examine the nature of these problems, their current effects and future consequences, awaken the global consciousness, and assist in understanding the urgent need for joint efforts by nations in finding possible solutions. Philosophy can also contribute to social transformation through envisioning alternative futures.

Philosophy is characterized by openness to all questions and all possibilities, taking nothing for granted. It can fulfill its task only if it approaches the social ideals in relation to reality and uses them as criteria for the evaluation of current social and cultural processes. This means we must compare ideals to empirical reality and reveal their opposites—violence, injustice, deprivation of rights, undemocratic power, or disharmony—to observe how close our reality is to the ideals or to some political program that appeals to ideals, and which claims to be a road-map toward their realization. Such critical assessment will help us see obstacles and problems on the way toward achieving these goals and help determine which issues need to be solved to facilitate progress toward, if not an “ideal,” then at least a realistically better, more peaceful and just world.

Such a normative critique shows a glaring discrepancy between declared ends and the means: world stability through power politics and the hegemony of a global empire; security through militarization and global electronic mass surveillance; prosperity of the few at the expense of the many; economic growth at the cost of destroying the environment; and forcible “spread of democracy” in violation of international law. The imposition of democracy and human rights by military force or by the

unilateral actions of either one nation or a group of nations (*condominium*), within the framework of power politics, cannot succeed in the long term. Traditional policies have failed to solve the real problems. They have not removed the root causes of the problems, but have made them even worse while also generating new problems. Thus, new approaches and policies are needed.

In contrast, a call for genuine harmony invokes a different philosophy, at the center of which is human freedom and the vital interests of humanity. It promotes an ethics of nonviolence and planetary co-responsibility. It attempts to bridge the ideal and the real world, aiming for a more harmonious world—including peace and cooperation among the nations, freedom, justice, democratic equality, realization of human rights, dialogical relationships, conditions for harmonious development of individuals, flourishing of diverse cultures, and preservation of the natural environment. This critical view of harmony needs not deny differences and conflicts of interests, but it approaches them in a balanced, egalitarian, and dialogical manner. It considers the legitimate interests of all and their rights of participation in the decision-making process regarding the issues that affect them. It asserts that morally good ends can be achieved only through morally good means.

Intercultural dialogue is a condition and an indispensable means for progression toward a more peaceful and harmonious world. In its normative role, dialogism can serve as the standard for evaluation and critique of the existing relationships within a socially-culturally diverse world. It can also serve as a regulative principle in the ennoblement of human relationships. Dialogism should become the norm broadly recognized by both the scholarly community and the “reasoning public” for ways of thinking and in relationships on all levels—intersubjective, social, cultural, and international. Philosophy can contribute to the further grounding and assertion of the normative status of dialogism.

However, on the one hand, dialogue—as the way toward removing divisive prejudices, justly resolving conflicts of interests, and collaborating on solutions to problems—has never been so urgent as now, in a world facing problems that threaten the future of humanity. On the other hand, the task of implementing dialogical relationships has never seemed as difficult as it is in today’s politically and economically polarized world. While diverse cultures and culturally embedded philosophical traditions tend toward a dialogical interaction, the political abuse of cultural differences continues to result in “culture wars” and violent “clashes.”

Asymmetry of political-economic power, domination, and a homogenizing effect of globalization in its hegemonic version create conditions

conducive neither to the preservation of unique cultures of nations and minority groups nor to the dialogue of cultures as equals. Thus, today we see only embryonic rather than full-fledged manifestations of intercultural dialogue. The full realization of its potentials is still to come.

Philosophy is committed to a priori respect for all human beings as potential participants in intersubjective and intercultural dialogue. Intercultural dialogue should have inter-philosophical global dialogue as its epistemological and ontological foundation. Philosophers are facing a twofold task: to examine the conditions for intercultural dialogue, while at the same time striving for a better understanding of the existing problems which hinder dialogue, and to seek possible solutions. A dialogue that is beginning to take place among the various world philosophies contributes theoretically and practically to fostering intercultural dialogue, which, in turn, may serve as a model for constructive political interactions, thus promoting a more peaceful, just, collaborative, and harmonious world. The realization of human dialogic potential ultimately depends on us.

Possible solutions to—or at least mitigation of—the world problems that concern all human beings are related to alternative, dialogically oriented, and more humane models of society. It is necessary to go beyond instrumental rationality and to be open to cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, humanizing education, and the ethics of co-responsibility. The solution to these problems can be achieved only by peaceful means, based on strengthening international law and institutions, increasing global consciousness and progressive movements, and aiming for a gradual realization of the ideal of a cosmopolitan order of law and peace.

It is our hope that this volume will help readers to see that meaningful choices remain, for all of us, as peoples, nations, and individuals.

Note

¹ Essays in this volume are based mainly on the keynote addresses and other papers presented at the conference of the International Society for Universal Dialogue, summer 2010, Beijing, China. The general theme of the conference was “Dialogue among Cultures: Peace, Justice, and Harmony.” I would like to begin by thanking the Beijing International Studies University for hosting the conference. Further gratitude is expressed to the estate of the late Jens A. B. Jacobsen for its generous financial support. I am also grateful to Keping Wang for his assistance, particularly in proofreading the chapters of this volume on Chinese philosophy and culture. Thanks also to Elizabeth D. Boepple for her help in editing the volume.

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INTRODUCTION

STRIVING FOR DIALOGUE AND HARMONY IN A CONFLICTED WORLD

EDWARD DEMENCHONOK AND KEPING WANG

Intercultural dialogue is underpinned largely by the social, cultural, and world problems that concern all human beings. These problems are the subject of dialogue among philosophers at conferences and through publications. This volume contributes to the ongoing debates in philosophy and cultural studies regarding the problems of cultural identity and relations among different cultures, as well as the role of intercultural dialogue in striving for a more peaceful, just, and harmonious world. It responds to the need to find alternatives to deal with a twofold problem: the homogenizing consequences of the current globalization in its hegemonic version on the one hand, and ethnocentric fragmentation and religious/ideological fundamentalism on the other.

The contributors, from different countries, seek a common ground in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. In approaching these issues dialectically, they argue for the preservation of uniquely diverse cultures and for dialogic (respectful and mutually complementing) relations among them based on universal human values. They are therefore preoccupied with the consideration of cultural diversity and universality.

The contributors approach these problems philosophically and from a broad historical perspective. The chapters of the volume reconstruct the ideas of dialogue and harmony as expressed in different cultural traditions, including Daoism, Confucianism, Ancient Greek, and Indian philosophy, as well as contemporary Latin-American, Russian, and other philosophies. At the same time, the contributors view the ideas of dialogue and harmony in the current setting and their normative role in the analysis of the complex and conflicting socio-cultural tendencies in their own countries and the world over. In contrast to the concepts of “culture wars” and “clash of civilizations,” this volume articulates the ideas of intercultural dialogue as mutually beneficial for each culture and as a condition for their flourish-

ing. The volume connects the ideas of dialogue and harmony to the philosophy of nonviolence and the planetary ethics of co-responsibility.

The volume approaches the theme of harmony and other concepts from the perspective of the cultural diversity of our world and interrelations of the cultures, arguing for the necessity and significance of intercultural dialogue. The contributors do not pretend to provide any final “answers” or ready “solutions,” but rather view their modest goal as participating in the ongoing discussions about these problems and to invite the readers to join them in critical reflections and constructive conversations.

This introduction will start with a brief review of some main themes elaborated in the chapters of the volume, and then the second part will introduce the topic of harmony.

The Harmonizing Potential of Intercultural Dialogue

The chapters of the volume are organized in three thematic parts. The first, “Cultural Identity and Intercultural Dialogue as an Alternative to Homogenizing Globalization” addresses the importance of a quest for intercultural dialogue and the conditions for its realization, as well as the problems that need to be solved for a dialogue of equals to prevail over the monologic dicta of the powerful. Then the question is: A broad cross-cultural philosophical dialogue about what? Hence, the volume proceeds toward the content of an intercultural philosophical dialogue addressing some of its major themes. Intercultural philosophy not only affirms the principles of intercultural dialogue and the conditions for its realization, but helps to clarify issues pertaining to the thematic content of such a dialogue regarding universally valid themes in the culturally diverse world. One of these themes focuses on harmony in cultural diversity, which is explored in the essays of the second part, “In Search of Harmony in Diversity.” Some other themes for the dialogue, such as justice, human rights, democracy, non-violence, and cosmopolitan order are discussed in the third part, “Intercultural Philosophical Dialogue Facing World Problems.”

Diverse cultures all express, in one way or another, the ideas of dialogue and harmony. At the same time, cultures themselves are complex and far from being harmonious either internally or in their external interrelationships. Cultural diversity contains a rich potential and opens new opportunities for the creative self-expression of individuals and for an interactive development of cultures and human liberation. But cultural identity is also used as an ideological weapon in political power-games under the banners of nationalism, racism, and religious fundamentalism. Freedom of cultural self-identification presupposes a responsibility for respecting the

same freedom for others, thus promoting mutually beneficial intercultural relations through dialogue. Dialogic relationships are an indispensable means for progression toward a more harmonious world. Unless mutually respectful dialogic interrelations among culturally diverse people prevail, the continuation of historical patterns of culture wars and clashes of civilizations will be even more devastating in the globalized world.

Striving for Cultural Identity and Intercultural Dialogue

The issues of cultural identity, diversity, and the relationship among different cultures came to the forefront of social consciousness during the second half of the twentieth century. After World War II and the establishment of the United Nations, the process of decolonization and movements for national liberation and cultural identity stimulated the emergence of Latin American, African, and other “Third World philosophies.” These emerged in the form of the philosophical self-consciousness of ex-colonial nations, challenging Eurocentrism and striving for the creation of their own thought in order to help their quest for cultural identity and independent socio-cultural development. In the search for their originality, or “authenticity,” they turned focus to their own cultural traditions. However, their further development requires them to interrelate with other philosophical traditions and to elaborate their intercultural dimensions (Demenchonok 2010, 448). In the historical development of these philosophies, they show a tendency to evolve from initial ethnocentrism to more critical self-reflection and openness to intercultural dialogue.

A dialogue among the various world philosophies suggests a broad conception of philosophy’s mission and place in the world, which William L. McBride calls “the globalization of philosophy” (2010, 428). Philosophers from various countries have made distinctive contributions to the dynamics of inter-philosophical and intercultural dialogue. Their ponderings represent various perspectives and theories, in many respects overlapping or complementing each other, and forming a polyphonic interaction of creativity.

In this polyphony, the voice of Latin American philosophers stands out. Long ago, they had addressed relevant issues related to interculturality, and they created in practice a new, original type of culturally embedded thought—Latin American Philosophy. They helped advance and develop the ideas of intercultural philosophy from the viewpoint of Latin America and other developing regions, applying them to the philosophical North-South dialogue in the search for a solution to social and global problems.

Since the late 1980s, Latin American and German philosophers have initiated a series of seminars in response to the need for an intercultural dialogue in philosophy, which would help to overcome the traditional dominance of Eurocentric discourse. The project was coordinated by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, a Cuban philosopher residing in Germany. Two main philosophical currents came to the forefront of the dialogue: discourse ethics and the liberation philosophy, represented respectively by Karl-Otto Apel and Enrique Dussel. The first seminar of this dialogue took place in 1989, in Freiburg, and the second in Mexico City, in 1991. These were followed by seminars on a regular basis on both continents, in which intellectuals from other regions of the world also participated.

In this volume, the Latin American philosophical thought regarding intercultural dialogue is represented by Enrique Dussel, Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, and Jorge Gracia. Dussel's chapter "Bridging the Gaps: The Voices of Non-Western Philosophies in Global Polylogue" addresses the problem of dialogue among cultures and among culturally embedded philosophies within a broad historical and global perspective. It points out the historically inherited and recent obstacles, such as the asymmetrical situation of its participants, which are obstructing equality in dialogue. Dussel asserts that intercultural dialogue should have an inter-philosophical global dialogue as its epistemological and ontological foundation. This cross-cultural philosophical dialogue, or polylogue, should include the philosophers and philosophies of both Western (the industrialized global North) and non-Western (the developing global South) regions. He addresses the problem of what he calls "philosophical coloniality" and the necessity of fostering a dialogue among philosophers of the countries of the global South. As an alternative to the hegemonic "univocal universality," he envisions an emerging new world, which will be an analogical pluriverse of different cultures engaged in dialogue "in a permanent process of creative cross-fertilization."

The theoretical foundation of philosophy's contribution to intercultural dialogue is analyzed by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt in his chapter "Toward a Philosophy of Intercultural Dialogue in a Conflicted World." He points to the ambivalence of human dialogicality, stemming from the existential contradictions of the human condition in each person as well as a structural contradiction in history. The existing asymmetries of power and marginalization of traditional cultures need to be changed in order to provide favorable conditions for dialogue. Philosophy's contribution to intercultural dialogue in a conflicted world consists of defending the culture of reason in response to irrationality and the "aphasia" that condemns humanity to conflict. Philosophy should show the path of dialogue as the only alterna-

tive for the humanization of our world. Fornet-Betancourt views philosophy as culturally embedded and elaborates a project of “the intercultural transformation of philosophy.” The emerging intercultural philosophy introduces a new perspective in our understanding of what philosophy is, of its history, its methods, and forms of articulation.

Much of the conflict that permeates the world today is the result of clashes between cultures, religions, races, nations, and ethnic groups. Is there a way to establish dialogue and resolve these conflicts? Jorge Gracia provides an answer to this question in his chapter “Social Identities: Conflict and Resolution.” He highlights the obstacles to the proper understanding of social identities which are characterized by two major dilemmas: “essentialism” versus “eliminativism,” and “generalism” versus “particularism.” Instead, he proposes a third approach, which he calls the “familial-historical view of social identities,” which opens the doors to dialogue and understanding, diminishing the possibility of conflict among peoples from different cultures.

The contribution of Russian philosophy to intercultural dialogue is reviewed in the chapter “Bakhtin’s Dialogism and Current Discussions on the Double-Voiced Word and Transculture” by Edward Demenchonok. It is focused on Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic philosophy, highlighting its idea of the universal character of dialogic relationships, which form the very foundation of all human activities—self-consciousness, intersubjective relationships, cognition, and cultural creativity—from the personal level to the most general level of dialogue among cultures. The chapter examines dialogism in Bakhtin’s philosophy of language, especially in the theory of the double-voiced word, as well as its influence on contemporary studies of the phenomenology of indirect speech. Dialogism, and all linguistic phenomena related to it, is a constitutive characteristic of language. Thus the various forms of dialogue related to language (including a dialogue of cultures) bear this inherent dialogic property immanent in language. Attention is paid to spiritual practice and the dialogue of spiritual traditions, as interpreted in the theory of “synergic anthropology.” Bakhtin’s ideas of outsideness, freedom, and creativity found their contemporary elaboration in the theory of transculture. The principles of dialogic philosophy can serve as a theoretical basis of a new, dialogical civilization.

In his “Toward a Phenomenology of Intercultural Dialogue,” Marc Lucht examines the manner in which phenomenology can offer an alternative to a nihilistic vision of life. He enumerates the resources that phenomenology can offer for reflection on intercultural dialogue. Phenomenology’s pointing to the possibility of non-relative norms can orient our attempts to search for common ground with interlocutors from alien cultures

and resolve disagreements peacefully. Phenomenology can give us hope that dialogue is not merely manipulative, and that through dialogue and mutual criticism, we can find jointly recognized measures, enabling us to correct and improve our moral commitments and facilitate consensus.

The complexity of the dialogic relationship between different cultures is analyzed in Andrew Fiala's chapter "Eurocentrism, Hospitality, and the Long Dialogue with China." Genuine dialogue between cultures is enriching, but the potential can be undermined by tendencies toward ethnocentrism, fundamentalism, and domination. Modern European Christian culture must not practice hegemony. Breaking such hegemony—"decentering," to use Habermas's term—is a condition for genuine dialogue across cultures. According to Fiala, the long centuries of interaction between Europe and China confirm the decentering of European Christianity. There is no "center"; rather, there are cultural spheres that overlap and develop against and with one another. In such a decentered world, we are each simultaneously both guests and hosts, engaged in a dialogue that has been going on for centuries.

The Concept of Harmony in Philosophical Traditions and Its Relevance

How to conduct a fruitful dialogue among cultures? Xin Ru holds that the idea of harmony in diversity advocated by Chinese traditional philosophy may serve as a basis for conducting such a dialogue in its modern setting. In his chapter, "'Harmony in Diversity' and Dialogue among Cultures," he analyzes the concept of harmony in Chinese philosophy and its relevance in the global context of today's world. As a philosophical concept, harmony's primary premise is the existence of different things in the world, and then it aims to take them as an integral whole and lead them to harmonious development and concord. The true meaning of harmony is not to agree passively with the maintenance of the status quo, but actively to advocate taking the initiative to conduct dialogue and exchange among different cultures. Ru formulates some basic principles that need to be accepted in order to carry on dialogue among cultures. First, all the parties to the dialogue should acquire awareness of globalization and have a common goal. Second, the dialogue should be conducted on the basis of full equality. Third, the dialogue needs a friendly atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. Fourth, all the parties to the dialogue should have the spirit of tolerance regarding the differences among cultures. The implementation of these principles will benefit the maintaining of world peace and stability, and the flourishing of world cultures.

In his chapter “A Harmonious Society in a Harmony-Conscious Culture,” Keping Wang examines the concept of harmony in Chinese philosophy and studies its relevance. He analyzes the project of constructing “a harmonious society” (*héxié shehui*) in contemporary China. Some teleological aspects of the project are viewed from the perspective of Confucianism as a harmony-conscious cultural heritage. Wang focuses on issues such as the orientation of the harmonious society, the importance and measurement of harmony, the distinction between harmony and uniformity, the dialectic mode of harmony versus conflict, and the building process of the harmonious society as such. The harmonious society is advocated as part of the Confucian heritage, in which harmony is always emphasized as a solution to social strife or conflict, and as an ideal of good governance. This concept acknowledges the existence of opposition and conflict within things and among persons, but claims that the final solution to conflict is hidden in the power of harmony. In the political culture, the principle of harmonization without being patterned or standardized tends to encourage an organic synthesis between the rule of law and the rule by virtue, according to the cultural legacy in China. It preserves the differences but seeks a common ground among them, aiming at peace and justice.

Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. This idea is elaborated in the chapter “Four Aspects of *Hé* (Harmony 和) in Daoism,” by Xia Chen and Yan Liu. Two schools of thought, Confucianism and Daoism, assert the oneness of heaven and humanity. Nevertheless, they differ in their emphasis on different aspects of *hé*. Confucianism stresses the importance of the moral properties of heaven and adapts them to person-to-person relationships. Daoism advances the theory of mutual correspondence between heaven and humanity. The goal of Daoist practice is the establishment of harmony on different levels: between the body and mind of the individual, between the individual and its surroundings, and between the individual and the cosmos. The ultimate, ideal level of attainment is of oneness, of merging oneself with the environment in a sense of cosmic union that alone can lead to complete fulfillment, and further, the transcending of the self.

The Pythagorean concepts of number and harmony have been expressed mainly by Plato’s dialectic of opposites and by the musical scale and harmony, which indicate the applicability of mathematics to physical phenomena and, in human experience, to the dialogue of cultures and mutual understanding. This is examined in Leonidas Bargeliotes’s chapter, “Whitehead’s Concepts of Number and Harmony: Their Background, Transformation, and Use.” His analysis of Alfred North Whitehead’s philosophy of number and harmony points to Pythagoras, who saw the cos-

mos in terms of number and mathematical ratios or harmonies. In the system of organic philosophy, the ladder of ascent is similar to that of Pythagorean Plato. Whitehead's philosophy of organism culminates in the notion of peace or harmony of harmonies, which completes the panorama of a civilized life, the perfect attainment of coexistence and of a peaceful way of life.

Xiujuan Chen's chapter "Contemporary Chinese Culture in a Diverse World" analyzes the development of Chinese culture under the impact of modernization and globalization. Chen emphasizes the importance of "cultural self-consciousness" and of seeking common ground while preserving differences. Given the process of cultural globalization and the trend toward cultural diversity, there is a need for a better understanding of the development of traditional Chinese culture. The inner core of Chinese culture is the concept of harmony between human beings and nature, an ecological view that emphasizes harmony, co-existence, and co-prosperity between humanity and nature. Chen argues that there is a need to deepen intercultural dialogue, communication, and integration between one nation's own culture and other nations' cultures to gradually incorporate the particularity of national culture into the universality of human culture.

The Critical Role of Intercultural Philosophy in Addressing the World Problems

One role philosophy fulfills is to perform a critical analysis of social and global problems—such as wars, poverty, massive injustice, human rights violations, and the ecological crisis—, seeking root causes and suggesting possible solutions, which would lead toward a less conflicted and more harmonious and humane world. Intercultural philosophy is important in this respect, for it challenges Eurocentric patterns, idealized concepts of Western society, and a hegemon-centered world. Philosophers from diverse cultures and perspectives thereby address the problems of their own countries or groups, acquiring a more critical view of the world and engendering a reassessment of existing theories.

From the perspective of intercultural dialogue, William McBride, in his chapter "The Philosophical Quest for Perfect Justice," examines some of the concepts of political philosophy such as justice, peace, and harmony, in comparison to the realities of our world. Philosophy is viewed not as confined to abstract, universal principles detached from empirical realities, but rather as bridging both. It is by alternating between empirical realities and the world of principles, and by using realities to rethink the principles in a critical light, that philosophy best carries out its unique task. With this

approach, McBride critically analyzes John Rawls's theory of justice and the so-called original position. He points out that the philosophical quest for perfect justice, as exemplified in the writings of Rawls and his followers, stands in striking contrast to the massive *injustices* rooted in dominance that pervade the real world. The whole pretense that we can describe the nature of the perfectly just society and then consider the society in which we live as a "*nearly just*" one is ultimately an illusion. The era of the ideal, self-congratulatory theory, presenting the West as comprising "*nearly just societies*," has come to an end and needs to be critically revised. The term "justice" should not be reduced to particular legal systems and the prejudices of those who control them. A struggle against *injustices* needs a reorientation toward theories of *injustices*. This is important for a broader theory of society. The philosophers' task is to pursue a critical analysis of the social system. McBride suggests that wisdom from other cultures and philosophical traditions can be helpful for this task. Intercultural philosophical dialogue is facilitating this.

The necessity of a reorientation toward a broader theory of society is also addressed by Enrique Dussel in his chapter, "No Democracy without *Both Representation and Participation*." Dussel examines some of the themes currently being debated in social and political philosophy, such as representative and participatory forms of democracy. He points out two problems: First, some liberal forms of representative democracy are frequently mistakenly equated with the definition of pure democracy. Second, there is a tendency to frame the issues involved in the debates in terms of antagonistic extremes such as participative democracy versus representative democracy. Instead, Dussel argues that these terms must be approached dialectically to consider both participative and representative democracy, to strengthen the state from the horizon of the dissolution of the state, and to exercise participative democracy with political leadership. According to him, the most far-reaching revolution of the twenty-first century will be the liberation of political communities in representative democratic states, which will institutionalize a participatory democracy of the impoverished majority of civil society (from community assemblies at the neighborhood or village level to different kinds of social movements). Democratizing the electronic means and networks of communication and putting them in the hands of the citizens is an essential prerequisite for real democracy. This presupposes a significant growth in people's consciousness regarding political problems, and in defense of their rights.

Regaining the Ideals of Human Rights, Peace, and Cosmopolitan Order

The current discussions on the justification of the idea of human rights are reviewed in Edward Demenchonok's chapter, "Universal Human Rights in a Culturally Diverse World." This examines Immanuel Kant's concept of human rights as freedom and his ideal of cosmopolitan order, arguing for their relevance. Analysis of the recent attempts by Nicholas Wolterstorff and Michael Perry to ground the concept of human rights on religion shows that their claim that religious worldviews provide the only intelligible foundation faces serious challenges in a pluralistic, culturally diverse world. With Immanuel Kant in the background, the chapter is focused on the theories that seek to develop an account of human rights that does not depend upon controversial metaphysical or religious doctrines. It examines an approach to grounding human rights from the perspective of discourse ethics, as developed by Karl-Otto Apel, Jürgen Habermas, Rainer Forst, and Seyla Benhabib. It argues for a universal concept of human rights as a regulative principle or normative yardstick for the evaluation and the possible critique of all states, including democratic ones. To the "imperial" version of cosmopolitanism is opposed critical and dialogic cosmopolitanism. The analysis concludes that the true solution to the problem of protecting human rights can be achieved only by peaceful means, based on strengthening international law and institutions and aiming to a gradual realization of the ideal of a cosmopolitan order of law and peace.

How to practice the principles of non-violence and achieve peace in a world permeated by violence? This was a question to which Mohandas Gandhi tried to find an answer. It is analyzed in Y. V. Satyanarayana's chapter, "Gandhi's Contribution to Non-Violence and Global Peace," which analyzes the distinctive features of Gandhi's views of non-violence, focusing on the concept of *satyagraha*, non-violent direct action, as a technique to resolve social conflict in a non-violent way. The fundamental principles connected with *satyagraha* include truth, non-violence, and self-suffering. Gandhi advocated the need for morally acceptable means for attaining morally justified ends. *Satyagraha* was a method that can conquer evil by good, untruth by truth, egoism by altruism, enmity by friendliness, and brutality by gentleness. Its followers employ strategies such as non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and fasting. Its most important goal is to bring a change in the hearts and minds of people. An enduring peace can only be ensured by non-violent means.

Globalization, intercultural coexistence, human rights protection, and our co-responsibility to preserve peace, the environment, and sustainable

world resources are unprecedented challenges that call for a cosmopolitan perspective. Contemporary cosmopolitanism tends to be responsive to cultural diversity and power relations in today's global conditions. In "After Babel: Journeying Toward Cosmopolis," Fred Dallmayr examines the conditions for progression in the direction of cosmopolitan order. He points to gross material disparities, global warming, and hegemonic tendencies toward a global "central command structure" as problems to be solved on the way to this goal. Equally important is to regain social ethics and to cultivate co-responsibility and shared well-being. To homogenizing globalization Dallmayr opposes the importance of the diversity of languages, customs, and cultural traditions. It is necessary to go beyond instrumental rationality and be open to dialogue and listening, cross-cultural and inter-religious interaction, ethics, and spiritual insight. In contrast to the idea of a uniform global super-state hegemonically controlling the world, "cosmopolis" means a shared aspiration negotiated among local or national differences. The contemporary period is viewed as part of a transitional phase from an international to a cosmopolitan order. It is a hope predicated on the progressive maturation and transformation of humanity.

Intermezzo: On the Modes of Harmony

The ideals of harmony have been expressed, in various ways, in cultural heritages across the world since ancient times. Their commonality and relevance are remarkable in our culturally diverse, conflicted, and globally interrelated world. Harmony is a general notion; its semantics include meanings related to music, arts, social relationships, and the inner world of human beings.

The term "harmony" derives from the Greek *ἁρμονία* (*harmonia*) meaning joint, agreement, concord (from the verb *ἁρμόζω*, *harmozō*, to fit together, to join). In Greek mythology, Harmonia (*Ἄρμονία*) was the goddess of harmony and concord. Her Roman equivalent was Concordia, the goddess of agreement, understanding, and marital harmony. Their opposites are Eris and Discordia. Webster's dictionary defines "harmony" as "accord in facts, views, or acts; sympathetic relationship; friendship; inner calm; a pleasing integration of components. Music: the science of cords; coincident combination of musical tones." It lists the synonym as "agreement," which in turn has its synonyms: accordance, concordance, concord, concurrence, harmony, understanding, unison, bargain, compact, contract, covenant, pact, stipulation. European languages have equivalent terms for harmony with similar meanings, and the Chinese dictionary offers synonymous counterparts such as "*hé*" (harmony or peace), "*héxié*" (harmony or

concordance), “*hémù*” (peaceful co-existence or on good terms), and “*hèshēng*” (consonance in sounds).¹

In what follows, we will take a closer look at the concept of harmony in Chinese philosophy: the principle of *hé* (harmony) remains paramount to all Chinese cultural ideals.

The term is ubiquitous in music and the fine arts in general, and defined in terms of how contrasting elements, such as a higher and lower tone, combine to make a pleasant whole. Confucianism played an important role in the formulation of early Chinese music. It asserts that musical harmony helps people to become more civilized and creates balance within individuals, nature, and society. Daoism views harmony as the balance of *yin* and *yang*, which describes how seemingly opposite or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world. Analogously, we seek social harmony, a balance between the interests of individuals and those of society.

Harmony was prized for its ability to assuage conflicts that had long haunted the ancient Chinese, especially during the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE). However, the practical relevance and worth of harmony can be better appreciated by elucidating its three modes, namely, the “dialectic,” the “synthetic,” and the “receptive.”

The dialectic mode calls for wise treatment of the interactive connection between the opposites (*dui*) within forms of things (*xiang*) in the light of the principle of harmonizing or conciliating (*hé*), the conflict (*chou*) caused by the opposition (*fǎn*) as proposed by Zhang Zai, a later Confucian thinker in the Song Dynasty:

As there are forms or aspects of things, there are their opposites within (*yǒu xiang si yǒu dui*). These opposites will likely stand in opposition to what they do (*dui bi fǎn qi wei*). Opposition leads to conflict (*yǒu fan si yǒu chou*). Conflict is then to be harmonized and resolved (*chou bi hé er jie*). (1975, 25; cf. Wing-tsit Chan 1973, 506)

These opposites are not merely interdependent, but also interactive in their respective functions. Consequently, they will lead to their co-existence in an ontological sense, and to their opposition (*fǎn*) in a kinetic sense. As the power of their opposition grows, it gives rise to the tension of conflict (*chou*). According to Zhang Zai, *chou* will be removed or reduced as the opposites are brought into unity or concord by virtue of harmonization or reconciliation (*hé*). This emphasis corresponds to the conventional focus on the value of union or convergence among the opposites or differences in the Chinese way of thinking, and thus claims that the appropriate solu-

tion to interpersonal conflict rests on the power of harmony, which emphasizes a “win-win” approach.

This argument echoes Heraclitus’ proposal on the harmony of opposites. According to him, “what is opposite agrees, and from differing things comes the fairest harmony, and all things happen according to strife” (2010, pt. 1, text 71, 161). In other words, without opposition, there is no agreement. Heraclitus was also aware of the animate features of strife, stressing it as characteristic of eternal flux that, in its violent form, should be eliminated: “Violence has more need to be extinguished than a conflagration” (*ibid.*, text 132, F87, 171).

The synthetic mode of harmony connotes a dynamic process of creative transformation, during which all elements collaborate while maintaining their individual identities, just as when spices are dissolved, they become inextricable parts of the soup but retain their unique flavor. This is a creative process. It should draw on diversity in a harmonized form rather than imposing a rigid pattern of conformity. It emphasizes compatibility among elements whose differences are treated as indispensable. The result is a vital new organic whole in a reconstructive and recurring system.

Conversely, imposing a pattern of conformity rejects unique features of diversity. Hence, it is characterized as a mechanical multiplication of the same identity. Just as the soup analogy shows, such sameness has no unique ingredients to make the whole rich and appealing. Such being the case, imposing patterns is assumed to be static and short-lived, whereas diversity in a harmonized form is thought to be dynamic and long-lived (*hé neng sheng wu, tong ze bu ji*).

The receptive mode contains a moral message about empathetic sensitivity to others. Confucius asserts:

The gentleman (*junzi*) harmonizes his relationship with others but never follow them blindly (*hé er bu tóng*). The petty man (*xiaoren*) just follows others blindly disregarding any principle of harmony (*tóng er bu hé*). (13:23)²

Here the gentleman acts upon the principle of harmonization without imposing a pattern, while the petty man imposes conformity without harmony. Harmonization without imposed conformity is by nature inclusive and tolerant. It is receptive to different but constructive components. It hankers after unity in diversity while revolting against any hegemonic dominance of the one over the many. Harmonization advocates see the world from the viewpoint of others in search of the common good instead of forming a rigid group that places personal interests ahead of the welfare of all. Conversely, conformity without harmonized diversity is exclusive and intoler-

ant, rejecting any factors except the absolutely similar ones. Thus, it disregards the nature of harmonization and the virtue of justice altogether. Such imposition ignores public ethics in its pursuit of conformity and groupism of an exclusive kind without thinking of doing justice to others and society as a whole.

The categories of harmony (*hé*) and uniformity (*tóng*) indicate two different moral codes. The former is oriented towards the common good and is grounded in the virtues of *rén* (reciprocal benevolence, human-heartedness, kindness, and love) and *yì* (righteousness or justice). It is possible only when personal cultivation develops into the high state of gentlemanliness that enables one to go beyond pursuing one's own interests. The latter is directed toward the individual good and is determined by one's own desires (*yù*) and profits (*lì*). It is confined to selfishness and working at the cost of others' welfare. It is by nature "a thief of morality" (*de zhi zei ye*) who will ruin all the virtues.³

These three modes of harmony make up the main part of the harmoniousness. In summary, the dialectic mode is socio-politically teleological as it is principally intended to approach the ultimate goal of harmonized human relations and social order by means of state administration. The synthetic and receptive modes are methodological, referring to ways to synthesize different components to foster a unity in diversity while avoiding arbitrary imposition of conformity over the symphonic many. It is based on the conviction that the harmonization of human relations is feasible providing individual passions and desires are in harmony with the best interests of all.

Thus harmony can be seen in the morally virtuous social order in the same way as we experience it in music or art, with the ultimate goal being universal order and beauty. As it is written in the Analects (*Lun yu*):

In the process of conducting the rites, seeking harmony is the most valuable principle (*lǐ zhī yōng, hé wéi guì*). Of the ways prescribed and cherished by the ancient sage-rulers, this is the most beautiful and therefore followed alike in dealing with matters great and small. Yet, if harmony is sought merely for its own sake without having it regulated by the rites, the principle will not work in fact. (Confucius 1995, 1:12, 69)⁴

Why is harmony so important? As is recorded in historical documents, the rites in ancient China were employed comprehensively as a kind of performing art on certain occasions of social interaction such as ancestral sacrifice and divinity worship. The performance would involve not only rules of proprieties or rituals, but also music and dance combined. In its actual performance as a process of organic cooperation and integration,