



The 1st World Humanities Forum Proceedings

Session 2

Plenary Session 2.
Multiple Identities in the Age of Globalization



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At Home in Motion: Evolving Identities in the Age of Globalisation

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...today we take pride in an identity...open to all, whatever their colour, religion or ethnic background. We celebrate our diversity, we recognise it brings us strength and teaches us a patriotism that enriches and unites our nation rather than divides it.

Tony Blair, Former UK Prime Minister

Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.

Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality.

David Cameron, U.K. Prime Minister

Australia is a multicultural country. We sing "Australians all" because we are.

Our country's story is the story of our people in this place. Australia has provided a new home and a chance at a better life for millions of people.

Julia Gillard, Australian Prime Minister

Over at least the last two decades, there has been considerable attention paid to the nature of our cosmopolitan world. Although the initial enthusiasm for a cosmopolitanism inspired by certain liberalism has been tempered by particularistic ethnic identities and forms of nationalism and patriotism, there remains considerable interest in the universality of humanity and the possibilities that arise from such recognition, especially in human rights discourse. This interest in cosmopolitanism is no doubt a product of the intense globalisation, processes of transnationalism and international migration that we have witnessed during this period. Nevertheless, the experience of 9/11 has more than demonstrated “that it is at best naive to assume that the presence of cosmopolitanism as an attitude is a quality that follows logically or inexorably from the very existence of the transnational experience” (Roudometof 2005: 128). Nevertheless, it is clear that cosmopolitanism and humanism are, at one level, inextricably linked. However, this relationship needs to be examined closely within the post-colonial context.

Humanism and Cosmopolitanism

The question of humanism is one that was central to Edward Said’s oeuvre. Robert Young argues that Said’s fundamental thesis was to point out the anti-humanist nature of orientalism. However, what was problematic for him was the manner in which Said appropriated the idea of human from within the Western humanist tradition in order to oppose the occidental representation of the orient. It was in this context that James Clifford asked if it was possible to escape the manner in which orientalism engages in the dehumanising, misrepresenting and inferiorising of other cultures? He argues that in Said’s work there is no alternative to orientalism, that his attack is firmly grounded within values derived from the “Western anthropological human sciences” (Clifford 1988: 261). Such a stance, of humanism, of oppositional criticism, is a “privilege invented by a totalising Western liberalism” (1988: 263).

One might ask if this strategy contradicts what Said reveals about the processes of orientalism in speaking for the orient. This is precisely what made Said, so fascinating as a cultural critic. The ambivalence of his position, the many paradoxes he traversed and the tensions created in his own cultural identity revealed the very complexity of the process of constructing one’s identity in the modern post-colonial world. It is in this context that we must view Said’s humanism which “was always a dialectic concept, generating oppositions it could neither absorb nor avoid” (Mitchell 2005: 462).

It is therefore not surprising that in his posthumously published book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004), Said emphatically answers Clifford by arguing that it is indeed “possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in its abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past...” (2004 10-11). In order to trace the Janus-

headed nature of Said's humanism, I want to suggest that it cannot be simply viewed as the humanism of the Enlightenment, but as Said pointed out, as a different kind of humanism. When viewed from such a perspective it is possible to conclude that Orientalism was indeed about exposing the anti-humanism of the Orientalists. As Said points out, humanism:

...is not a way of consolidating and affirming what 'we' have always known and felt, but rather a means of questioning, upsetting, and reformulating so much of what is presented to us as commodified, packaged, uncontroversial and uncritically codified certainties, including those contained in the masterpieces herded under the rubric of 'the classics' (2004: 28).

This Saidian humanism, and its filiation and affiliation, has its roots clearly in colonialism and the manner in which the colonial project was deployed.

Humanism and Colonialism

Although there are many types of humanism and the term is highly contentious, it nevertheless signifies that there is something universal and given about human nature and that it can be determined in the language of rationality. These ideas of human nature and rationality underpin the Enlightenment humanism that post-structuralist and postmodernist anti-humanists find objectionable on the grounds that these notions are historically contingent and culturally specific. Leela Gandhi points out: "the underside of Western humanism produces the dictum that since some human beings are more human than others, they are more substantially the measure of all things" (1998: 30). In this context, Aimé Césaire (1972) observed that the only history is white (1972). As Dipesh Chakrabarty points out:

For generations now, philosophers and thinkers shaping the nature of social science have produced theories embracing the entirety of humanity; as we well know, these statements have been produced in relative, and sometimes absolute, ignorance of the majority of humankind i.e., those living in non-Western cultures. (1992: 3)

Fanon recognized that for France as the birthplace of the democratic sentiments of liberty, equality, and fraternity Algeria raised significant questions that posed a critical problem and challenge to Western Humanism. However, it was much earlier in *Black Skin, White Masks* that we gain an insight into the Manichean world of his formative years. He was desperate to understand and transcend the nauseating banality of this world. As he pointed out at the end of the book:

Was my freedom not given to me in order to build the world of *You*?

At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness. (1986: 232)

Fanon's account of the Manichean world of colonialism, Homi Bhabha argues, needs to be seen as the "image of the post-Enlightenment man tethered to, not confronted by his dark reflection, the shadow of colonized man" (Bhabha in Fanon 1986: xiv). This realisation led to his desire to change the madness of the colonial world, a task that became critical for him when he moved to Algeria. In Algeria, Fanon was forced to conceptualise a new humanism. The tenuous hold he had on cultural certainty led to a weakening of the hold of humanism and the conception of a new humanism, a disruption of humanism that previewed the post-humanism of post-structuralism. Colonialism created the conditions that necessitated the new humanism. The new humanism was not a radical break with Enlightenment humanism, because of the way in which he drew on Marxism and existentialism. The old categories were however becoming problematic primarily because the issue of race problematised Marxist universalism (Ahluwalia, 2010).

In his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean-Paul Sartre pointed out the manner in which a new generation of colonial subjects challenged their European masters: "You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart" (Fanon 1967: xliv). In Fanon, Sartre found the voice of the Third World which did not speak to Europe but spoke to itself. He pointed out that Fanon's book did not need a preface because it was not directed at the coloniser but that he had written it to bring the argument to a conclusion:

for we in Europe too are being decolonized: that is to say that the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out ... we must face that unexpected revelation the strip-tease of our humanism ... It was nothing but an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage; its honeyed words, its affectation of sensibility were only alibis for our aggressions. (Fanon 1967: 21)

The humanism Fanon wishes for can be gleaned further in his "Letter to the Youth of Africa" where he pointed out that it is necessary for oppressed peoples to link up with "the peoples who are already sovereign if a humanism that can be considered valid is to be built to the dimensions of the universe" (1970: 125). Fanon described a new society that was only possible through the end of colonialism. He noted that, at "the same time that the colonized man braces himself to reject oppression, a radical transformation takes place within him which makes any attempt to maintain the colonial system impossible and shocking" (1970: 159). The revolution, he argued, "changes man and renews society ... this oxygen which creates and shapes a new humanity" (1970: 154). This discussion of Fanon's new humanism would clearly have been resonant with contemporary debates on cosmopolitanism albeit that

he was deeply conscious of the effects of racism. It is against this backdrop that we should examine the relationship between globalisation and multiculturalism as one of the main domains in which notions of cosmopolitanism and humanism are currently being played out.

Globalisation and Multiculturalism

It is now commonplace to speak of a global culture, the global village as well as the speed and spread of globalisation processes that are gripping the world. Globalisation is not an entirely new phenomenon. Nevertheless, new information, communication, transport and manufacturing technologies as well as trade regimes effected through such multi-lateral organisations as the GATT and tariff reductions, have allowed production, commerce and finance to be organised and operated on a global scale. The rise and spread of multi-national corporations operating across nation-state boundaries raises questions about the capacity of the state to function within the national interest. In addition, the mass migrations of peoples from different parts of the world have intensified and in several cases resulted in transnational diasporas.

The multiplicity of identities which we all embody, with allegiances to kin, group and nation has meant that we always are negotiating and putting forward different identities at different times. While such identities were at one time largely based in a single-nation state, the process is now more complicated due to the changes in global cultural processes, rapid economic changes, communications, travel and migration. As Goonatilake illustrates:

Thus one may be born in country A, get primary socialization through a religion B, secondary socialization through predominantly European science C, military training D on Chinese military strategy, work in country E, have as employer as an internationally traded company F, upgrade or change the profession through a new training G, receive a transnational global package H through radio and television, and travel in country J. Today's self is encroached upon dynamically by many shifting cultures (1995: 231).

Clearly, it is in this multiplicity of identities that the processes of globalisation are being carried out. These processes and the sheer complexity entailed within them, necessitate that we reassess and rethink and indeed re-imagine the manner in which cultural diversity is experienced as well as interpreted. It is no longer possible in this configuration to imagine that it is encapsulated in the space of a single nation-state (although it might be). Rather, this movement and complexity suggests a transnational element. As Fazal Rizvi suggests:

...it has become clear that experiences of cultural diversity increasingly take place in a transnational

context. This realization demands new conceptual resources with which to understand experiences of diversity within the era of globalization (2011:183-4).

This has meant that the nature and context of multiculturalism itself is rapidly changing with the traditional terrain dominated by competing groups who were unwilling to relinquish power or privilege being usurped by transnational processes that are beyond the control of groups within a particular nation-state. Hence, if multiculturalism is to have any currency or utility, it cannot be entrapped as a mechanism for managing ethnic relations. Rather, it has to be cognisant of the mass migrations that have characterised the movement of peoples and to engage “with the diasporic spaces that enable many people to now belong simultaneously to more than one country, and to interpret their sense of identity with respect to economic, social and political relations that span national boundaries” (Rizvi 2011: 186-7). The mass movement of peoples necessarily also means that we need to reassess our understanding of cosmopolitanism and humanism.

A New Multiculturalism: The UK and Australia

Let me turn then to David Cameron’s assertion in the epigraph, of the need for a muscular liberalism and how it clashes with such a cosmopolitan multiculturalism that is rapidly being de-territorialised and operating within new vectors of power that are dominated by diasporic processes. These processes are challenging traditional paradigms through new forms of technology that allows seemingly disparate peoples to be connected in new ways that were not even imagined a decade ago.

On February 5, 2011, David Cameron, the UK Prime Minister, speaking at the Munich Security conference addressed the pitfalls of state multiculturalism. He was convinced that this was the failure of the state to provide a particular vision of a society to which its citizens would want to belong. He spoke about the radicalisation of Islamic youth and the potential threat that they posed to the security of the nation. Remarkably, his remarks precipitated a debate that signalled a crisis of multiculturalism in the UK. It is important to juxtapose the UK case with the Australian because at roughly the same time, *The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy* was launched by the Commonwealth Government. For Australia, this was a reaffirmation of its commitment to a multicultural nation that has been forged by the realities of migration. It recognised that since the Second World War seven million people had migrated to Australia. The facts are that:

Today, one in four of Australia’s 22 million people were born overseas, 44 percent were born overseas or have a parent who was and four million speak a language other than English. We speak over 260 languages and identify with more than 270 ancestries. Australia is and will remain

a multicultural society (2).

As the authors of *The People of Australia* put it, “Multiculturalism is in Australia’s national interest and speaks to fairness and inclusion” (2). These seemingly disparate views by two rather similar countries with shared heritage and values seems quite extraordinary. Is it merely that the change of government in the UK, has led to such a reversal since Tony Blair’s celebration of diversity? Can this change be attributed to a Conservative Government that is speaking to a particular section of its constituency or, is there something far more concerning and alarming about multiculturalism in the UK? Similarly, are we witnessing a change of emphasis in Australia from the heyday of Pauline Hanson’s racism and the usurping of that policy by the Howard government and the subsequent election of a Labor government? Or, are there critical factors that make Australian multiculturalism unique, and one that embraces inclusion as opposed to one that merely tolerates its diverse citizens? To put it another way, is it merely a policy that engages in surveillance, that is in reality, about managing a diverse population. It is these questions that I want to explore particularly in relation to the muscular liberalism that David Cameron has proposed.

Negating Freedom’s Freedom

The phenomenon of diasporic ‘home-grown’ terrorism, such as the UK-born Muslim terrorists seem to instil the greatest fear after the 9/11 attacks. This phenomenon has led to social division arising out of a fear of the enemy within Western societies and poses unique challenges for social cohesion in multicultural societies. Vitriolic attacks on minority communities, especially Muslims, in Western nations including the targeting of the veil as a pre-modern artefact that has no place within a modern democratic society, needs to be contextualized against the backdrop of such fear. Indeed, some of the most intense debates surrounding the ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan were based on the need to save its women whose freedom had been severely curtailed by the Taliban with the veil as the symbol that most confronted Westerners. There is little doubt that women were adversely affected by that regime, however, to fetishize the veil seems particularly problematic without knowing the myriad of reasons that women veil in the first place.

In recent times, several countries in Europe have become fixated on the hijab, the nakob or the burqa as symbols of oppression that are unacceptable within a Europe that promotes, above all else, a form of democracy underpinned by equality, freedom and tolerance. In Australia, the debate has intensified recently within State Parliaments where private members have introduced bills to ban the burqa. The banning of the veil on grounds that it is ‘undemocratic’, ‘oppresses women’, is a ‘security threat’ – all the claims that have been articulated with zeal to ban the veil reek of the centuries old discourse of Orientalism.

However, the negation of freedom or the curtailment of freedom to secure freedom is most ironic, given the high value with which religious freedom is held in the West. To postcolonial subjects, this should not be too surprising, given that the colonial power always knew what was best for you – given the ‘white man’s burden’ – and the civilizing mission. More importantly, curtailing freedom on the pretext that it was essential to secure freedom was an effective tool of governance that was perfected by colonial regimes. Nowhere is this captured better than in the fear of the other, the need to keep out the ‘native’, to keep them in their place. In order to maintain this separation elaborate forms of security and policing were essential. In Algeria, it was Albert Camus who captured:

. . . this intriguing and disquieting people, close and yet separate, that one brushed past during the day; sometimes there was friendship or camaraderie but, when night fell, they returned to their own unknown houses which we never visited, barricaded also with their women whom we never saw or, if we saw them in the street, we did not know who they were with veils covering half their faces and their beautifully soft and sensual eyes above the white mask. Though fatalistic and exhausted, they were so numerous in the neighbourhoods where they clustered that there hovered an invisible threat which you could sniff in the air . . . (cited in Aldrich, 1996, p. 141)

Camus’ description captures the absurdity of the colonial project, the fear, the desire and sense of alienation from the indigenous population. In France, this current obsession with the veil is certainly not new and harks to the days of the Algerian War. But it is one that continues to haunt the French imagination. In 1990, Julia Kristeva, a few months after the controversy surrounding the wearing of headscarves, wrote in her Open Letter to Harlem De’sir that, in order to reinvigorate the principles of secularism in French schools, a particular quote from Montesquieu be displayed in every classroom:

If I would know of something which would aid me, and which would be harmful to my family, I would reject it from my soul. If I knew of something which would be useful to my family and which would not be to my country, I would try to forget it. If I knew of something which would be useful to my country, and which would be harmful to Europe, or which would be useful to Europe and harmful to humanity, I would regard it as a crime. (as cited in Moruzzi, 1994, p. 665)

This quote highlights the centrality of Europe’s allegiance to the very project of the Enlightenment. It is admirable that Montesquieu advocates that broader European interests subsume the French national interests. However, the migration of large numbers of post-colonial subjects with filiations not to Europe but with affiliations to France highlights the perception that there is a Western tendency to ‘close ideological and national ranks in the face of other . . . cultural identities’ (Moruzzi 1994: 665). It should

not be surprising then, that Muslims view the motives behind the banning of the burqa as a cynical move to negate their freedom in order to secure their freedom. This is a concrete example of how a muscular liberalism is being operationalised to the detriment of the type of multicultural diversity that has been envisioned by *The People of Australia*.

National Identity and National Character

Australia appears once again to be enveloped by the very concerns of identity and national character which were its focus at the turn of the last century. At the time of its founding, Australia as a settler colony inevitably looked towards its imperial master to provide its defining characteristics. Currently, Australians are attempting to come to terms with their post-colonial Australian identity. The denigration of the indigenous population characterised by a policy of genocide and displacement was somewhat challenged successfully by the Mabo case in which the highest judicial body overturned the founding myth of terra nullius upon which the modern nation had been built. The “White Australia” policy, which was meant to privilege the imperial settler class was modified continually to meet the labour needs of a post-war boom economy, has evolved into a multicultural society which even its architects had not envisioned.

These significant changes, however, do not mean that Australia is free now of its racist and colonial past. Indeed, it remains to be seen whether Australia can finally embrace multiculturalism which can inaugurate a new phase in its history, characterised by the principles of understanding and acceptance. Indeed, one of the four pillars of Australia’s new multicultural policy is that:

The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of law (5).

This policy is certainly a watershed given that under the Howard Liberal government there was a reassertion of assimilationist ideology which pervaded much of Australia’s past. The Howard government grudgingly accepted the Mabo ruling but subsequently watered down the decision through successive legislation and scare tactics around pastoral leases and appeals to a “mainstream” Australian polity (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998; Povinelli, 1998; Stratton, 1998). In addition, the Howard government insidiously cut funding not only to governmental bodies designed to promote a multicultural Australia but also to multicultural community groups, Aboriginal bodies and the Office of the Status of Women. These changes were part of the Howard vision of a certain kind of Australia - an Australia reminiscent of the Menzies era (Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998). And yet, the Australia of today is one characterised by ambivalence.

Australia has commodified Aboriginal culture in its drive to attract tourism and to project its image overseas - in the same way as it has portrayed itself as a multicultural society actively pursuing markets in an increasingly globalised world. This image has been tarnished not only by the Tampa election but by the continuing obsession with a perceived threat of refugee boats invading our shores promulgating policies such as “the pacific solution”, the “East Timor” option or even the “Malaysian deal”. These different policies, often in violation of our international human rights obligations and refugee conventions, appear to signal a nation that is struggling with xenophobia and racism albeit that the debate is couched in terms of “genuine” refugees and “queue jumpers”.

In short, this is a contestation over what it means to be Australian –the result of exclusionary practices and minimalist notions of citizenship which have operated in Australia. The exclusion of Aboriginal people, women, people of colour, gay people and recent migrants has rendered a crisis of citizenship that remains entrapped within certain white settler notions of identity in which “others” can only be constituted as hyphenated Australians.

Settler colonies were forged out of the very idea of the elimination of the indigenous population. As Patrick Wolfe has noted, “the colonizers came to stay - invasion is a structure not an event” (2006: 402). In the triumphant settler independent continent of Australia, the distinction therefore has never been between the settler as white conqueror and the native as black inhabitant but about when it is that a settler becomes a native. In a formal sense, the question can be answered by examining citizenship laws and clauses which ascribe citizenship after fulfilling certain criteria such as place of birth or the fulfilment of residency requirements. But these only entail gaining minimal formal civic rights and obligations. The task of determining who is a citizen is decided through legislation and altered from time to time. In Australia, while the boundaries of citizenship have been extended in order to accommodate waves of migration, it does not mean that citizenship is equal.

What is more important is how you gain the legitimacy of being transformed from a settler to a native? For those who sought to construct a particular Australian identity - through the white Australia policy and assimilationist ideology - the transformation was one that was limited exclusively to those of Anglo-European origin. It is a legacy that continues to be manifested through exclusionary practices whereby the entitlements of certain citizens such as refugees can be denied. It is in this context that any notions of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism must learn from the lessons of Fanon and Said.

Said's Legacy: Paul Gilroy

In recent times, if anyone has come close to rethinking humanism in the manner suggested by Edward Said it is Paul Gilroy. In his recent work, Gilroy advocates a planetary humanist perspective. Like Said, he rejects forms of liberal humanism that are deeply complicit with racial thinking in favour of the kinds of humanism that were advanced by thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, W.E.B. DuBois and C.L.R. James. Gilroy's new form of humanism is not 'European' but "planetary" and his project in the post 9/11 environment is to work out how to live with difference. He writes

As the postcolonial and post-Cold War model of global authority takes shape and reconfigures relationships between the overdeveloped, the developed and the developmentally arrested worlds, it is important to ask what critical perspectives might nurture the ability and the desire to live with difference on an increasingly divided but also convergent planet? We need to know what sorts of insight and reflection might actually help increasingly differentiated societies and anxious individuals to cope successfully with the challenges involved in dwelling comfortably in proximity to the unfamiliar without becoming fearful and hostile" (2005: 3).

For Gilroy, the challenge is to configure human interactions and relationships beyond the very strictures and boundaries imposed by race thinking. His frustration is not only with contemporary discourses of racial politics but also with multiculturalism which, seems to have been all but abandoned. It has, he notes, been "judged unviable and left to fend for itself, its death by neglect is being loudly proclaimed on all sides. The corpse is now being laid to rest amid the multiple anxieties of the 'war on terror'" (2005: 1). Gilroy is deeply cognisant of the power of race and his quest to think past race is embedded within that project.

Planetary humanism is the beginning of a way out of this predicament and is inextricably linked to his notion of "conviviality", a notion that seeks to move away from reified forms of identity and fixed racial classificatory systems. For Gilroy, conviviality describes, "the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multicultural an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere" (2005: xv). Conviviality is deeply located in the politics of everyday life and it delineates "the evasive, multicultural future prefigured everywhere in the ordinary experiences of contact, cooperation, and conflict across the supposedly impermeable boundaries of race, culture, identity and ethnicity" (xii). Conviviality requires a certain detachment from 'community' and 'identity' and demands a different sense of the human. As Gilroy points out, the unabashed humanism which underpins his project is "licensed by a critique of racial hierarchy and the inhuman life forms it creates". It is opposed to racism "in order to project a different humanity, capable of interrupting the liberal, Cold War,

and exclusionary humanisms that characterize most human-rights talk” (xv-xvi).

Multiculturalism: A Challenge for the Humanities

The most crucial terrain where these debates are being played out is within the education sector and poses real challenges for the humanities. The effect of mass migrations and the emergence of transnational diasporic populations render our communities culturally diverse, forcing them to be more inclusive not only through equity and participation but also through reforms to their curriculum. A curriculum, that has to necessarily be more relevant given the disparate global experiences of its participants. As Fazal Rizvi points out, “this new understanding of the experiences of cultural diversity poses new challenges for policy in education” (2011: 180).

In a post 9/11 environment, the traditional humanities are continuously being forced to balance the celebration of diversity with the often conflicting narrative of the nation that is both contradictory and confronting. Within such a construct diversity must necessarily embrace a deterritorialised notion of cultural diversity and recognise that multiculturalism as a concept has far greater salience when considered within the framework of globalisation where subjects are continuously pushing the boundaries of ascribed identities, defining and redefining their place in the world.

Conclusion

Edward Said and Paul Gilroy, writing in the aftermath of 9/11, recognise the debilitating effects of the pervasive violence that marks our world. For them, new forms of knowledge underpinned by humanism or conviviality are marked by the adoption of a certain ethical stance and point to ways in which we can begin to think out of the theoretical abyss that confronts us in a post 9/11 world. Remarkably, Edward Said was at the forefront of redefining and rethinking humanism at the very time when it had been relegated as outmoded and conforming to an orthodoxy that is out of step with trends within contemporary theory. Saidian humanism, as I have tried to portray it, forces us to recognise that in Edward Said’s hands necessitates that it be “rezoned to avoid misleading cartographic divisions between European and non-European cultures” (Apter 2004: 52). In his unrelenting contrapuntal style, his unique ‘late style’, Said forces us to reconsider the place of the humanism by going so far as to say that it is “the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history” (Said 2004a: 878).

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Beyond Unity in Diversity: Cosmopolitanizing Identities in a Globalizing World

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Introduction

It is commonly recognized that we live in an increasingly globalized world today. This is a world whose workings and fate are increasingly underpinned by global interconnectedness and interdependence. This does not mean, however, that humans are all becoming more the same, nor that we are creating a more harmonious, cosmopolitan world. On the contrary, the paradox is that the more globally connected we have become, the more insistent local and particular identities are being articulated by people around the world, often leading to tension and conflict. This is not surprising, given the massive inequalities and persistent power hierarchies shaping economic, social and political relations at global, national and local levels. Although we are a single humanity living on one planet, we all live our lives in different social communities, creating a multiplicity of cultural worlds.

Globalization and cultural diversity, then, go hand in hand. This paradox is often rhetorically evened out in public discourse through familiar mantras such as ‘many cultures, one world’ or ‘unity in diversity’, as if the gap between unity and diversity can be easily reconciled. But such often-repeated slogans are abstract catchphrases without substantive meaning, hiding rather than illuminating the complex contradictions and challenges of living in a globally entangled world, which is nevertheless replete with difference. In philosophical terms, this global paradox is expressed in the antinomy between universalism and particularism, or the gap between the presumed universality of human nature and the irreducible particularity of different cultures. In social and political terms, the desire to close this gap is manifested in the ongoing universalist effort to achieve a fully inclusive humanity despite our differences; in other words, by subsuming particularism within an all-encompassing, humanist universalism. The slogan ‘unity in diversity’ is an expression of this high-minded ideal.

In this paper, I will interrogate the ‘unity in diversity’ slogan in order to argue that the attainment of this humanistic universalism is bound to fail if it is envisioned as a static moral ideal. Instead, it is more useful to conceive it a social and political horizon that must constantly be worked towards, without it ever being fully achieved. In doing so we need to explore how the complex intersections of globalization and cultural diversity manifest on the ground, within and between nation-states. In recent times we have seen that tensions between nations and cultures have been rising despite the common calls for international peace and understanding, and global solidarity. In other words, the world we live in is not just a diverse world, it is in many respects a divided world. Not only is the world rife with conflicting interests and values, the reality of which cannot be ignored; it is also the case that we perceive the world as a place inhabited by peoples who are so very different from ourselves – in terms of races, ethnicities, languages, religions, and so on – that we often struggle to see them as part of a common humanity. As a result, many people tend to experience the world in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’, self and other, in various configurations. Overcoming such divisions is not easy, because they are deeply ingrained in common ways of seeing and imagining the world. We need to develop conceptual perspectives which are able to overcome such divisive ways of seeing and imagining, without overlooking the real differences which will always remain.

One such conceptual perspective is to describe our globalized world as a network of flows. The experience of planet Earth as ‘one world’ is fostered in different ways today through international trade and the flow of goods and services, the unprecedented movement (or flow) of people across borders, and with them the flow of forms of cultural practice and knowledge, information, images and ideas through digital communications networks. The effects of these technologies are now apparent almost everywhere, with the blossoming of internet and mobile phone communications in the remotest and poorest of villages. They create an intensively networked world, or what the sociologist Manuel Castells (1996; 2005) calls a ‘network society’.

But the networks of flows boosted by globalization do not simply make the world more unified or integrated; they also produce new forms of disunity and disintegration, creating what international relations theorist James Rosenau (2003) calls a ‘framgregated’ world – a world of simultaneous fragmentation and integration. For instance, economic and technological globalization may promote the hegemony of powerful corporate forces (e.g. Westernisation or Americanisation), but one of its effects may be a proliferation of diverse cultural experiences and social activities as a consequence of such flows. Here, processes of globalization and localization are taking place at the same time, leading to what some theorists have called glocalization (Roudometof 2005). Glocalization is a term originally used in Japanese business practices in the 1980s, coming from the Japanese word *dochakuka*, which means ‘global localization’. It is used to describe how global products or processes are adapted to suit local needs and conditions. What is interesting in such a situation is that what is ‘global’ and what is ‘local’ cannot be

separated out: they are intertwined. For example, the spread of the Internet has been dominated by some large American corporations such as Google, Apple and Microsoft, but the uses of the Internet, especially social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (all American-owned), have created massive virtual network societies shaped by local interests and priorities, as has been the case recently during the Arab Spring. In other words, although the technology is global, its spread is dependent on how people around the world adapt it to local uses (eg by developing websites in their native languages). In short, 'glocalization', or the 'glocal', although awkward, is a useful new term which can signal the ways in which things we tend to see as separate (such as local and global, but also old and new, familiar and alien, similar and different, self and other) are actually complexly interwoven.

This complex interweaving of seemingly opposite forces should lead us to a different way of thinking about cultural diversity: not as a mosaic (where each element is a separate entity), nor as a melting pot (where all differences are dissolved), but perhaps as a maze (where identity and difference are seen not as opposites but as simultaneous, complementary and entangled presences). I will clarify these different conceptualizations further below, as they are very important for our understanding the relationship between universalism and particularism. A key starting point here is to reflect on the nation-state, especially in relation to the issue of multiculturalism.

Nation-states and the multicultural question

Nation-states are the central agents of government and governance in the modern world. A common general definition of the nation-state is that it is an autonomous political unit inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common ethnicity, culture, history and language. This idea of the nation-state has been a guiding principle since the French Revolution of 1789, which stressed the political unity and independence of peoples (the state coincides with the nation, which in turn coincides with a territory and a people). Today's modern world order is one which takes the legitimacy and sovereignty of separate nation-states for granted.

The ideal type of the nation-state is based on sameness and homogeneity. In this sense, the authority of the nation-state is based on the internal universalisation of a particularist sense of nationhood and the assertion of its uniqueness in relation to all other nation-states. In other words, the modern world order is the embodiment of the absolute dichotomy of universalism and particularism: it is constructed as a universal humanity comprised of resolutely particular, mutually exclusive, internally cohesive nations – racially and culturally.

But the very concept of the world as a 'family of nations', as institutionalized pre-eminently in the United

Nations, is being corroded increasingly and unavoidably by the cross-cutting flows of globalization. The idea of national sovereignty – that is, the claim of a nation-state to be the judge and jury of its own cause, to have supreme, independent authority over its territory – has come under severe pressure as a consequence of the intensifying global mobility of money, technology, information, people, and ideas. Still, it is widely recognised that globalization has not, as yet, led to the gradual dissolution of the power of the nation-state. Instead, what the era of globalization has brought about is a reconfiguration of the place and role of the nation-state in the management of the global (dis)order. Thus, nation-states are not bound to disappear or to lose their influence any time soon, not least because their legitimacy is constantly reproduced through their status as central agents in institutions of international governance from the UN to the European Union to APEC. Rather than being the pinnacle of sovereignty, however, nation-states now operate more as nodes of socio-spatial power where the very contradictions of economy and society in a globalized world are being negotiated (Sassen, 2007). As national territories are being traversed by highly contradictory flows of multiple, cross-cutting and intersecting local and transnational forces, they should be conceived as fragmented, disorderly and porous social spaces, not as ordered, bounded totalities. Nevertheless, the very imagination of the nation-state as a bounded entity is part and parcel of the performative work of states in their efforts to secure nation-wide managerial control. Indeed, representing the nation as a distinct and unique imagined community, as Benedict Anderson (2006) would have it, is perceived by governments as an even more urgent, if increasingly challenging cultural task, precisely in the current age of globalization. We live in a networked world where the national and the transnational are irrevocably intertwined, yet where nationalising forces attempt to disentangle our image of the nation from its transnational enmeshment by insisting ever more strongly on drawing its borders and boundaries (Castells, 1996; Paasi, 2003). This paradoxical tension between the national and the transnational is a crucial factor in the shaping of much political conduct around the world today. This is strongly evidenced in the complex impact of international people flows, especially migration, on nation-states.

Clearly, the social reality of most nation-states today is not at all one of sameness and homogeneity. On the contrary, most nation-states, to a greater or lesser extent, have very diverse populations, not least as a result of burgeoning international migration (Solimano, 2010). Even those nation-states which have traditionally been characterized by exceptional racial and cultural homogeneity, such as Japan and Korea, are today becoming more diverse with the presence of many migrants from other countries. Thus, the reality of nation-states is that they are internally diverse, yet they also tend to promote national unity through the integration of all their citizens into a common ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 2006), for example through national education, the imposition of a national language, the teaching of a national history, and so on. Nation-states can recognize cultural plurality and difference, albeit often within a hierarchy of more ‘central’ majority and more peripheral minorities, but always under the umbrella of an overarching nationhood, within which the diverse minority groups are to be subsumed.

Policies of multiculturalism, which have been introduced in several nation-states in the late 20th century, especially in Western immigrant societies such as Canada and Australia, are an official recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity within the nation. Such state-driven multiculturalism generally refers to ‘the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up’ (Hall, 2000: 209). In this sense, multiculturalism is a mode of governmentality, consisting of particular ensembles of institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics, aimed at regulating and reconciling the tensions and conflicts raised by cultural, racial or ethnic differences among a population within a territory (Foucault, 2009). In this respect, multiculturalism is a particularly modern technology of government; it is a governmental problematic which has emerged as part and parcel of the management of the modern nation-state. At the same time, wherever it is deployed multiculturalism is a deeply contested idea, whose meaning is never settled and always attracting both passionate proponents and ardent opponents from both left and right, conservative and radical. Why is the case?

I would suggest that multiculturalism is controversial as a policy framework because it brings into sharp focus the fundamentally problematic nature of the nation-state as a bounded, sovereign entity. The fact, as Stuart Hall (2000: 212) points out, that what he calls ‘the multi-cultural question’ has intensified and become more salient in the past few decades, taking centre-stage in the field of political contestation throughout the world, is indicative of the shifting configuration and increasingly ambiguous nature of national identity in an increasingly globalized world. Discourses of multiculturalism often limit themselves to issues and arrangements within a particular nation-state; that is, they tend to be focused inward on a strictly national frame of reference. It is precisely this nation-centric focus of multiculturalism, as it is predominantly conceived, which reveals its deeply problematic relationship with the idea of the nation.

The easiest way to explain this is to note that what policies of multiculturalism do is redescribe the nation-state explicitly as a ‘unity in diversity’. Multicultural societies are generally described in terms of the diversity of ethnic groups living within it. And to be sure, many non-western countries, which became nation-states in the modern sense in the wake of European colonialism and imperialism, have always had to establish themselves in multi-ethnic terms. Malaysia, for example, is a postcolonial nation-state which officially describes itself as consisting of three ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese and Indians – a composition which is a legacy of British colonialism. Iran is also officially a multi-ethnic society with Persians as the dominant group, but consisting further of Azari Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Balouches and Tukmans, and many other smaller ethnic groupings. In a different way, India is equally characterised by great diversity, not least in terms of language: there is no such thing as the Indian language and the Indian currency is printed in 15 languages. Indians even pride themselves on their diversity, and the slogan ‘unity

in diversity' is often invoked as quintessentially applicable to India. In the nation-states of the developed West, meanwhile, ethnic and cultural diversity have resulted mostly from waves of immigration. In such contexts, a liberal version of multiculturalism prevails, in which migrants are recognised for their difference but are still expected ultimately to integrate, if not assimilate into the dominant national culture. As Hall (2000: 210) has noted, 'Just as there are different multi-cultural societies there are very different "multiculturalisms"'. Yet despite this wide variety what all multi-cultural societies have in common is that they harbour different cultural, racial or ethnic communities who live together in a common polity. In other words, multiculturalism poses the overarching national community as the universal domain within which each of the particular ethnic communities (minorities and majority) find their rightful place. This is the 'unity in diversity'. Yet this image of the nation-state is too neat, and too far removed from the reality of multicultural societies.

One key problem with notions of 'unity in diversity' is that it often results in the creation of too rigid conceptions of ethnic groups, as if they were bounded and internally coherent entities. It does not account for the fluidity and dynamic nature of social relations between and amongst members of these groups. The Nobel prize-winning Indian economist, Amartya Sen, has criticized approaches to multiculturalism which define nations as a 'plural monoculturalism', where people and communities are categorised within rigid boxes of inherited identities (Sen 2006). Such a model makes identity and difference absolute, and thus constructs a static and unchanging image of diversity, which fits J.S. Furnivall's classic description of a 'plural society' as comprising ethnic groups 'which live side by side, yet without intermingling' (quoted in Hefner, 2001: 4). Today's controversy about multiculturalism is based on this notion of diversity, as in critiques – articulated especially in Europe – that multiculturalism promotes 'parallel lives'.

Against such a static image of diversity and multiculturalism many theorists have mobilized concepts of hybridity and hybridisation, emphasising the fluidity and multiplicity of identities, intercultural mixture and cultural translation taking place in multicultural societies (Ang 2001; Bhabha 1994; Nederveen Pieterse, 2009). This involves a more cosmopolitan understanding of multiculturalism as opposed to a more traditional, pluralist one. US historian David Hollinger (1995) has eloquently articulated the tension between these two opposing tendencies in the idea of multiculturalism:

Multiculturalism is rent by an increasingly acute but rarely acknowledged tension between cosmopolitan and pluralist programs for the defense of cultural diversity. Pluralism respects inherited boundaries and locates individuals within one or another of a series of ethno-racial groups to be protected and preserved. Cosmopolitanism is more wary of traditional enclosures and favors voluntary affiliations. Cosmopolitanism promotes multiple identities, emphasizes the dynamic and changing character of many groups, and is responsive to the potential for creating new cultural

combinations. Pluralism sees in cosmopolitanism a threat to identity, while cosmopolitanism sees in pluralism a provincial unwillingness to engage the complex dilemmas and opportunities actually presented by contemporary life. (Hollinger, 1995: 3-4).

Cosmopolitanism has attracted the interest of many scholars in recent times (Delanty 2009; Held 2010; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). Hollinger's description highlights what I consider of key importance about cosmopolitanism: it is not a fixed attitude or disposition, but, in its responsiveness to 'the potential for creating new combinations', it encourages a process. It is this process – call it the process of cosmopolitanization – which needs to be promoted in multicultural societies.

The cosmopolitan process

Historians have pointed to situations in the past where a strong cosmopolitan ethos emerged in situations of intensive exchange relationships in many places, particularly in trading centres and colonial outposts. Sri Lanka, for example, because of its geographical position in the Indian Ocean, was long at the heart of maritime trade routes between East and West, frequented by Roman, Arab, and Chinese traders before the arrival of Portuguese and Dutch seafarers from the 15th century onwards, until the island was submitted to British colonial rule in the early 19th century. Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, like many other trading posts in the region, has a history of being a meeting point where people from different lands came into contact with each other, often for extended periods of time, leading to an incredible exchange of ideas, technologies and goods. Thus, a fluid cultural diversity around the Indian Ocean existed for centuries before the establishment of modern nation-states. These traders were thoroughly cosmopolitan in that they would routinely transact and translate across different languages, and knew how to conduct themselves in different cultural settings with people of different religious beliefs, while respecting the disparate religious, social, and cultural practices of their neighbours (Gupta 2008).

Since Sri Lanka has become a nation-state, however, the country has been riven by protracted inter-ethnic conflict, even civil war, between the Sinhalese and Tamil populations. Even now that the civil war has ended, the question of how Sri Lankans of different ethnic backgrounds can learn to live in harmony remains an urgent one. The nation-state cannot prescribe a singular cultural identity for all its citizens. Peace building efforts using a pluralist approach to multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue tend to take the form of programs where members of each group are encouraged to get to know the other group, for example, through the showcasing of each other's dances, food and music. Such programs presume that ethnic categories such as Sinhalese and Tamil have fixed, pre-given identities, putting every person in a hermetically sealed box. But as a consequence differences between the two groups tend to be reified and presented as unambiguous and absolute. This may paradoxically work to reinforce the sense of being

different and in conflict (Orjuela 2008).

A more cosmopolitan approach would encourage conversations which do not take pre-existing ethnic boundaries and mutually exclusive ethnic identities as a given but, on the contrary, attempt to help open up such ethnic boxes. Such conversations should nurture the idea, as Sen argues in his book *Identity and Violence*, that identities are robustly plural and that the importance of one identity does not obliterate another. The Ghana-born American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) argues that cosmopolitanism can provide us with a set of principles that allow us to 'to live together as the global tribe we have become'. Cosmopolitanism is, as the subtitle of his book says it, a form of 'ethics in a world of strangers'.

Appiah admits that cosmopolitanism is a problematic term, often associated with abstract, rootless notions of 'citizen of the world', as if cultural traditions and ethnic attachments do not matter. This does not have to be the case, in his view. Rather than dissolving differences of background, practice and belief in a kind of melting pot of 'shared values', Appiah sees the aims of cosmopolitanism as more modest and more processual, indeed, as an ethics. As an ethical mode of conversation and engagement with others it is not meant to work towards a consensus of values, which is so often foregrounded as a prerequisite for the achievement of a common humanity. Instead its purpose is, more humbly, to get to know and learn from and about one another. In multicultural societies, conversation across lines of difference helps us to gradually change the way we understand, to see the world from other points of view, and to become more comfortable with the presence of others who are different. 'Conversation doesn't have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values, it's enough that it helps people get used to one another', Appiah notes. What is important about cosmopolitan conversations is not that they teach us about differences, but the very fact that they take place. It is the process of conversation that matters, not its outcomes. This is a process of leaving fixed categories behind, and bringing out the fluid plurality and dynamic complexity of our identities. The goal is not to know, in any definitive and positivist sense, how they are different from us, but to become used to the fact that they inhabit the same world as we do. In other words, cosmopolitanism involves the ongoing process of nurturing of what Appiah calls 'the habits of co-existence'.

Appiah insists that citizens do not have to agree on all common values in order to live in harmony, as long as they agree to make living together work (which, of course, is a crucial precondition). In this way, he distinguishes cosmopolitanism from universalism: 'Cosmopolitans suppose that all cultures have enough overlap in their vocabulary of values to begin a conversation. But they don't suppose, like some universalists, that we could all come to agreement if only we had the same vocabulary.' (Appiah 2006: 57) In other words, we do not all have to embrace a universe of "shared values" – that is, achieve full

unity – to live harmoniously in a diverse world. At the same time, cosmopolitanism brings out a different understanding of particularism, where cultural diversity is conceptualised not as a mosaic (a composite structure consisting of individual pieces, each neatly separated), but as a maze – an intricate tangle of interconnecting pathways and passages where identities are always in process, a matter of becoming. Or to use a different metaphor, which I derive from the French philosopher Roger-Pol Droit (2007), identities are not like unyielding, impenetrable stones, but like porous and fluctuating clouds, where self and other do not have clearly demarcated boundaries but constantly influence and shape each other.

In short, from a cosmopolitan perspective a multicultural society is not a static ‘unity in diversity’, but a dynamic confluence of fluctuating, cloud-like identities, sometimes overlapping and merging, at other times breaking up and dissolving. Rather than seeing identity and difference (or unity and diversity) as opposite to one another, cosmopolitanism acknowledges that contradictory processes of unification and diversification take place simultaneously and ongoingly.

Beyond the nation

This shift in conceptualising and imagining multicultural societies is perhaps quite realizable within the context of a nation-state, where different ethnic and cultural groups are forced to live together within a shared jurisdiction. Even so, we know all too well that it is difficult to overcome habits of thought where the absolutism of ethnic difference is deeply ingrained and, often, reinforced by governments. This difficulty is enormously magnified when we wish to break down cultural barriers between nation-states. This is because in a strictly legal sense citizens of different nation-states do not need to see themselves as sharing a common world, on the contrary. If, for example, it would be possible to persuade the deeply divided Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka to embrace a shared Sri Lankan national identity, then they would collectively see themselves as a national ‘we’ in contradistinction to other national identities.

We live in a world where nations are seen as the key building blocks of the world community. The United Nations is the preeminent supra-national organisation where nations are assembled and receive recognition for their individual autonomy and sovereignty. The world according to the United Nations is irrevocably a mosaic: a mosaic of independent nation-states, each with their own government, culture, flag, anthem, etc. Oppressed peoples around the world often aspire to the status of independent nationhood as a way of casting off their sense of subjugation – think, in recent times, of the people of East Timor, Southern Sudan and the Palestinians. National independence, then, is generally prized as an incontrovertible good. National pride is whipped up by governments and internationally through worldwide ceremonies such as the Olympic Games, which are staged as a global competition between national teams. Nation-states are mutually exclusive entities: they occupy territories which are separated from each other by keenly

patrolled borders. As a result, nations are generally conceived as hard, unyielding stones rather than malleable, flowing clouds.

And yet, as we have seen, nation-states are not nearly as autonomous and independent as they are imagined, especially under today's globalized circumstances. But precisely because the idea(l) of national sovereignty is so deeply cherished, the interdependencies and entanglements brought about by globalization create ever increasing anxieties over the loss of national autonomy, resulting in intensifying tensions and conflicts. How, then, can we move beyond such deeply entrenched modes of nationalist particularism?

To elucidate the difficulty of the challenge posed in this question, we need to go no further than focusing on relations between neighbouring countries. Such countries – for example, India and Pakistan, Thailand and Cambodia, China and Korea, Korea and Japan – are often driven to mutual enmity precisely because they share a border, which separates them but also conjoins them. National borders are modern constructs designed to manage territories and populations, but because they are sharp lines on a map they suppress cultural continuities and shared histories that may exist on both sides of the border. Border wars over competing national particularisms occur with dispiriting frequency in relation to issues of history and heritage, where the predominance of a national frame of interpretation and sense of ownership is overwhelming.

For example, Thailand and Cambodia have had armed clashes in recent years over the Preah Vihear Temple, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for Cambodia in 2008. This led to the rekindling of disputes between the two countries over ownership of the temple, because the temple resides right in the borderzone between the two countries and the precise borderline, only insisted upon in the early 20th century when Cambodia was colonized by the French, has never been fully agreed upon. The standoff between the two nation-states over the temple has inflamed nationalist hostilities on both sides, at the expense of a shared and joint celebration of a site which, in the philosophy of UNESCO, is deemed of universal value for humanity as a whole. Here we see how universalist principles are undermined by the divisive effect of the ingrained particularism of cultural nationalism, which is ironically reinforced by the World Heritage system (Silverman, 2011). In other words, it is not universalism that subsumes different particularisms under its overarching umbrella; instead, it is the different particularisms which clash over the opportunities unleashed by the universal. If the encompassing family of nations is envisaged as a 'unity in diversity', then it is diversity – the diversity of nations - that prevails, undercutting the presumed unity of humanity.

Similar clashes over history along national lines are intense in Northeast Asia, for example between (South)

Korea and Japan and South Korea and China. A case in point is the ongoing dispute between Chinese and Korean historians – backed by their respective national governments – over whether the Ancient Kingdom of Koguryo, located in the northern and central parts of the Korean peninsula where the modern border between the People’s Republic China and the Republic of Korea lies, is part of Chinese or Korean history. (Chung 2009; Lim 2008). Similarly, in an analysis of Korean and Japanese national history textbooks, Jie-Hyun Lim has argued that ‘Korean and Japanese national histories have been trapped in a “mutual siege”’, each fully ensconced in their own parallel, yet antagonistic, nation-centred versions of history, with ‘no meeting point at which a reconciliation of historical interpretations might take place’ (Lim 2008: 2/3).

Such examples illuminate how difficult it is to overcome the powerfully separatist impact of nationalist particularism. In this light, it is clear that the universalist vision of ‘one world’ can provide little counterpoint to the pervasive weight of particularist national belonging in the modern world order we currently live in, bolstered as it is by the structural prevalence of the nation-state.

Universalist rhetorical references to ‘a single humanity’ are not sufficient for the attainment of a greater sense of global human solidarity. Instead, a cosmopolitan perspective, in the conversational way Appiah has described it, would be more useful in that it may open up vistas beyond the nation, towards more outward-looking world views, sensitive to both commonalities of history and differences of cultural formation between and across nation-states. But this is a hard, ongoing process – a process in which differences, even incommensurabilities, cannot (and should not) be entirely overcome. A universal, common humanity can only be a social and political horizon that must constantly be worked towards, without it ever being fully achieved. The work of cosmopolitanization will never be done.

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The Uncanny Laughter

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1.C

It was one November evening in Paris that a criminal defense attorney, C, satisfied with his success in a certain lawsuit case, had a wonderful dinner with his girlfriend and made wild love to her in her apartment. When he came out of the building just past midnight, it was starting to drizzle outside.

When he reached the midpoint of the Pont Royal over the Seine, C saw a woman gazing down at the river bending over the railing. Indifferent to the scene, he just kept walking his way. Then, as he had crossed the bridge all the way into the riverside road, he heard an enormous noise heard from behind. It was the sound of something falling into the water followed by a shrill scream falling on his ears.

I would run there, but my body was fixed to the ground. I was shivering in the cold air. My mind was urging me to do something, but I felt as if not a bit of strength was left in my helpless body. I cannot recall what exactly I was thinking then. Perhaps, I was saying to myself “it’s too late, it’s too far...” or something like that.¹

Afterwards, C believed that he had overcome that memory. On the same day 2 or 3 years later, he was walking home across that same bridge over the Seine after he had received a warm welcome from his clients as always and had drawn a round of applause for his excellently improvised speech at a certain event. All of a sudden, he heard someone laughing behind his back. He spun his body around to see but found no one there. He backtracked the way he had come, and then, again, the same laugh reached his ears, this time, from the opposite side behind his back, chilling his spine. “I halted there, standing blankly. The sound of laughing dwindled, but I could still clearly sense it behind my back.”²

After a long time, during which C had grown old sometimes suffering from illness, he was taking a trip on

a trans-Atlantic liner with his girlfriend. When he came out on the upper deck to gaze over the waters, he found a black speck repeatedly emerging and submerging. Frightened, he almost gave out a scream.

That sound of a scream, which had once echoed behind my back a few years before, had been carried down by the river all the way to the Straits of Dover and had been drifting restlessly in the endless space of the ocean around the world, waiting to finally encounter me until that day. I realized that it will always be waiting for me whether in the sea or in the river, that is, whichever place has the water of bitterness to baptize me with.³

This is a statement by C, who once was a successful attorney in Paris. Now, he has become a penitent to be summoned for a verdict by the sounds of a scream heard wherever there is water. Being a penitent and living as a penitent, are there any differences?

2. Narrative

What can we know from a faded photograph of someone, found amid what was left of Fukushima after its devastation this spring? Is he or she a good person victimized by the sudden disaster, not even having any inklings of what happened? Or is it a hero who vanished while trying to rescue his or her neighbors against the tide fiercely closing in, not even leaving his or her own body to be found?

A being, a thing, or a situation is accepted as understandable only when it is placed in a narrative context of a certain plot. A. McIntyre presents an impressive case that explains this idea. Let's imagine that a young man makes a statement to you that "a harlequin duck is called 'histrionicus ,historioncus histrionicus'" while you are waiting in the line at a bus stop. How should you understand this situation? First, you might judge his behavior as mental: the guy in front of you is simply mad and is just speaking bullshit. Meanwhile, it is not totally impossible that the young man has mistaken you for someone he had met in a library the day before, who had asked him whether he knows the Latin name of a harlequin duck. Or, he might be a stutterer in a psychiatric treatment session that required him to initiate conversation with strangers. Or even, he might be a spy and have uttered a secret code phrase to the wrong person.

Every being, every situation is properly understood only when its proper place within a narrative is known:

The narrative of any one life is part of an interlocking set of narratives. Moreover this asking for and giving of accounts itself plays an important part in constituting narratives .Asking you what you did and why saying what I did and why, pondering the differences between your account of

what I did and my account of what I did, and vice versa, these are essential constituents of all but the very simplest and barest of narratives

A human identity is essentially a “narrative identity.” One’s action is understood only when his or her intention is known, while his or her intention is explicable only in a historical and social context. Everyone, therefore, is an author, actor, and critic of his or her own life. In other words, a human is as much a narrative animal as he or she is a social animal. We can unreservedly accept the following statement of Barbara Hardy: “We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative. The reason why I bring up the narrative theory here is that it provides us with an excellent insight into understanding the identity issue in which we are interested. A narrative vision influences not only a daily and private identity of an individual but even a process in which heads of a group or a nation develop their identity. There is every piece of evidence for that. In this regard, Axel Honneth presents one interesting fact in his writing. Even the head of a Somali pirate group yearns for a kind of a righteous identity and acts accordingly, which exemplifies the prominent phenomenon that has emerged in global dissemination of local terrorism foreshadowing a Hobbesian “war of all against all” in the post-Soviet era:

M. Ignatieff associates heads of banditry or combat leaders today with a medieval warrior, which is a historical type of personality. He says that “they appear everywhere a nation-state crumbles: Lebanon, Somalia, North India, Armenia, Georgia, Ossetia, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, and so on. Their car phones, fax machines, and excellent weapons make one consider them post-modern, but, as a matter of fact, they are living in the Early Middle Ages.”⁶

The identity issue, therefore, is involved in every narrative situation from one’s private life to a war between groups.

Once we agree that a human is a narrative being with an identity born in a narrative category, the next step is to question how it is shaped, revised, modified, sustained, disseminated, or approved within a narrative community.

A Heideggerian conceptual framework helps us deal with the issue. It identifies a human Dasein (being-there) as an In-der-Welt-Sein (being-in-the-worldness). We have been thrown into the world. What let us know of this Geworfenheit (thrownness) is the fact that we have Stimmung (mood). This is the way a human being exists in the world, unlike a shirt in a wardrobe or a card in a wallet.⁷ The world of moods is not so simple to grasp: others, duties, tools, objects, ideologies, interests, and all are involved (Bewandtnis). If you choose “others” as a theme under which to analyze yourself, it will be analogous to taking a novel

out of your bookshelf and drawing a character map with the protagonist in the center and other characters connected to him or her by a relationship line. An identity is describable as an outline of an entity, which for the first time looms in this misty world of thrownness:

It is also that we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle ; I am a citizen of this or that city , a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles.. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations.⁸

When an identity is presented as something that an individual must take in, it implies that one must unconditionally accept the state of thrownness. For example, let's take a look at what happened in a musical workshop held in Weimar in 1999. It was an orchestral concert initiated by Daniel Barenboim, a Jewish conductor, and Edward Said, a scholar of Arab origin acting in every corner of human sciences, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Goethe's birth. Top-class young Arab and Israeli musicians, purportedly not on good terms with each other, participated in this event. Said, in one of his dialogues, particularly mentions a fourteen-year-old Kurdish cellist boy from Syria who played in the concert.⁹ The identity of this Arab boy as a Kurd from Syria was something unremovable and unalterable no matter if he gave an impressive performance with a stroke of genius at the workshop. It was an absolute condition imposed on him by the historical, social, and traditional anchor that he had inherited, or an existential state that he, as an In-der-Welt-Sein, must accept regardless of his own mood.

3. Becoming

Becoming a penitent is something immensely far way from being a penitent. *Becoming* is a mode of creation, and the antipode to *being*. Creation is a pure flow without a node or a break. "The leaf is yellow" is a statement of a different level from "The leaf turns yellow." The former statement is made about *being* whereas the latter is about creation. *Becoming* is not a visible entity, but an invisible process of transition. Transition, or flow, is the only state that occurs to a being for sure. Nevertheless, it hardly receives attention for what it is. Like the Owl of Minerva, which spreads its wings at sundown, "thinking" starts to function only as *becoming* stops its move at a certain node of flow, and takes a shape of an entity. But an entity is only a temporary form taken by *becoming*, or a "block of creation"¹⁰ that will soon transition to another phase of *becoming*.

Whereas *becoming* is the only actual state of a being, we are not able to shake off our system of thinking

destined to adhere to the notion of entity. The creative paradigm of thinking, which is based on the notion of *becoming*, is not what we can grasp with ease. *Becoming* does not refer to an ontological passage through multiple entities, each of which corresponds to each moment that a being secretes a difference, towards a certain point of *being*. It was on that very passage that Zeno of Elea encountered his famous paradoxes. If one were to go through all the stop points where a being is equated to a certain fixed entity, Achilles would never overtake the Tortoise, and the arrow would never reach the target. As Bergson once criticized, *becoming* is not equal to completing a jigsaw puzzle of entities through which a being passes, and motion is not about threading traces that a being makes in space.

The key point is that we should be clearly aware of the difference between the two paradigms of *being* and *becoming*. It is our desire to capture “representations” that hinders us in understanding *becoming*. We always set our eyes on the final stage of *becoming*, that is, *being*, and attempt to convert the whole process of *becoming* onto a coordinate space or distance, pinpointing infinitude of changes, which take place within the creative block of *becoming*, as a continuum of fixed points inside that coordinate.

For instance, when one thinks of a human *becoming* a mouse, or the process where a human form metamorphoses into that of a mouse, he or she usually recognizes it as a series of spatial representations. It implies that we go through numberless intermediates of representations to finally reach the state of having *become* a mouse. But according to Deleuze/Guattari, *becoming* never refers to the state as an entity. If it did, we could never experience any types of *becoming*. *Becoming*, as Deleuze/Guattari sees it, is literally *becoming*, or transition:

Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination....Becoming-animals are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here? For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not ‘really’ become an animal any more than the animal ‘really’ becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than itself.¹¹

If *becoming* produces nothing but the itself, why do we need to talk about it? It is because the itself is the very being that claims to *become* the truth. In this essay, I interpret an identity as “the itself produced by *becoming*,” borrowing the language of Deleuze/Guattari. If this interpretation is granted, it is obvious that we must focus on the “creation that allows us to return to our true self,” concerning our discussion over identity.

In this context, das Man of Heidegger, which hides behind an inauthentic *being* to avoid the fear of death, is nothing but a technique of disguising that veils its duty of *becoming*. Such a behavior is what manifests “selfishness” in its bareness. In other words, selfishness is essentially something like an unbearably

insignificant break, node, or particular point of *becoming*, which permeates the world.

4. Multi-identity and over-identity

Before furthering the discussion, I will suggest a new way to classify identities. This is because there are two disparate categories within the notion of a so-called “multi-identity.” One is plural identities perceived in the self-contained and closed paradigm of *being*. This includes a variety of identities that moor an agent at a specific existential condition, location, role, or function. One can distinguish them simply by observing pieces of information or knowledge given. It leads to the belief that one understands the agent better in proportion to the amount of information provided and the number of its titles presented. It is possible to draw these identities in concentric circles around the agent at the center, or to juxtapose them on a horizontal line, as they combine and contrast with each other by slight differences within one large framework according to the principles of similarity and consistency. For instance, those identities enumerated in the aforesaid statement of McIntyre – a son, a daughter, a cousin, an uncle, a citizen, or a member of an association, organization, clan, tribe, or nation – all converge to a multi-identity, which also applies to those of the Kurdish cellist boy from Syria in Said’s dialogue. Here, I will limit the notion of a multi-identity to this kind of plural identity in the paradigm of *being*.

The other is an open and boundless plural identity perceived in the paradigm of *becoming*. It implies that one cannot understand an agent better through knowledge or information, such as its titles. This kind of knowing, on the contrary, simply confuses one over an agent to which he or she previously and firmly felt familiar. It is because such kinds of identities are heterogeneous and multi-layered to the extent that one can never package them into one entity. It is in vain to attempt to diagram them in concentric circles around the agent, or to make a chart of them. Let’s suppose, for example, that there is a person who is a Yemenite, a Korean, a woman, a homosexual, a butcher, a poet, a gangster, a patriot, a panhandler, and all. We could possibly understand nothing about that person amid ups and downs of his or her incompatible identities, as if we were facing a synthetic entity of an Israeli and a Palestinian, or Jekyll and Hyde, or a dog and a human, or a wolf and a hunter. I will term this as a kind of anxiously unresting plural identity based on the paradigm of *becoming* as an “over -identity.” in Althusserian sense.

A over-identity oscillates “vertically” along the way an agent splits and engages itself in ideological or ethical values, for example, depending on whether it lives up to its ideals or goes astray. The notion of plural identity that Freud employed to define the Ego-Ideal and the ideal Ego may be considered an over-identity. Meanwhile, a multi-identity, which generally focuses on the rationalistic distribution of an agent’s abilities and corresponds to the mode of being that branches out in a functionalist manner, oscillates “horizontally” in pursuit of economically effective values.

The crucial difference between these two types of plural identities lies in temporal horizons where they each unfold. Through an over-identity, one usually endeavors to hold his or her self on a diachronic line, whether long or short, struggling to grasp the authenticity of his or her being among complicatedly overlapping layers of times from the memory of his or her peaceful childhood up to the fearful moment of death.

A multi-identity, on the other hand, relates to the unity and consistency of plural identities that have stacked up on an agent at this very moment. Here, therefore, plural identities are arranged serially to coordinate their sameness and differences.

When an agent expands or splits itself along the vertical axis, that is, when it moves diachronically, submerges into its inner side, or leaps towards transcendence, its identity shall have multiple layers. What drives them, in this process, towards the authenticity of being is ethical and normative values. For example, different false and pen names that Kierkegaard used to conceal his identity (Victor Eremitus, Johannes de Silentio, Constatin Constantinus, Johannes Climacus, Anti Climacus, Frater Taciturnus, Inter and Inter, and Hilarius Bogbinder), in our context, relate to a over -identity rather than a multi-identity, as Kierkegaard himself is placed somewhere in between those names, or in their connections, rather than in them.

This point is well argued by a following passage from *The Sickness Unto Death*:

A human is the mind. Then, what is the mind? The mind is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that one forms with oneself, or another relation that the former relation establishes with oneself. Therefore, the self is not a relation, but the relating of a relation to oneself.¹²

On the other hand, a multi-identity functions socially or contextually. When one conforms to his or her roles expected by his or her communities, and forms an identity based on them to which he or she adapts, he or she is placing another identity alongside his or her unique identity. This is the moment when one presents a multi-identity.

5. Metamorphosis

Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, "wakes up to find that he has been transformed into a monstrous verminous bug."¹³ At first, he attempts to fall asleep again in vain. His intention to lie on his right side as he has long done so is rejected by his metamorphosed body. All an insect can do is either to lie on the stomach or on the back.

It feels tragic that his metamorphosed body clashes with his unaltered identity at every moment. Even in this disaster, Gregor is still Gregor. While his body is struggling for a comfortable position on the bed, his mind is worrying that he has missed the 5 a.m. train for work:

The next train went at seven o'clock; to catch that he would need to hurry like mad and his samples weren't even packed up and he himself wasn't feeling particularly fresh and active. And even if he did catch the train he wouldn't avoid a row with the chief, since the warehouse porter would have been waiting for the five o'clock train and would have long since reported his failure to turn up¹⁴

..

Despite all his failed efforts to move his insect body to get out of bed, Gregor the bug firmly maintains his identity as a "company salesman Gregor." But when the chief clerk comes to his home for his absence without leave and speaks to him outside the door, his identity suddenly falls into bewilderment. All his mouth utters is strange shrieks of a bug that never form a single phoneme. He would say, "Anyhow, I can still catch the eight o'clock train, I'm much the better for my few hours' rest. Don't let me detain you here sir; I'll be attending to business very soon, and do be good enough to tell the chief so and to make my excuses to him."¹⁵

From that moment until the story ends, the physical transformation of Gregor never leads to his mental transformation, and he never succeeds in getting out of the chasm between those two poles. The poles, straining what is placed in between them, overlap each other inside his consciousness as multiple layers.

Gregor, accepting his metamorphosis as reality, acts accordingly. He hides his appearance from his family and others frightened by him, and, as a bug, unresistingly lets them feed and clean his room. His younger sister, having called him by his proper name "Gregor" despite his changed body, at last labels him as "it." Bearing his dual identities as they are, Gregor survives a few months in this state.

He mumbles as he listens to his sister playing the violin in front of people. "How possibly could I be a bug when I'm moved by music at this very moment?"

But his sister finally and completely resolves his identity in confusion. She declares that she will never call this bug by the name of her brother, and that they should get rid of "it."

Deprived of his name with his being isolated, Gregor keeps his identity as a human until his last moment.

He thought of his family with tenderness and love. The decision that he must disappear was one

that he held to even more strongly than his sister- if that were possible. In this state of vacant and peaceful meditation he remained until the tower clock struck three in the morning.¹⁶

His own determination that he must disappear, which is firmer than the wish of his sister who treats him unkindly, enables us to judge the width and thickness of multiple layers set between his polarized identities.

Are we really in a different situation from that of Gregor? The difference, if there is any, is not between fiction and reality, but between fast and slow. The misery that assaulted Gregor overnight is happening to us in an extremely slow fashion over our life span. Whether one metamorphoses into an insect or a corpse is a trifling and negligible difference relative to the similarity of the two processes.

We are all receivers of Kafka's letter. Borrowing Lacan's phrase, the letter has arrived exactly at its intended destination. The following statement by Žižek is also correct in this connection:

When I recognize myself as the addressee of the call of the ideological big Other (Nation, Democracy, Party, God, and so forth), when this call "arrives at its destination" in me, I automatically misrecognize that it is this very act of recognition which makes me what I have recognized myself as_I don't recognize myself in it because I'm its addressee, I become its addressee the moment I recognize myself in it. This is the reason why a letter always reaches its addressee: because one becomes its addressee when one is reached..¹⁷

It is that we do nothing but misrecognize the context of reading our own letter automatically. We wrongfully consider ourselves different from Gregor, who was labeled as "it" by his sister, and whose family goes on a picnic the day after his death to enjoy the regained freedom they haven't felt for a long time.

But the story has not ended yet. Inside a sad family drama written in the letter sent to us, another tragedy of Gregor (=ourselves) is still unfolding.

6. Death

It is death that lays our over-identity bare. Everyone fears death. Heidegger makes a statement about Dasein (being there) with an undeniable predicate: "Man is being-onto-death."¹⁸ Das Man is a worldly aspect of a multi-identity that turns away to avoid the inevitability of death for fear.

A human is a being who is not yet dead but soon will be. How could we harmonize these multiple layers of our own destiny? Heidegger's *forerunning into death*, put into the context of Kafka, may be represented by the peaceful state of being that Gregor has finally achieved in front of his death.

Heidegger himself finds the protagonist of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Tolstoy as illustrative of his *forerunning into death*. Ivan, a poor man dying of an incurable disease, suddenly recalls a syllogism that he once learned in a school logic class. "Caesar is a man. Every man dies. Therefore, Caesar dies." If this is true, the following should be true as well: "Ivan Ilyich is a man. Every man dies. Therefore, Ivan Ilyich dies." Ivan, however, could not understand these syllogistic propositions applied to himself:

He judged it fair to apply the rule to Caesar, who obviously had been a human. But he had always been thinking that he was not Caesar, thus "not a human," but a totally different being from others ... Caesar was destined to die. His death was fair. But death meant something different to Ivan Ilyich, who possessed both emotion and reason. "It is not possible that I die. It is way too horrible."¹⁹

Heidegger, shrewdly and precisely, locates the root of this kind of inexplicability. It lies in a vacant space where a being-towards-death, who has been hiding in the disguise of *das Man*, returns to its original state. One can eventually understand his or her situation when he or she projects (*entwurf*) him or herself into his or her possibility instead of falling (*verfallen*) into the state of *das Man*. If we are to understand what Ivan Ilyich could not do, we must resolutely get out of the state of *das Man*, and run towards the most original possibility of *Dasein*. It is, as Heidegger repeatedly remarks, death as the "possibility of absolute impossibility."

Heidegger argues that this *forerunning into death* finally frees us from the state of *das Man* and reveals our original existence. Ivan, having woken up from his three-day coma to face impending death, suddenly feels a certain force that pushes against his chest and sides, mumbling to himself:

"Right. It was not all," said he to himself. "But it's alright. If things go well, I can do 'it.' But what is 'it'?" Asking himself, he suddenly shut his mouth.²⁰

It is something that he is sure that he is capable of doing. But he cannot figure out what 'it' is. What is 'it' that Ivan Ilyich thinks he can do? And what does this reversed sequence of "being able to do it" prior to "knowing what it is" imply? In the Heideggerian terms, this is the severe truth of existence unveiled to Ivan Ilyich by *forerunning into death*. Knowing can never overtake life because "being able to do it" always precedes "knowing what it is."

An hour before his death, finally the truth, or “it,” starts to manifest itself transparently to Ivan Ilyich:

“But where is the pain?” said he to himself. “Where has it gone? Hey, pain, where are you?”

He pricked up his ears.

“Ah, there it is. Well, it is alright. Just let the pain as it is.”

“But what about death? Where is death?”

He looked for his old fear of death, but could not find it. Where is it? Death? What is it? He had no fear. Because there was no death either.

It was light that was there in death’s place.

“That’s it!” suddenly he called out. “How good it is!”

Everything took place in a moment, and the meaning of that moment never changed afterwards.²¹

Heidegger’s *forerunning into death*, as in Ivan Ilyich’s episode, eliminates death by turning it into light. It was a blessing that Ivan Ilyich passed ahead of that absolute impossibility, and, although for a brief moment, recovered his multi-layered-identity as a being-towards-death, or a being that will die, before he accepted his death in peace.

Death calls and names our identity. It is something that we all, like Ivan Ilyich, have to label as “it” because we don’t know what it is. It is “it” that let us retrieve our own multi-layered-identity.

7. Comrade

Kim Yeong-min, one of the leading contemporary Korean philosophers, presents a very interesting notion of *comrade* among his other creative and productive academic results. The concept, which took him long to form in depth and with vitality, clearly demonstrates every implication of my aforesaid argument in favor of a multi-layered-identity.

Before proceeding to explore and discuss his notion of *comrade*, I will overview Kim’s contemplation on “otherness.” In 1721, Montesquieu, a typical Frenchman, anonymously published *Persian Letters*, for which he had imaginatively appropriated a Persian identity. Complicated Eurocentric ideologies, stifling their stink effortfully, permeate what he wrote in the disguise of a Persian. The key point here, rather than whether his imaginative identity unfolding inside the book is true or not, is its narcissism that circulates in a circuit of identity, which Kim labels as “self-differentiation.”

No matter how *Persian Letters* describes “being Persian” with an imaginative and witty language, the

“other” identity contained in it is of the absolute otherness, or the outside, irreconcilable with the author’s own identity. The notion of a mystical other from a foreign land is nothing more than a pseudo-externality softened by or sieved through his internalized cultural mechanisms. It is, therefore, no more than an image reflected on a narcissistic mirror:

But whenever someone happened to announce that I was Persian, I could soon hear people around me whispering in a hushed voice. “Ah, yes. He is a Persian man. It’s very odd. How come he became a Persian?”²²

The question in the excerpt makes us, or those who pity Persians, uncomfortable because of the way that we differentiate ourselves from them, or the way that we accept a Persian as a Persian as if it were a very strange fact. This is the very attitude derived from Montesquieu’s “self-differentiation,” which overlaps the question of Odysseus and his fellows in Homer’s epic poem. During their adventurous journey back to Ithaca, they encounter giants with a single hideous eye set on their forehead on the Island of Cyclops, and become horrified, asking themselves: “They look so grotesque. Why do they have only one eye?” What develops an epistemological awareness that a Persian being a Persian is as grotesque a fact as a Cyclops having a single eye is the narcissism operating in the identity politics.

Kim’s reaction to the above passage of *Persian Letters* is a bitter derision:

They ask, “How odd! How come he became a Persian?” Essentially, they would be no different than tourists visiting Gomso in Buan, wondering, “How strange it looks! How come it became a webfoot octopus?” Or it perhaps is tantamount to Aristotle asking “How poor she is! How come she became a woman?,” or adversaries of Fanon and Malcolm X asking “Oh! How come they were born so black?,” or Hitler’s fellows saying “It’s very queer. How come they became Jews?”²³

There is no genuine “others” inside their identities, ranging from that of tourists at the Gomso Octopus Festival to that of Hitler’s fellows. Others in the system of their language is simply a simulacrum, or a false image reflected against their narcissistic mirror.

In his *Comrade Discourse*, Kim harshly refutes this narcissistic mirror image created by the system and its way of thinking. Then, what does he refer to by *companion*? It is neither a lover, nor a friend, nor a colleague. The definition has to start with negation as it is impossible to locate and hold the concept on one single spot within the closely woven relation network of multi-identities in our capitalistic social system.

Comrade refers to the experiment of recombining and restructuring, or the experience of dismantling and reviving, which renders “jeopardous life” as a daily matter through creative discord with the system, and summons one into the field of that seductive and contagious jeopardy to agitate his or her own mode of life at its very root. So, I, as a *comrade*, am called to be a being that moves on endlessly, or a contagious being, or, most primarily, a being that perturbs all those false idols of standardization and their cynicism, familism, and desire for recognition that haunt us like demons at night.²⁴

A *comrade* is a being that routinizes dangerous life. Adversaries of the humanities alternate established identities like camera lenses to cleverly snatch worldly happiness. Solidarity of comrade employs various strategies to break falsehood of their shameful and cowardly life. It firstly wields its own language to relentlessly dismantle well-structured grids and binary codes inside the system, and pulls out a “fine body” to the forefront which confronts everything in the system:

How can we ever open a new horizon of relationship freed by tensioned contact from the bigoted grid of this world of standardized dichotomies such as seller-consumer, enemy-ally, alien-friend, or stranger-lover? ... How can we ever build the world where we face each other in our language, change things with our language, and live as our language says and works, when all the texts between humans are under a complete siege by capitalism, lust for power, images, spectacles, desires, and the media?²⁵

Answers for these questions are that we first have to eradicate the grid system of multi-identities trapped in the net of daily occurrences. We shall endlessly keep going around in a circuit of identities inside the grid structure, asking questions about “others” existing outside the circuit like “How strange it looks! How come it became a webfoot octopus?” unless we liberate ourselves from our bound state as a teacher, a student, a lover, an enemy, or a friend.

8. Clamence

“Over” that I defined above may be described as the landscape of two mountain peaks, one in the fore and the other in the back, overlapping each other aslant with the outlines of their ridges distinguished by the difference in their transparency. This “multi-layered” scene will also be seen alike from the other side of the mountain range.

Clamence the ex-attorney narrates his life into a dramatic story, which he confesses to the surrounding audience. His identity is ambiguous. He is a confessor, an accuser, a penitent, a judge, a recluse, an

eloquent speaker, a layman, and a prophet. But this identity of his is far more transparent than his life in Paris that has covered him up with a multi-identity. How could he ever live on as Clamence, or keep hiding in his multi-identity given by this mundane world, when he eventually has encountered the laugh that had chilled his spine on the Pont Royal, or the scream in the disguise of a black speck that had been awaiting him on the upper deck of a trans-Atlantic liner?

The moment when Clamence placed his identities as a recluse and a penitent in Amsterdam alongside his identity as a successful attorney in Paris, the moment when Ivan Ilyich saw “it” right before his impending death, the moment when Gregor sorted through the multiple layers placed between “Gregor Samsa” and “bug” to accept the latter at last, and the moment when comrade crossed over the tenacious grid of social network – all these are the moments when their multi-layered-identity penetrated their multi-identity that has been fossilized as a stable self-identity in the system of this world, to finally and relentlessly recover their authenticity as a subject, or “the self produced by *becoming*.”

It never fails to come that he or she has to write a narrative of his or her over-identity in his or her own language. It is because we all live with the memory of a “bridge” on which a woman threw herself into the river behind our back as we passed doing nothing about it, but returning as uncanny laughter permanently.

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The Golden Rule: Moral Universality As a Formal Law

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CIPSH

Identity can be described as an evolutionary series of preferential choices, or prohairesis. The different identities we belong with ‘personal, political, social, cultural...’ depend on sets of decisions that we perform in our daily life. As such, they rely on a moral law, whose capacity of bringing them to mutual interaction depends on its universality. It will be argued that this universality is a formal one, and it is constituted by the principle known as Golden Rule. This will be discussed in its different expressions. It will appear as a moral and epistemic principle to constitute a particular kind of identity, one that proves able to coexist with other identities and to produce open and fruitful interactions between multiple social and cultural groups.