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Abstracts

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An Opening Door

Jean –Marie G. Le Clézio

The author of this paper, a Nobel Laureate in Literature (2008), develops here a plea in favour of the practice of interculturality. He takes the case of its family's historic birthplace, the Island of Mauritius, as an example of intercultural human coexistence, and analyses its achievements, challenges, and possible developments in today's world.

Beyond Unity in Diversity: Cosmopolitanizing Identities in a Globalizing World

Ien Ang

The greater interconnectivity and interdependence unleashed by globalization are not creating a more harmonious, cosmopolitan humanity. On the contrary, the more global the world becomes, the more insistent particular differences, especially of the nationalist kind, are being articulated around the world, often leading to tension and conflict. This seeming paradox cannot be reconciled through simple mantras of 'unity in diversity'. Rhetorical references to 'a single humanity' to overcome structurally entrenched divisions (as institutionalized in the world system of nation-states) are not sufficient for the attainment of greater pan-human solidarity. In response to this predicament this paper argues for a processual cosmopolitan perspective, in which a humanistic universalism should not be seen as a static moral ideal, but as a social and political horizon that must be worked towards, but probably never achieved, through a painstaking and continuing process of cosmopolitanization against the grain of powerful modes of particularist closure.

Subjectivity and Solidarity – A Rebirth of Humanism

In-Suk Cha

The notion of subjectivity with which the argument will be carried out may be defined as our ability to reflect critically, to think creatively and to act resolutely in our relation to society and nature. Some essential marks of subjectivity are illustrated through an example taken from rescue operation conducted in the fall of 2010 for the miners trapped in deep underground at the San Jose mine site in Chile for 69 days. With the science and technology applied in constructing the drilling rigs and making the capsule which lifted up the trapped miners to freedom, ingenuity, the resilient sense of mission and perseverance of the rescue personnel, and the purposeful solidarity among

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the trapped miners are among the decisive factors contributing to the successful accomplishment of the rescue undertaking.

At this critical juncture of the current global economic downturn, it is consequential for us to bring ourselves to reflecting on the seriousness of the predicament which all humanity is in. It is indeed time for the intellectuals to rise up to share responsibility in keeping our world sustainable by setting purposive and resolute subjectivity before themselves and coming forward to tenaciously find ways toward renewing ourselves as well as toward the continuing betterment of humanity.

Humanizing Humanity: The Global Significance of the Humanities

Fred R. Dallmayr

The essay seeks to vindicate the importance of the humanities or liberal arts deriving from their crucial contribution to the "humanization of humanity". This vindication is timely in view of the wide-spread curtailment of humanistic or liberal education in many institutions of higher learning. It is also timely as a pedagogical antidote to the fascination with violence in our world (which often culminates in "crimes against humanity"). In a first step, the paper traces the historical development of the humanities or liberal arts in the West. Next, I highlight some crucial features of humanistic education: the emphasis on ethical and character formation; the fine-tuning of moral judgment; and the cultivation of a *sensus communis*. Another central feature is that such education offers a counterpoint to the overwhelming preoccupation today with career training and utilitarian objectives. In the words of Martha Nussbaum: it is "not for profit", but serves an intrinsic good. In this respect, humanistic pedagogy bears a close affinity to the needed education for democracy and world citizenship.

A Universal Ethic in the Globalizing World: Accommodation, Rights and Human Values

Uchang Kim

The present moment in human history is marked by the ever-accelerating movement across the world of materials, peoples and information, creating various problems and, of course, opportunities as well – especially, the movement of the people, which makes multiculturalism a major issue. Differences between the immigrants and the receiving society create conflict. One solution would be found in the legal provision for the equality of rights for all the members of society, including cultural minorities, but if the legal solution alone is considered effective, there would be waste of resources accumulated in cultures as enabling agents of amenable human life. But multiple cultures in a single society easily become a source of conflict, as another culture encroaching upon one's own culture is often felt as a threatening challenge to one's identity, as identity is constructed in the subjective process of culture. It implies the master-and-slave struggle between two subjectivities. Cultural subjectivities, personal or collective, could be induced to constitute a complex system of federated subjectivities. Even such a system would not, however, completely eliminate tension and conflict. Intervention by an ethic universally conceived on the minimal basis would meet the urgent need to prevent escalation of conflict, but it would ultimately prepare a common ground for the development of a global culture incorporating multiple cultures as historically

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inherited resources for enrichment of human life. Ethical awareness is what reveals the otherness of the other and also the ontological ground of human life on earth; as ethics and epistemology coincide, a human reason would emerge as the ground of a new global culture, and the world would hopefully become a single Lebensraum for entire humanity.

Buddhist 'Genesis' as a Narrative of Conflict Transformation: A Re-reading of the Aggañña- sutta

Suwanna Satha-Anand

Since January 2004, violent conflicts in the deep South of Thailand have caused 4,453 deaths, 7,239 injuries in 10,386 violent incidents. The numbers are increasing every day. Myriads of studies, strategies and proposals have been put forth to address and redress this deep-rooted problem. This paper is a modest attempt to find analysis and inspiration from the rich cultural resources of Buddhism to address the question of conflict and conflict transformation in Thai society.

The Buddhist "Genesis" or *The Agganna-sutta* has been analyzed by Thai and Western Buddhist scholars as offering an allegorical tale which details a long, inter-dependent process of human beings' moral degradation on the one hand, and socio-political evolution on the other. This is considered to be the Buddhist equivalent of the Genesis without God.

This paper offers a re-reading of this important *sutta* as a narrative of conflict and conflict transformation. It argues that the personal conflict of the two young Brahmins aspiring to be fully ordained is transcended and transformed by the Buddha's allegorical tale of human socio-political evolution. This paper offers an analysis of the narration and demonstrates that in the narrating process, the Buddha was "substituting" the Hindu creation myth with the *Discourse on What is Primary (Agganna-sutta)*. This narrative replacement subverts the deep-rooted cultural force of the Hindu creation myth which serves as a cosmological justification for a hierarchy of classes/castes in the social world. Once the creation Hindu myth is de-mythologized, the structure of meaning for the personal conflict of the two Brahmins evaporates. In this way, the Buddha's approach to conflict transformation addresses three dimensions simultaneously, namely, the personal, the socio-political and the cosmological.

This re-reading is one paradigmatic example of how to revitalize Buddhism to function as an agent of social transformation by offering a Buddhist creative approach to conflict transformation.

Living in the World as Humans

Tanella Boni

Human beings are not an artificial creation nor are genetically modified organisms. They are bodies which share in life with plants and animals and which possess certain characteristics such as language and the capacity for thought which provide the freedom to attain knowledge, to project and realize intentions, to act upon the world. They inhabit a world where men and women reveal themselves as human, or conversely, as inhuman. Humans, with male and female following their own particular paths, behave according to norms specific to their group. The question which remains unanswered is whether it is possible to derive a universal ethic which is valid for all, whatever one's distinct culture might be. This paper focus on this particular issue, providing philosophical as well as literary references, taken both from the Western and the African traditions.

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Aesthetic Perception and the Critique of Emblems: The Politics of the Visible in the Public Sphere in Africa

Jean-Godefroy Bidima

This paper examines the "policies of sign" developed in several African countries, describing some of the main emblems that are used to mark national or group identities: flags, coins, banknotes, and philately. It tries to bring to light the implicit narratives that belong to the way how these emblems are shaped, and draws conclusions that are relevant to the political, social, and cultural life of the involved communities.

Overcoming Emotions, Conquering Fate: Reflections on Descartes's Ethics

Supakwadee Amatayakul

This paper offers a reconstruction of Descartes's theory of the emotions, with special focus on the virtue "generosity" *(générosité)* which he proposed as the master virtue to help humans manage and control their desires so that they can achieve the highest level of happiness which transcends the unpredictability and arbitrariness of fate. It first provides an analysis of Descartes's notion of "divine providence," "vain desires," and "regret;" then proceeds to offer an investigation of "générosité" both as an emotion and as a virtue; and concludes with an examination of "générosité" as a tool to master and control the emotions.

'Not an Idle Spectator': Geoffrey Hill as Model Reviewer

Bridget Vincent

Geoffrey Hill's prose has prompted longstanding critical controversy, much of which turns on the perceived difficulty, intransigence and anachronism of his oeuvre as a whole. This paper proposes that new ways to navigate this controversy can be found in Hill's preoccupation with the exemplary dimensions of writing – that is, in his interest in the poet's capacity to offer examples (positive and negative) to a community of readers. The discussion pays particular attention to the connections Hill's reviews establish between style and ethical choice and between literary difficulty and democracy; connections which are intertwined with his ethics of exemplarity in fundamental ways. The paper also engages with those dimensions of literary exemple-use which emerge in new or unusual ways in his prose: his presentation of "models" or ideals for the organisation of civil society; his treatment of certain literary works as exemplars or embodiments of philosophical ideas; and his procedural tic of "sampling" regularly for the purpose of chastisement the "bad example" set by some of the works he criticises.

Transversality, Harmony, and Humanity Between Heaven and Earth

Hwa-Yol Jung

This paper presents the concept of *transversality* as a possible key notion to explain the cultural and social phenomena that are peculiar to postmodernity.

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Humanities Promotion Policy in Korea

Ki-Dong Song and Eunjong Ra

This paper presents the Humanities promotion policies implemented by the Korean government in the last years. It underlines the growing importance given to these disciplines in the current context of Korea's economic development. It explains why a background in the humanities is seen as a critical tool to enhance the national capacity of compete on global scale. The main actions and programmes for the upcoming years are presented here, along with medium- and long-term plans.

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