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Istanbul: August 8-9, 2003

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The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective



Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

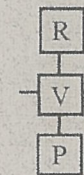
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An International Conference

THE DIALOGUE OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS A Global Perspective

Istanbul
August 8-9, 2003



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The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective

- person and community; rights and duties; Cultural Foundations for Civil Society and Cooperation between Peoples;
- globalization as the new integrating context for contemporary life; pluralism and tolerance; dialogue vs hegemony;
- ethics: the bases of values in multiple cultures and their implications for issues of the environment and of public service.

Drawing on the world wide RVP series of studies this conversation will emerge from the ground up, rich with contributions of the many cultural contexts. It will seek: to identify present challenges and move on to chart new paths for work in philosophy; to understand how cultural traditions as pertaining to the essence of life as human are not closed and opposed, but open and related; and to envisage how global cooperation in philosophy can promote, their creative thrust. (For related readings see http://www.crvp.org/conf/Istanbul/suggested_readings.htm).

C. Regional Strategies: Two sessions of the conference will be dedicated to regional planning. These will enable participants from the particular parts of the world from their own cultural horizons: to assess their philosophical situation, to analyze their needs and prospects, and to plan together ongoing research, meetings, and publications. These ideas will be presented in a plenary session in order to benefit from cross-cultural critique and invite cooperation on a global scale.

PROGRAM

August 8

9.00-9.30 hours: Opening Session

George F. McLean (U.S.A.)

Safak Ural (Turkey)

Cetin Bolcal (Turkey)

9.30-12.45 hours: Three keynote addresses, with discussion

Zagorka Golubovic (Serbia): "Problems and Challenges of Balkan Cultures under the Impact of Globalization" (p. 23)

Semou Pathe Gueye (Senegal): "I and the Other: Globalization as an Intercultural Challenge"

Vincent Shen (Taiwan/Canada): "Appropriating the Other and Transforming Consciousness into Wisdom: Some Philosophical Reflections on Chinese Buddhism" (p. 27)

12.45-13.15 hours: Brief introduction of panel themes:

Burhanettin Tatar (Turkey): Ways of Thinking and Interpreting

Plamen Makariev (Bulgaria): Person and Community

Chibueze C. Udeani (Nigeria/Austria): Globalization

Tadeusz Buksinski (Poland): Ethics and Values

13.15-14.15 hours: Lunch (provided)

14.15-16.30 hours

Panel A-I. "Ways of Thinking: Epistemology"

Chair:

Jerzy Wojciechowski (University of Ottawa, Canada)

Discussion Leader:

Tran Van Doan (National University of Taiwan, Taiwan)

Panelists:

Tony Balcomb (South Africa) (p. 51)

Pablo Lopez Lopez (Spain) (p. 57)

Panagiotis Noutsos (Greece) (p. 65)

Cafer Yaran (Turkey) (p. 69)

14.15-16.30 hours

Panel B-I. "Person and Community: Rights and Duties"

Chair:

Abu Yaareb Marzouki (University of Tunis, Tunis) (p. 105)

Som Sujimon Mohamad (International Islamic University of Malaysia, Malaysia)

Discussion Leader:

Plamen Makariev (University of Sofia, Bulgaria) (p. 111)

Panelists:

Rolando M. Gripaldo (Philippines) (p. 119)

Sirajul Islam (India) (p. 125)

Andrew I. Isiguzo (Nigeria) (p. 303)

Mustafa Koylu (Turkey) (p. 131)

16.30-16.45 hours: Tea Break

16.45-18.45 hours

Panel A-II. "Ways of Interpretation: Hermeneutics"

Chair:

Tomonobu Imamichi (University of Tokyo, Japan)

Discussion Leader:

Burhanettin Tatar (University of Samsun, Turkey) (p. 75)

Panelists:

Mamuka Dolidze (Georgia) (p. 81)

Embun Kenyowati Ekosiwi (Indonesia) (p. 83)

Zbigniew Wendland (Poland) (p. 87)

Alieva Kuluyha Mukaschovna & Tischin Alex Ivanovich (Kyrgyzstan) (p. 93)

16.45-18.45 hours

Panel B-II. "Person and Community: Cultural Foundations and Civil Society"

Chair:

Oliva Blanchette (Boston University, U.S.A.) (p. 137)

Discussion Leader:

William Sweet (St. Francis Xavier University, Canada)

Panelists:

Anatolij Karas (Ukraine) (p. 141)

Zsuzsanna Bogre (Hungary) (p. 145)

Gong Qun (China) (p. 149)

Vladimir A. Gutorov (Russia) (p. 165)

Miklós Tomka (Hungary) (p. 177)

Francis Gikonyo Wokabi & Stephen Omondi Owino (Kenya) (p. 181)

18.45-19.00 hours: Snacks (provided)

19.00-20.30 hours: Regional Colloquia

Africa

South and East Asia

Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

August 9

9.00-11.00 hours

Panel C-I. "Global Horizons: Pluralism and Tolerance"

Chair:

Pham Minh Hac (Academy of Social Sciences of Vietnam) (p. 195)

Discussion Leader:

Gazala Irfan (Lahor University, Pakistan)

Panelists:

Kazhimurat Abishev (Kazakstan) (p. 203)

Tamara Albertini (U.S.A.) (p. 209)

Rustem Kadyrzhanov (Kazakstan) (p. 213)

Abdumalik N. Nysanbaev (Kazakstan) (p. 217)

Alzhan Kuanysh Uzakbaevich (Kazakstan) (p. 221)

9.00-11.00 hours

Panel D-I. "Ethics and Aesthetics"

Chair:

S.R. Bhatt (University of Delhi, India)

Discussion Leader:

Tadeusz Buksinski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland) (p. 263)

Panelists:

Jelena Djuric (Serbia) (p. 273)

Li Dongni (China) (p. 277)

Alfred Rammer (Austria) (p. 279)

Mostafa Younesie (Iran) (p. 283)

11.15-13.15 hours

C-II. "Global Horizons: Dialogue vs Hegemony; Cooperation vs Conflict"

Chair:

M. Avani (Iranian Institute of Philosophy and Wisdom, Iran)

Faruk Akyol (Istanbul University, Turkey)

Discussion Leader:

Chibueze C. Udeani (University of Salzburg, Austria/Nigeria) (p. 225)

Panelists:

Dmitry N. Baryshnikov (Russia) (p. 229)

Osman Bilen (Turkey) (p. 249)

Daniel Smith (U.S.A.) (p. 253)

Leon Dyczewski (Poland)

Mohamed-Rashid Hassan (Somali)

11.15-13.15 hours

D-II. "Ethics: Ecology and Public Service"

Chair:

Venant Cauchy (University Montreal, Canada)

Joseph Nyasani (University of Nairobi, Kenya)

Discussion Leader:

Ouyang Kang (Huazhong University, China)

Panelists:

Omar Chaoura Bourouh (Algeria) (p. 287)

Chen Xia (China) (p. 291)

Hellen Karabatzaki (Greece) (p. 299)

Jurita Morkuniene (Lithuania) (p. 301)

13.15-14.30 hours: Lunch (provided)

14.30-16.30 hours: Reports of panels, discussion

Tran Van Doan (Taiwan): Ways of Thinking and Interpreting

William Sweet (Canada): Person and Community

Gazala Irfan (Pakistan): Globalization

Ouyang Kang (China): Ethics and Values

16.30-16.45 hours: Tea Break

16.45-18.00 hours: Regional Reports and forward planning and

Concluding Observations

M. Avani (Iran)

S.R. Bhatt (India)

Venant Cauchy (Canada)

T. Imamichi (Japan)

Faruk Akyol (Turkey)

Hu Yeping (China)

18.00-18.15 hours: Snacks (provided)

18.15-19.15 hours: Special session on H. Reichenbach

PANEL THEMES

(For background selections from related volumes in the series "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change" published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (see http://www.crvp.org/conf/Istanbul/suggested_readings.htm).

Panel A. Ways of Thinking (Epistemology) and of Interpreting (Hermeneutics)

I. *Ways of Thinking (Epistemology)*: Modern philosophy was initiated in a rupture from earlier thought, e.g., Bacon's smashing of the idols, Locke's imagining the mind as a blank tablet, and Descartes' systematic doubt. This created an empty space reserved exclusively for clear and distinct ideas joined in the rigorously deductive process of objective thinking essential to science. More recently questions have been raised regarding, not the fruitfulness, but the adequacy of this mode of thinking. Great effort is now being made to broaden this field of knowledge to include human subjectivity and hence such other modes of awareness as meditative thinking, creative imagination and phenomenological investigation.

II. *Ways of Interpreting (Hermeneutics)*: In this way philosophy is expanding to include the hermeneutic recognition, interpretation and relation between the multiple values, cultures and civilizations of the many peoples of the world and their varied modes of understanding. Philosophers now are challenged to unveil at a deeper level the cumulative freedom by which we shape ourselves in the subjective terms of values and virtues, which in turn constitute cultures and their traditions. These constitute the hermeneutic vantage points or horizons in terms of which we understand, interpret and respond in the many dimensions of our life.

Panel B. Person and Community; Rights and Duties; Cultural Foundations for Civil Society and Cooperation between Peoples

I. *Rights and Duties*: Family and community have come under strong disaggregating pressures of urban and industrial society. Individualist models see all ascriptive duties and obligations as antithetic to human freedom. There emerges then the issue of whether the individual and the social nature of the human person are mutually antithetic or complementary. In most cultures social concerns have been articulated in terms of duties to family and society, rather than in terms of rights. There is then much work to do on the foundations of human rights in order to relate these to duties and responsibilities and thereby extend and adapt their applicability.

Diminishing Tradition, Continuing Transition: the State of Serbia

Jelena Djuric

(The Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
Belgrade)

As a region full of territorial, religious, ethnic, national and ideological diversity, Balkan is both a place of history of small cultures and, simultaneously, the meeting point of great confronting civilizations. Osman Turks, who ruled it for 500 years, called it 'Rumelia' which indicate previous history of that area as a part of Roman Empire. At the same time, for western Europeans it was called 'European Turkey', until the mid of XIX century when the term 'Balkan' begun to run.

The fact is that Balkan cultures, north of Greece, were always excluded from European identity, either old or new, Western, Roman-catholic, Protestant or German Europe. Even today attitude of westerners toward Balkans is similar. According to Collins Dictionary (1994) 'to Balkanize' means to divide (a territory) into small warring states.

Professor Traian Stoianovich, the author of *'Balkan Worlds, The First and The Last Europe'* (1994, M.E. Sharpe - Armonk, New York; London, England), describes Balkan as integral part of first Europe. He emphasizes the risk of its current exclusion from Europe, which indicates that European structure, based on money and power rather than on culture, could lead to its own cultural collapse. The profound structure of traditional Balkan cultures, as T. Stoianovich explains, was connected with earth and cosmos, following with subsequent strata of biology, technology, society, economy, culture. History revealed that before the structure of an economy is stabilized, the culture of personality, that is most delicate of all relational systems, is not possible.

Enduring deficiency of the economic stability in Balkan (and being in the middle, Serbia is it's core representative) is still crucial for regular decline of individual potentials. This is principally so in regard of absent philosophical heritage in Serbia. (One should just remember Aristotle's note about necessity of leisure time for philosophy). While building the system of knowledge (science was a part of philosophy until XVIII century) in wealthy western Europe was a regular option among scholars, in Serbia there was a half

millennium of slavery followed with multitude of devastating wars for the independent state.

In the Middle Age a kind of poetic philosophy in ancient Serbian national literature ('narodne umotvorine' – 'folk works of wisdom'), was developed. Much later, in XIX century, after its collection was published it became an inspiration to some of European intellectuals such as Gete himself. Of course, later Serbian writers are an evidence that culture of personality is developed to the certain extent. However, their works were hardly done in the way of rational discourse.^[1] There is some possibility to reconstruct fragmentary concepts which Serbian writers had presumed.^[2] But, if we take as paradigm the prevalent philosophical tradition^[3] (such as philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, or in New Century: Descartes, Espinoza, or Lock), than the Serbian cultural heritage is without philosophers. If there are some, they are not particularly original.^[4] However, considering the history of another different, poetical philosophy which had not have a chance to become dominant in the West, again Serbia would be scarce in philosophers as such.^[5] Simply, this cultural area was predisposed to different type of thinking far from systematic rational discourse.

Maybe this is not such a terrible disgrace for a small culture especially if we are looking from contemporary point of view. Namely, after Kant the bifurcation of two different kind of philosophies led to a denial of any possibility of their mutual communication.^[6] This provoked a worrying situation in contemporary philosophy since the ways have gone so much apart to the extent of becoming anti-philosophical and dogmatic, declining the opportunity to communicate among themselves. Philosophy has come into a threat of becoming the ideology which resolves the differences with various kinds of political "arguments".

So we came to this period of time when anthropological and ecological thinking became more 'philosophical' than academic philosophical thinking itself, that is, more adequate for difficult contemporary questions of mankind. They brought the consciousness about different value options as the source for corresponding cultural responses to the environmental challenge^[7]. Whole spectrum of different ecological organizations is based on the idea of freedom to choose a way of life. They want the possibility of alternatives to the totalizing model of dominant globalization which seems to be the only option allowed to people.

Present Balkan, which is obviously influenced with long history of troubles, is not capable to face the negligence of ecological urge and to sustain balance between freedom and social justice. It's actual poverty and powerlessness, intensified with continuous 'transitions',

(post-communist change, and recent conflicts and wars), inhibits response to what seem to be actually most important in global age – the transition from obsolete industrialization to the era of cyber technology. Without this transition, other transitions, such as the one to 'democracy' and 'market economy', are prone to be futile....

Nowadays there are two actual approaches to the problem of the global integration of traditions. In accordance to one, it is a one-way process of adaptation to the neo-liberal tradition of the West, while in accordance to another it is a mutual process of harmonization of different world traditions. Bearing in mind that the meaning of tradition has been reduced to the cultural dimension in the second approach, the difference of these approaches does not actually question the global power relations. Instead, it focuses on the problem of values and the issue of their universality.

Global transition as the process of reshaping traditional identities could find support in the domain of universal human experience. This is essential for comprehensive understanding of different traditions and their corresponding place in the global society. By representing the value order principle, traditions as such are lesser obstacle for global integration than the lack of tradition itself. Having its manifestation as a loss of identity, the lack of living tradition represents the greatest problem of Serbian society. Being in constant transit from one social system into another, it seems that Serbian society has substituted its tradition with 'transition' as such.

NOTES

^[1] Thus, for example, P.P. Niegosh offers authentic wisdom of life exclusively trough his metaphorical poems 'Forest Garland' ('Gorski vjenac'), and 'Lighty Microcosma' ('Luca Mikrokozma').

^[2] When, for example, we read Vojislav Ilic's poem 'Istina' ('The Truth': "... go your own way / but know yourself / to know the truth..."), some epistemological and methodological approach is presumed even completely colored with psychological impressions of the world. Suffering is predominant atmosphere in the opus of Recent Serbian Poetry which is undeniably reflective.

^[3] In accordance to the division made by Jorge J.E. Gracia (*Philosophy and its History*, 1992, Albany: State University of New York Press)

^[4] Typical is the Neocantian Branislav Petronijevic

^[5] Mentioning one such example of the work of Serbian bishop Nikolai, it should be stressed that this work is dominantly in the quest of achieving Serbian orthodox fait and identity and less in the search-

ing for fundamental ontological and epistemological insights in the purpose of discovering reality. This work also defies known categorizations, since in the empirical level it is highly critical and strict in the sense of ethical requirements. On the other hand, as it starts considering the absolute, such as in "The Science of Law – Nomology" it glorifies the almightiness of God who is in command of everything including natural laws. Alike to some other mystical and philosophical approaches, here the belief in God transcends the rational knowledge: it has to be experienced in order to be understood and therefore it requires the personal attitude which is understandable only among the ones who share similar experiences.

^[6] Poetic philosophy had a long history from Pythagoras through Plotin, Tertullian, Eckhart and other thinkers who believed in metaphysics and prospective to know the ultimate reality through the personal mystical experience. Opposite way in philosophical tradition went through the positivism and analytical philosophy and finished in full antagonizing and abolishment of communication with the methaphysicists.

^[7] Thus some ways of technologically inferior cultures, as Bushmans or Eskimos, appeared superior from the point of view of human adaptation to the environment.

The Ethical Implication of "the Heaven" and the Contemporary Ethical Adoration

Li Dong Ni
(China)

Concepts about the heaven vary widely between the east and the west. The Chinese idea of heaven has nothing to do with Zion, fatality or God. Without transcendency, it can be Fornix, lording over the earth via the natural laws; it can be integrated with man, never divorced from him in time or space and never reaching Faramita. There is an intense ethical implication in the Chinese ideology about "the Heaven".

There was not a universal god in ancient Chinese mythology, without a well-developed theogony. Nor was there a paramount god. The primogenitor, instead, is given greater priority. Culturally, this accounts for the absence of the heaven in the sense of transcendence.

The establishment of the position and the content of "the Heaven" has destined Confucianism for the Chinese culture and culturally unravels Confucianism not as a cause but as a result of the Chinese culture. In reverse, as a result of the paramountcy of Confucianism, "the Heaven" has never disentangled itself from its ethical implication in the long history of ideology. Nor has it acquired a prescriptive implication. It has evolved into philosophical realm of nature-human harmony, first from the primitive beliefs of half-human animals and then from the ancient myths of half-human deities.

Ethicizing the heaven leaves contemporary China open to Atheism and heaven worship has survived the mainstream ideology of atheism. Unlike theism and the general religious beliefs, the object of worship is neither the ultimate heaven nor other supremacies. Rather, it is an ethical system and ethical principles. It is termed by the author as ethical worship.

Under ethical worship, ethical principles have achieved supremacy. As contemporary China has undergone decades of atheistic education, ethics does not need the support of the heaven. Ethical supremacy is only found in worship. As ethical principles have supreme significance, ethical worship is nothing less than heaven worship.

Nature-human harmony consists in human mind, which has reduced ethical worship to obsession, even overriding god worship. In China, ethical principles assume greater inspiration than the God. They can achieve transcendency only through nature-human harmony.