CONFLICT BETWEEN CULTURAL WORLD OUTLOOKS IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: SOME REASONS AND SOLUTIONS IN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINT

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Globalization is rapidly taking place in our world. Although there are some advantages, globalization also brings about a lot of problems, especially in the relationships between different cultures. For the limit of the paper, I try to present briefly some main reasons for the conflict between cultural world outlooks in the Era of Globalization through the philosophical and intercultural viewpoints. I will reflect on some works by Wittgenstein and offer some solutions based on Wittgenstein's insights.

I. Why are cultural world outlooks in conflict with one an other?

From an intercultural point of view, there are two main reasons which might lead to cultural conflict: 1) conflict between cultural forms of life; 2) conflict between cultural world outlooks. Primary reasons refer to indispensable principles of some certain forms of life. Secondary reasons are very much concerned with cultural non-understanding or cultural misunderstanding.[1]

1. Cultural non-understanding

Discussions or violent criticism of different cultural world-views against each other may stem from cultural non-understanding or lack of information of other cultures. Why is it so difficult to understand people of other cultures? The common and traditional conceptions tend to believe that the other's interior thinking is completely secret, for it is hidden in the mind and publicly inaccessible.[2] The late Wittgenstein criticizes sharply this point of view, especially the thesis of Cartesian on the so-called complete secrecy of the inner sphere. Cartesian thesis is based on an acceptance of the private language. In Wittgenstein's opinion, people can perceive, to some extent, feelings (for example feeling of pain) and thoughts of other people through his public (linguistic and non-linguistic) manifestation. One can not understand actions and thoughts of people of other cultures not because their inner thinking is completely secret and inaccessible for him[3], but there is another subtle reason

behind it. In fact, he is not able to understand people's form of life, even if their inner thinking is totally accessible for him. The barriers of language (foreign languages) may be the difficulty for understanding, but it is not the fundamental reason for cultural non-understanding.[4] The fundamental reason for non-understanding is related to "cultural blindness" i.e. not knowing or not practicing the cultural forms of life, language games, and the traditions such as habits and customs of other cultures. According to Wittgenstein, in this view, we could not understand a lion either, even if that animal could speak[5], for its "form of life" is completely alien. "Cultural blindness" or cultural non-understanding can be one of (secondary) reasons for conflicts between cultural forms of life.

2. Cultural misunderstanding

Cultural blindness of a certain culture alone can not lead to misunderstanding. The main reason for cultural misunderstanding consists in

subjective ways of thinking, particularly when one tries to identify and perceive people of other cultures based on his cultural perspectives, or views them from form of life and world outlook of his cultural community through it's filter of cultural values. In other words, cultural misunderstanding begins when one tries to see other people only in his own view based only on the criteria of his culture. This way of thinking often gives him not only an incomplete or one-sided picture, but it also gives him a wrong picture of other cultures. Such a way of understanding of other people[6] belongs to a type of ego-centrism or so-called "cultural solipsism". As a result, the representatives of each culture tend to universalize their own forms of life, their own world outlook, their own cultural values, and their own language games of their culture; and then they generalize its criteria for distinguishing between "correctness" or "incorrectness", "rightness" or "wrongness", "goodness" or "badness", "beauty" or "ugliness" etc..

In reality, we need to acknowledge that this ego-centric way is common and inevitable for most people in all cultures. The origin of this asymmetric, ego-centric pattern of an intercultural understanding is, on the one hand, the natural inclination of human beings to generalize their own culture and then try to understand other people from their subjective perspectives; because only in the language game of one's own

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PI, part II, XI, p. 536; Lütterfelds, Wilhelm: Interkulturelles Verstehen in Wittgensteins Konzept von Sprachspiel, Weltbild und Lebensform, in: Lütterfelds, W., Roser, A., Raatzsch, R. (Hrsg.): *Wittgenstein - Jahrbuch 2000*, Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Bern/Bruxelles/NewYork/Oxford/Wien,2001, p. 6-19.

[4] See: PI, part II, X, p. 536: "Wir sagen auch von einem Menschen, er sei uns durchsichtig. Aber es ist für diese Betrachtung wichtig, dass ein Mensch für einen andern ein völliges Rätsel sein kann. Das erfährt man, wenn man in ein fremdes Land mit gänzlich fremden Traditionen kommt; und zwar auch dann, wenn man die Sprache des Landes beherrscht. Man versteht die Menschen nicht. (und nicht darum, weil man nicht weiss, was sie zu sich selber sprechen.) Wir können uns nicht in sie finden."

[5] See: PI, part II, X, S. 536: "Wenn ein Löwe sprechen könnte, wir könnten ihn nicht verstehen."

[6] "Wir können uns nicht in sie finden" See: in PI, part II, X, S. 536.

culture, can one compare the different forms of life and verify their similarities and differences. On the other hand, the ego-centric pattern of understanding is practicable, when one level of intercultural understanding is still limited to attain an ideal pattern of understanding: the symmetric, objective and universal pattern of understanding. This requires a dialogue among different cultures in the world to reach a common ground and have a globally cultural world outlook.[7]

In sum, cultural misunderstanding is mainly the result of the subjective deduction, especially the ego-centric way of thinking about people of different cultures. As a result, one may not even want to have a sufficient knowledge of the form of life or the world outlook of other cultures. Although lack of cultural knowledge and language or wrong information can lead to a cultural misunderstanding, this factor is only a trivial reason for the explanation.

Therefore, the ego-centric way of thinking about people of different cultures is the main reason for cross-cultural misunderstanding. Definitely, cultural non - understanding and misunderstanding can create a lot of conflicts between different cultural forms of life, between different cultural world outlooks, and between different

language games. In my opinion, this is the main point which the late Wittgenstein wants to present with a hope that cross-cultural problems might be resolved. Unfortunately, numerous problems regarding the relationships among ethnic groups, between religious communities, and between secular versus religious communities are still constantly taking place in many Asian countries in this very era of globalization. And this problem is also taking place in many countries in the world nowadays. The roots of these problems are the lack of a sufficient and deep knowledge of other cultural communities, especially the lack of cultural tolerance and understanding among those who represent (stand for) their cultures.

Anyway, cultural non-understanding and cultural misunderstanding are not main reasons for conflicts between different world outlooks. They are only secondary reasons. The primary reasons, the main reasons for these conflicts are related to the fundamental difference of cultural world outlooks.

3. The fundamental difference of cultural world outlooks

Cross-cultural problems not only stem from the lack of information and knowledge of other cultural forms of life or stem from wrong understanding, but more complex issues are hidden behind. We know that these intercultural problems would not be solved fundamentally, even if cultural non-

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[7] See: Lütterfelds, Wilhelm: Interkulturelles Verstehen in Wittgensteins Konzept von Sprachspiel, Weltbild und Lebensform, in: Lütterfelds, W., Roser, A., Raatzsch, R. (Hrsg.): *Wittgenstein - Jahrbuch 2000*, Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Bern/Bruxelles/NewYork/Oxford/Wien,2001, p. 21-22.

understanding and misunderstanding were removed successfully and entirely.

The key problem of intercultural misunderstanding is, first of all, related closely to the fundamental difference of cultural world outlooks. These world outlooks are based on different and essentially incommensurable principles. That difference can be considered as the real and primary factor for possible and potential conflicts between cultural forms of life. Essentially, these are conflicts between quite different principles. The later Wittgenstein analyzed this problem in his work "On certainty" (Über Gewißheit). Through numerous examples and remarks, he shows that the representatives of each culture are not able to reach a general agreement on judgment and language practice, i.e., a super cultural and global view of world.[8]

According to Wittgenstein´s analysis, it is *impossible* to tell whether a culture, a world outlook, or a form of life is correct or not, scientific or non-scientific, reasonable or non-reasonable, high or low. The world outlook and the form of life of a certain cultural community give criteria for distinguishing between correctness or incorrectness applied only in this community. In fact, a cultural world outlook is neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong. It is merely the result of a cultural heritage passed on by previous generations; it is also the result of the whole education in each cultural community.[9] It is the fundamental foundation of thinking and acting of each member in the community. In this view, it is a mistake to judge or criticize a certain form of life, language games, or a cultural world outlook by an outsider. Therefore, it is irrational to measure religious or mythical statements based on scientific experiments.[10] For example, it is nonsense to use scientific methods, e.g. an analysis of chemical composition, to reject the Catholic beliefs in the Eucharist: water becomes blood of Christ's or bread becomes the body of Christ.

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[8] See: Wittgenstein, Ludwig: On Certainty (Über Gewißheit) in: Werkausgabe, Bd. 8, Frankfurt a. M., 1989, 108, 118, 132, 153, 157, 167, 203, 231, 239, 240, 255, 262, 264, 321, 332, 333, 609 etc..

[9] In On Certainty 94, Wittgenstein writes: "Aber mein Weltbild habe ich nicht, weil ich mich von seiner Richtigkeit überzeugt habe; auch nicht, weil ich von seiner Richtigkeit überzeugt bin. Sondern es ist der überkommene Hintergrund, auf welchem ich zwischen wahr und falsch unterscheide."

[10] More detailed see: Nguyen, Vu Hao, The Concept of Man in Wittgenstein's Language Philosophy. The Anthropological Foundations for Education and Intercultural Understanding, Hamburg: Kovač 2002, p. 254-259; List, E.: Zum Problem des Verstehens fremder Kulturen: Wittgensteins Bemerkungen zu J.G. Frazers' Golden Bough, in: List, E. u.a. (Hrsg.): Wittgenstein und sein Einfluß auf die gegenwärtige Philosophie, Akten des zweiten internationalen Wittgenstein-Symposiums 1977, Wien, 1980, S. 471-474; Fretlöh-Thomas, Sigrid: Interkulturelles Verstehen oder kulturbedingtes Erklären: Wittgensteins Kritik an Frazer, in: Lütterfelds, W. und Salehi, Djavid (Hrsg.): "Wir können uns nicht in sie finden. Probleme interkultureller Verständigung und Kooperation" - Wittgenstein-Studien 3 (2001) - Frankfurt am Main u.a.: Lang, 2001, p. 36-44; Davies, P: Remarks on Wittgenstein's Remark on Frazer's "The Golden Bough", in King's Theological Review 6 (1983), p. 10-14; Henderson, D.: Wittgenstein's Descriptivist Aproach to Understanding: Is There a Place for Explanation in Interpretive Accounts?, in: Dialectica 42 (1988), p. 105-115; Kippenberg, H.G. und Luchesi, B. (Hrsg.): Magie: Die sozialwissenschaftliche Kontroverse über das Verstehen fremden Denkens, Frankfurt am Main, 1978.

According to Wittgenstein, there is a diversity of principled different forms of life and a diversity of principled different of world outlooks. Claiming that there is only one truth in some determined cultural world outlooks is unacceptable.[11] In my opinion, the late Wittgenstein's position seems to support a diversity of different cultures, a diversity of world outlooks. In this way, he seems to protests against the Euro-centrism and against some contemporary conceptions which attempt to identify the globalization with Westernization or Americanization.

He seems to accept the fact that in spite of certain similarities, it is difficult and even, in some certain contexts, impossible to have a common principle for different forms of life. No common measure can be applied to compare between different forms of life, or between different cultural world outlooks. They belong to different incommensurable principles. This leads to the fundamental barriers for understanding of a strange culture or a strange cultural world outlook.

The main reason for conflicts among different cultures to take place is that, especially in some cases, when the understanding model of egocentrism, plus subjective standards of a community is used to judge or criticize the representatives of other cultural communities as well as their principles. In those cases, one forgets that these criteria and standards of a strange culture is quite different from his or her cultural community. For example, Muslims are forbidden to eat pork. This does not mean that all Christians are forbidden to do the same. Given the different teachings of the two religions, it is unacceptable for an Muslim to criticize a Christian who eats pork.

In some extreme cases, based on his or her subjective views, one tries not only to criticize but also to change the world outlooks and forms of life of other cultures, i.e., to change the beliefs of their representatives, and this leads to the climax of intercultural conflict. Those are uncompromising struggles between different, opposite and even confronted principles against each other. In worse cases, some representatives of one group consider the representatives of the other groups as foolish or heretic, for his opinion is contrary to what is generally accepted. Each of them considers him/ herself as an orthodox and the other as anomalous.[12]

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[11] See: Lütterfelds, 2001, S. 26; Mall, R. A.: Was heißt 'aus interkultureller Sicht'?, in: Mall, R.A. und Schneider, N. (Hrsg.): *Ethik und Politik aus interkultureller Sicht (Studien zur Interkulturellen Philosophie)*, Amsterdam/Atlanta, 1996, p.2ff; Arifuku, Kogaku: *Das buddhistische Natur- und Menschenbild. Das Verhältnis des Menschen zur Natur im Buddhismus*, in: Takeichi, Akihiro (Hrsg.): *Das Bild von Mensch und Natur im 21. Jahrhundert. Zur neuen Philosophie der Politik, Gesellschaft, Technologie und Natur*, Kyoto, 1995, p. 91-107.

[12] In: *On Certainty 611*, Wittgenstein says: "Wo sich wirklich zwei *Prinzipien treffen, die sich nicht miteinander aussöhnen können, da erklärt jeder den Andern für einen Narren und Ketzer." In this way, the answer to the question, if someone is an orthodox or heretic is only relative, depending on the social cultural and historical conditions. This is the same as fact that only in his time, Galileo Galilei or Giordano Bruno was considered as heretic.

Therefore, the most important reasons for potential conflicts are the diversity and the difference between principled incommensurable and incompatible forms of life. However, the conflict potential alone does not yet lead to a real conflict. Incompatible principles lead only to the real confrontation in extreme cases, when one party- in their own ego-centric way of thinking - tries to judge, criticize, or even to oppose and to change the world outlook of the other side.

II. Some solutions for conflicts between cultural world outlooks

In order to avoid the possibilities of conflict and to solve intercultural problems, especially conflicts between cultural world outlooks, it is necessary to eliminate both primary and secondary reasons as discussed above. In other words, it is necessary to eliminate cultural non-understanding and cultural misunderstanding. Also it is necessary to treat the principal difference of cultural world outlooks in reasonable way.

1. Eliminating the phenomenon "cultural blindness"

In order to avoid non-understanding, it is very important to eliminate the phenomenon "cultural blindness" : not knowing or not practicing the cultural forms of life, language games, and the traditions such as habits and customs of other cultures. In order to understand people of other cultures, one has to study fundamentally and to know not only about that culture with its world outlook, its form of life, and its language, but also, first of all, to take part directly in its language games and in its forms of life with the motto "learning by doing".

This solution of the later Wittgenstein seems to be reasonable and possible, especially in the era of globalization in which people of different cultures or of different world outlooks have a greater chance to communicate with one another through internet, travels, and other interchange programs. By doing so, one can communicate, participate, and experience of other cultures. Of course, we have to acknowledge that these opportunities are not always available for every nation, every cultural community, and for everyone.

2. Avoiding cultural mis-understanding

Cultural misunderstanding can be avoided if only its root is removed, i.e. only when both following conditions are fulfilled. First, one must be in contact with people of other cultures or of other cultural communities to get acquainted with their language, their world outlooks, and their "game rules". At the same time, one must study them basically. In other words, the first condition is to eliminate cultural non-understanding. Second, the asymmetric, ego-centric pattern of intercultural understanding must be eliminated, and it needs to be replaced by the symmetric, objective and universal understanding of people of other cultures. This needs to

begin with dialogues based on equal and mutual understanding cultures.

Of course, this is not easy, because the egocentrism or a so-called "cultural solipsism" is common in every cultural community. Besides, it is necessary to remove psychic reasons, which can cause misunderstanding of other cultures. The solution is to have a tolerant attitude and high respect toward other cultures.

3. Solutions concerning the principal difference of cultural world outlooks

Because the principal difference of cultural world outlooks is the main reason for potential conflict between different cultural communities, it is not simple to overcome the differences. According to the later Wittgenstein, conflict risks between incommensurable principles can be reduced and even avoided, if a "peaceful coexistence" between principles or between different world outlooks is accepted as long as people stop to universalize their own criteria, the standards of their own cultural community and to criticize strange cultural world outlooks. Because in some certain contexts, it is impossible to correct the contrary principles in order to reach a consensus. Thus, the first solution for preventing conflicting risks between the contradictory world outlooks is avoiding every dispute. This is a neutral solution, and it requires a recognition and respect for the diversity of different and even contrary world outlooks.

Cultural conflict happens inevitably, when this person considers his/her own form of life and world outlook as the criteria for criticizing or even refuting other's world outlooks. The second solution for uncompromising conflicts of principles is persuasion.[13] This solution does not depend on the acknowledgement of the subjective intention. In order to realize a fanatical persuasion in order to spread their own form of life, people often use rational procedures and then try to reject the other's world outlooks by arguments which support their own correctness of language game and their own form of life. Although the strategy seems aggressive, it is still a peaceful approach.

One greater concern is that some people might use persuasion through the form of violence, in stead of peaceful one. Violent persuasion usually goes along with some extreme strategies such as using military force, terrorism, or wars to oppress the other side. In these cases, the other side would react strongly including retaliation or revenge. As a consequence, both sides are stuck in a confused circle, and it finds extremely difficult to get out of the spiral. The situation might lead to hatred and hostility toward each other. And it is also a result of irreconcilable struggles among the cultures, or "clash of civilizations" in a world scale as Samuel Huntington warned. Once the representatives of one side - in extreme cases - sense that they are driven to a

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[13] On Certainty 262.

corner or there might be a threat for the destruction of their own culture and their own form of life, then they must use all means they can afford, including barbarous and terrorist means, to defend fanatically their cultures and values. They will act without thinking of ethical values, even sacrificing their own lives. They are ready to die for the so called "just war" in the battles of cultures. The currently international terrorism is a clear evidence for that.

In my opinion, the effectiveness of this solution - the persuasion of people of other cultures with violent to "civilize" and to "assimilate" the other's forms of life, which is taking place in our contemporary process of globalization - needs to be questioned. This approach is doubtful and unacceptable, for it brings more destruction than peace.

Unfortunately, the persuading approach is still a common solution for cultural conflict, for its main purpose is to convert people of other cultures. Of course, the motivation behind are other hidden factors such as economical interests and political power. In the past history, this solution could bring some certain results. In this era of globalization and in the era of the atomic weapons, however, this solution is totally unsuitable.

The third solution for conflicts of world outlooks is the orientation to a common and global cultural world outlook. This solution is based on the common foundation of people in all cultures, that is, the similarity in the way of thinking and acting of all people as an essence of human species in general. Gradual changes, transformation, and acceptance of world cultural outlook are necessary and indispensable. Given that, the contemporary globalization should be done with this model. Globalization should not be either Westernization or Americanization. Globalization is not born by some culture which tries to force or swallow up all other cultures. Globalization does not accept the arrogant attitudes of some cultures and underestimation of other cultures at the same time. Good globalization is possible only through dialogues between different cultures in the world on the level of equality. That is the approach of the symmetric, objective, and universal pattern of thinking. In this model, the representatives of each cultural community need to be aware of the contrary to the traditional asymmetric, ego-centric pattern of thinking. In order to do that, education for a civilized world in which everyone is a citizen of the world, is the crucial condition for a great globalization.[14]

Of course, the common, global cultural world outlook and the globalization need to aim to build a united world in a diverse world of cultures (or in the diversity of the world

[14] See: Treml, Alfred K.: Die Erziehung zum Weltbürger. Euphemismus oder Fulguration?, in: Treml, Alfred K. (Hrsg.): Natur der Moral? Ethische Bildung im Horizont der modernen Evolutionsforschung, Frankfurt am Main, 1997, S. 56-63. Sistenzanthropologie 1.-6. September 1986 an der Universität Bamberg, Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York/Paris, 1988, S. 171-186.

outlooks); it does not mean excluding the diversity of cultures or the diversity of the world outlooks at all.

Anyway, the formation of the common, global cultural world outlook as a universal basis for intercultural understanding is an extremely difficult, complicated, and long process. It cannot take place automatically, without a collaboration of the representatives of different cultures. The more similar cultural world outlooks are, the smaller cultural conflicts between them and the better chances for intercultural understanding become. On the contrary, the more different world outlooks are, the greater change for cultural conflicts occur.

Therefore, learning to understand quite different, opposite cultures and their world outlooks is the crucial thing. It is the reason why the late Wittgenstein, tries to point out some reasons and to give some effective

adequate solutions for cultural and intercultural conflict. This is to say that the later Wittgenstein laid an important foundation for the contemporary intercultural philosophy. In my opinion, however, there are main limitations in his conception. First, the later Wittgenstein tends to analyze intercultural conflicts only in a social, cultural, and intercultural context. He does not seem to pay enough attention to other reasons such as economical interests, political power, or territorial requirements, which might be standing behind intercultural conflicts. Second, the later Wittgenstein is not able to analyze in detail how to change and to approach different forms of life and world outlooks so that it can reach a common, globally cultural world outlook. In my opinion, overcoming those limitations will open new perspectives for intercultural understanding, especially in the age of globalization.