

# **The Mundialization of Home in the Age of Globalization: Toward a Great Community<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Introduction**

The terms globalization and, less often, mundialization, have been much discussed and even bandied about like campaign slogans in the last ten or so years. In popular usage, globalization is the term which one hears most often. It appears to have different meanings, but the most common one is tied to the spread of economic liberalism from developed countries to undeveloped or developing ones. Sometimes, in the same vein, globalization refers to the spread of any aspect of Amer/Euro/Anglo culture to other parts of the globe. Depending upon one's point of view, this spread is viewed positively or negatively.

A reader or eavesdropper on these discussions can easily discern the point of view being expressed by the tone of the globalizaion argument used. One sees placards for globalization or against it. But always the hot anger against, or the hopeful enthusiasm for, globalization is directed toward some aspect of market development. In the last five or six years, the notion of globalization has been taken up by the social sciences with a view to understanding it not only in its most oft-used context of economic liberalism but in other contexts as well.

When globalization is categorized by contexts and kind, we come to define it more precisely as the name of the processes by which ideas - indeed, whole philosophies and faiths - cultural mores and customs, technologies and practices are spread to communities around the globe. In naming globalization as a process we can then discuss whatever is being globalized and, more importantly, we can discuss the particular processes involved in a particular globalization.<sup>1</sup> Categorizing in this manner frees us to understand globalization as the dissemination throughout the globe of multiple facets of

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<sup>1</sup> *Humanitas Asiatica*, vol.1, no.2 (June 2001).

<sup>1</sup> Francois de Bernard, 'globalization to globalizations: dominating the world or sharing control?' Address delivered at UNESCO in Paris at a symposium on the topic "Globalization and Identities." 2000. See <http://www.mondialisations.org>

societal life. We also come to see how one kind of globalization influences another, for example we can ascertain how the growth of the Internet intertwines with the spread of political theories and ideas.

Globalization has many dimensions and many nuances once it ceases to be conceived as a single entity. We can, for example, speak of the globalization of education, of technology, of science, of medicine, of politics and culture, and of world economic governing systems like liberalism and socialism.

Once we grant globalization a plurality in terms of what is being globalized, we must also accept it as a very natural process belonging to the societal nature of human beings. As social agents we can reflect upon and, perhaps, act on the way some ideas, or more likely, practices associated with ideas are being globalized. Certainly one of the strongest protests of a particular globalization today concerns the deliberate promotion of the globalization of economic liberalism. The manner in which some things are globalized can indeed be influenced by promotion or protest. Many of the processes involved in some globalizations are engineered and perpetuated by human agents acting under the aegis of powerful ideas. Ideas are certainly powerful in the lives of every human being and, we now know, they are continually coming into being, and transformed and reconstructed in the constant play of reason, circumstance and other ideas. For example, slavery and colonialism were once extremely powerful globalization vehicles but they were deliberately halted, albeit, over an agonizingly slow course of times, as international conceptualization of what it means to be human changed and spread throughout the world. One hears of cases of slavery in this day and age but the practice is ubiquitously condemned. And though vestiges of colonial governing arrangements remain, it is today unthinkable for any country to attempt to colonize another. Current theory has it that colonization and slavery were virtually ended as acceptable practices because of a globalization of the moral reasoning engendered by the globalization of certain political notions which stressed a basic equality for all human beings. .

As a term, mundialization is, as I said, often used in the same manner as globalization but it has different roots and so carries different connotations and denotations. Both words are Latin in origin. Globalization refers to the globe, to the shape of globe and hence, with regard to the earth, to the shape of the earth.

Mundialization comes from the Latin word, *mundus*, or, in English, world, and as such it refers to far more than spatial dimensions or geographic confines. When we speak of “our world,” we usually mean the manners and customs, ideas, language and the like which are in our particular community or communities of reference. It is not geographic at all, though place may be a part of it. When we speak of the world at large, we are referring to the peoples and cultures around the globe. With these connotations in mind, we can see that mundialization thus would mean that some aspect of some part of the world at large has been globalized, that is, has undergone some sort of transfer, and, most would agree, some sort of transformation in the process. For example, a wedding ceremony in which the bride wears white, a color in Europe which designates purity and virginity, is, I believe, a Euro-Anglo custom. But, for some years now it has also been a custom in South Korea, existing side by side with the traditional wedding ceremony and dress of the Korean culture. In fact, most young couples in South Korea today have two wedding ceremonies. But, except for the white gown and the formal wear of the groom, there is not much resemblance in the ‘Westernized’ Korean wedding ceremony to the many variations one finds of the wedding ceremony in Western countries. In the South Korean white gown ceremony, a custom originating in the West has been transformed to accommodate the social structures and traditions of a particular Eastern society. Anything, from religions to politics, from customs to art undergoes a transformation, a transculturation if you will, when it transplants itself in another culture. There are times when transculturation takes place because of a reprehensible sort of social action, or, as well, in the interpretive wisdom accorded to hindsight at any rate, it is thought to have taken place because of some reprehensible *and* preventable social globalizing action. There are also times when such is not the case. Violence and destruction are not by any means necessary requisites for mundialization, or for the transculturation involved, nor indeed, are they necessary for globalization.

I have posited this distinction between globalization and mundialization because I want to discuss both of these phenomena in terms of some very dynamic ideas which by their very nature are transformative. The terms are human rights and civic society. As I discuss these two concepts and others besides within the contexts of mundialization and transculturation, it is my hope that the reader, in becoming more aware of the ways in

which ideas interact and evolve in the construction and reconstruction of meaning(s), will also become apprised of the power individuals and groups both have and do not have as agents in the processes.

### **Living Together and Longing for Peace**

Throughout human history differences among individuals and groups have been a source of conflict. History itself has often been characterized as an endless series of conflicts and hostilities. While human beings long for peace and security, it eludes them, so much so that an unfulfilled longing for peace would appear to be as much a part of the human condition as is the human propensity to conflict, especially to conflict precipitated by differences.

Yet, despite the differences among human beings and the conflicts waged in the name of difference, a wide assortment of different peoples inhabits the same earth. They coexist sometimes uneasily, sometimes in conflict and sometimes in harmony. But, as a matter of fact, they coexist. There are times in the history of humanity when one group tries to annihilate another and there are even times when it is believed that a group succeeded in doing this. Yet, at least in modern history, these attempts are viewed by much of the rest of the world at large as an aberration of humanity, heinous and shameful beyond words. Moreover, again from modern history, we also know that whenever a group acts to utterly annihilate another group, members of the aggressor group themselves condemn the act at the time, and most certainly they condemn them in hindsight.

Since all human beings are different, one from another, we must ask what kind of differences calls up the frenzied madness of destruction. And since clearly our notions of differences change over time, we must today wonder why difference can provoke the kind of destruction it does at all. Just as, even today, we must ask how and why it is that people can live together for long periods in harmony and cooperation and then suddenly

find their differences to be so intolerable that one group or the other must end its existence so that the other can continue to exist.

In modern history, we have explored these questions in varying degrees. In doing so, we have dispelled certain notions once held justifiably dear. For example, it was once considered reasonable to suggest that atavistic fears of the unknown came to the fore whenever human beings who differed substantially from us in outward appearance arrived in our midst. Presumably we held the same atavistic fears about those who worshiped different gods. Some of the perpetrators of the most murderous conflicts today conjure up the notion that primordial fears of difference precipitated them. But the world at large, and, significantly, members of the perpetrator group themselves, have gone to painful lengths to leave a record that they do not believe this to be so.

One of the reasons why modern humanity cannot claim vestiges of primordial fear of difference or Other as either a justifiable or even, an understandable cause for violence and conflict is mundialization. We humans share too much of each other in our societies. Globalization and mundialization are as old as societal living itself. There are now no groups in proximity to each other who do not share some very basic elements of societal living with each other. Some sort of common cultural ground exists because of interaction between and among societies and this is so for even the most remote of groups.

It is not fear which kindles conflict so much as it is greed, an unwillingness to share, a fear that there is not enough to go around. Perhaps it is intolerance of another's ideas, or as so many have said before; perhaps it is all about power. Difference exists, to be sure. But it is not the fearsome difference of a specter rising up out of the waves at the horizon. And as for that primordial vision, what shall we do with the story upon story of the technologically advanced invader/explorer who time and time again was greeted by 'primitive' peoples with no more than a cautious curiosity?

In the present day and age, most of the world is accustomed to the notion of large cultural differences. In conflicts attributed to differences today, it is not really the differences between groups which is the culprit, but the honoring of ancient hates which may or may not have sowed their seeds in differences. But neither fear nor the traditions accrued to ancient hates can account for those civil wars fought because of differing

ideologies. These wars are much with us today and are as bloody and as monstrous as any other.

My contention here is that mundialization has already rendered some of our most cherished self-deceptions regarding the justification of violence toward what is different inept. Those parts of the world, which have entered our own worldviews, now express something of the parent culture and our own in their manifestations, and our orientation toward the Other has been changed by the mingling. We cannot think of Other as fearsomely unknown any longer. We must recognize the Other in ourselves to some degree at least. Various schemata have become part of our individual and collective reasoning because of the transformations involved in mundialization. We are, one might say, more predisposed to deal with difference now through other means besides violence. I know of no way to present the growth and transformations that have taken place in practical reasoning and their relationship to mundialization than to visit the most insightful philosophical contributions of phenomenology developed by an array of phenomenologists: the lifeworld. My discussion will not end at the lifeworld juncture however, but will explore it in terms of that other phenomenological emancipatory development to which it belongs: hermeneutics, identified by Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of its most eloquent constructionists, as being not only a theory of understanding the world but one that encompasses all the ways in which this understanding manifests itself as well.<sup>2</sup>

### **Lifeworlds and the Development of the Self**

Each human being is born into a particular community, inheriting a language, a culture, and ways of interacting with other members of that community and with members of other communities. Within the shelter of community we connect to each other as human beings and develop our individuality through various modes of human coexistence. Eugen Fink supplied some basic categories that will serve us here. He posits that it is through interacting with one another through the modes of love, hate, work and

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<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode 1969)*, translated from the second German edition by Garrett Barden and John Comins, London, Sheed and Ward, 1975.

play that we come to our understanding of self and others. All human beings come into the world with an innate capacity to engage in these emotions and activities and through them; they exist and interact with one another using and developing the ubiquitous human capacity to reason.<sup>3</sup>

I have used Fink's four categories here for the sake of simplicity, well aware that one might add to or elaborate upon each. One may say that we exercise our human capacity for reasoning, for creativity, for art, and for spirituality in these modes of emotion and activity. One may also argue that there are other emotions and other human activities not apparent in these categories. Fink's point however is that no matter how we categorize modes such as these, no matter how they are manifest, they are the same in every society. The myths of every culture portray them in origin stories in their most basic and recognizable forms, and we know those myths as ageless and renewing, ever resurfacing in myriad guises.

In our most ideal myths, love is learned in the bosom of family especially between mother and child. Hatred often comes in rivalry, also within the bosom of the family, and hatred often leads to separation and loss. Beyond the myths, of course, is the bonding of families for survival and this leads to broader community efforts at hunting, fishing, and harvesting of crops. When communal life expands because of contact with still other communities, when there is some sort of extended exchange between and among communities, we find that societies change more rapidly and take on even greater complexity with each change. From such exchanges do towns, cities, commerce, art, the building of dams and temples and civilizations of complexity and magnitude arise. Yet even when a community is isolated and insular such as, for the most part, had been those of densest jungles or frozen tundra until very modern history, all human beings develop an individual sense of self through communication with each other and meanings abounding within their communities. Each of us communicate not simply with the people around us but with the understandings those people have of the community, its purpose and its traditions. These understandings are manifest in people's actions and interactions as are ours. Our knowledge of our communities and the way in which we interact within in them is unique and ever changing. This knowing constitutes our

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<sup>3</sup> Eugen Fink, *Grundphaenomene des menschlichen Daseins*, Freiburg, Alber, 1979.

individual lifeworlds, as phenomenology has so aptly named them. Our knowledge of self and other in our lifeworlds, is, as again, the insightful hermeneutist, Gadamer, says, “communicatively experienced and continually entrusted (traditur) to us as an infinitely open task.”<sup>4</sup>

It is impossible for any human being to experience anything at all in exactly the same way as another. Biologically and genetically, we are so composed as to be unique, so different from one another that even an infant is predisposed to show preferences and to have certain propensities, talents, and dislikes. We all share in and have an innate understanding of the traits of humanity, to be sure, but they are arranged so as to play a different tune. We are always aware that we are different from one another even as we compare our similarities. We are always in our own skins. We never mistake ourselves for another.

From such a description of the development of self and community, it is difficult to make a credible case for defining human beings as either collective or as alone. The self-reflecting human being may be solitary but the ontological dimension of the individual subject coexisting with others definitively demonstrates that to be an individual is to be social. The self does not really transcend society even when an individual seemingly goes against or beyond society. In pursuing my study of difference and conflict for this essay, I came across a remarkable true story of a Polish farming couple in a Polish village. In 1941, in that village, wherein the Polish citizenry had been approximately half Jewish and half gentile for centuries, with Nazi encouragement but acting on their own, both hooligans and respectable townsmen murdered all but seven of the Jewish population, which had, until that time, numbered well over a thousand. Those seven were hidden for some months by the gentile farming couple. Indeed, as the story was pieced together from later dispositions, it was the wife of the couple who was most active in hiding her Jewish neighbors before and after the massacre that took place. The researcher narrating the tale I read assumes that she deliberately did not tell her husband many details so that he could not be implicated. At one point, her husband later testified, she was asked by the town hooligans where the Jews were hiding. She denied any

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<sup>4</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, ‘Reflections on my Philosophical Journey’ in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*” edited by Lewis Edwin Hahn, The library of Living Philosophers, Vol. XXXI, Chicago, Illinois, Open Court. 1997 edition. P.59



knowledge and was beaten so severely by her fellow townspeople that no part of her body was without bruises. After this experience, the couple's family and the Jews hidden in their household stole away to a safer village where they parted. There was no refuge however for the farming couple who were forced to leave that village and then another, simply because they were rumored to have saved Jews. Sometime after the war, the farmer died and his wife later immigrated to the United States. What is known of her deeds in full came from the disposition of one of the seven Jewish survivors.<sup>5</sup> This is surely a remarkable story of a remarkable, extraordinary human being. A farmer's wife who acted independently, hers is a portrait of selfhood that rose above the community. One might even be tempted to say that hers was a self, which transcended the then dominant and coercive mores in the community. Nonetheless, it was a self that existed because of association and intercourse with the community. Her rationality derived from societal interaction. One cannot help but suppose that Antonia Wyrkoska drew deeply from the historical wells of her lifeworld to recognize her own relation to the rightness of her deeds. Surely she could not have done as she did without some relational sense of herself as acting justly and rightly by standards she shared with others whom she respected and whom she must have known would have respected her. That such an understanding of her self, articulated or not, could be wrested by her from her lifeworld is evident in the fact that others of the town came forward after the war to point fingers at the murderers among them and to say that they themselves stood by in impotence only because of their fear. It is not necessary to speculate long upon the understandings that contributed to Antonia Wrzkoska's sense of self and the courage that sense gave her. It may have come from her faith, from the long and peaceful interactions between Jews and gentiles in the town, from the notions of equality that we sometimes become conscious of when we see others abused. We cannot know such particulars since we know of her only in the tale I just retold, but we can be sure that she formed some meanings in her lifeworld interactions which fostered the development of her sense of herself as a moral agent.

For me, her story underlines the observation that John Dewey so passionately promoted in all of his works, that individuals develop and act within society and that it is

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<sup>5</sup> Jan T. Gross. 'Neighbors,' in *Annals of War*, *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2001. pp 64-72.

only in community that an individual progresses in intellectual capacity in observation, imagination, judgment, and invention.<sup>6</sup> Because Dewey was aware that human beings are moral beings, and that they are not passive but active agents in societal life, he wanted to build upon this natural way in which the self is developed in society by allowing all individuals to evolve as selves in democratic societal contexts. He wanted to so construct and reconstruct the various institutions of society, most especially the schools, in such a way that democratic interaction in them would promote the development of autonomous, moral selves for all citizens, that is, of selves recognized and respected by self and other. I am using the small case “other” to distinguish it from the Other of the exotic stranger, of cultures, which appear so different from ours. The “other” lives with us in our community, even in our family, since each of us is, as the Existentialists have so cogently revealed for us, alone. Self, unique and hence, ultimately alone, continually comes into being through complex interactions with others. Without others, there is no self. The contention of this paper is that the expansion of our lifeworlds in terms of the inclusion of more and more others and others’ meanings, that is to say, the inclusion of the Hegelian mutual recognition of others, has become more possible now in this complex age of globalization processes. With this possibility can come the deliberate structuring of the environments fused with democratic procedures and ideals. Environments where equal rights are elaborated upon in debate centering upon decisions which effect a society. Such are the democratic environments Dewey championed and they foster the development of autonomous, moral and rational selves because they individuals at every level of society participate in them.

The domain in which we live and interact with others, ever interpreting and producing meanings, is itself a field of meanings. These lifeworld meanings are historical because our languages are constitutive of history, though deeply influenced by temporality nonetheless and, Heelan reminds us, even by a certain ‘historical forgetfulness’ which takes place in the transmission of meaning over time.<sup>7</sup> In other words, we interact in our lifeworlds, not only with the present but also with the past, and we construct and reconstruct our meanings out of these interactions with them through

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<sup>6</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, New York, The Free Press. 1966. p.297

<sup>7</sup> Patrick A. Heelan, ‘after Post-Modernism: The Scope of Hermeneutics in Natural Science,’ a paper delivered at the After Post-Modernism Conference. 1977. Webmaster.

our individual lifeworld's schemata of meanings. Such categories, for example, as peace, unity, division, conflict, destruction, creativity, communion, Other and other, have been constructed from the modes of human coexistence in the past. These constructions now make up part of the meaning base of our pre-understanding of our surrounding world. By virtue of such pre-understanding, individual subjects are able to engage in particular kinds of intersubjective communication, thus experientially reconstructing these meanings by expanding and developing them. It is in such contexts of coexistence that practical reason, both communal and individual develops and continually matures.

If lifeworlds contain the historicity of human experience itself, they have always also contained some measure of "Otherness" beyond what we might call the otherness within communities, insofar as the nature of most societies is to interact with other societies and to communicatively experience them in the modes available to each culture. Cultures travel. Ideas travel. Culture is always a complex of many cultures and is always in a state of assimilating other cultures. Lifeworlds thus are always in a state of visible or invisible instability because they are always transcending and widening their boundaries. Many events in history have precipitated the processes of transculturation: war, colonialism and slavery being among the most prevalent and most ugly of means. Yet, in modern times, none of these might be said to equal the impact of science and technology as transmitters or carriers of culture and as agents of cultural change and assimilation.

The notion of lifeworld as it was first conceived by Husserl in the 1920's is a far cry from the lifeworld as we conceive it today if only because Husserl, rather quixotically by our sights, thought of it as prescientific. In his mind it related more to the human spirit and to understanding in that realm, and he held that realm as transcendent of what he perhaps conceived of as baser impingements outside of the self. As we know, he saw the individual as capable of transcending culture, certainly of transcending science, which he managed to separate from culture. In unpublished manuscripts he discussed his notion of lifeworld in detail as the place in which we feel most comfortable, most "at home." He even called it homeworld.<sup>8</sup> Homeworld is the world of our homeland, containing the

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<sup>8</sup> Edmund Husserl, Ms.Av10 (1925-27), p.127ff; Ms. AVII 9 (130), p.22.

totality of all familiar and intimate entities, including environment, language, and fellow human beings who share our mores, customs, and view of life. In this sense it is a comfortable world, though it is by no means static or unchanging. To step out of that homeworld into another however is to step to alien shores and indeed Husserl uses the German “Fremdwelt,” which translates to alien world in English, to distinguish the lifeworlds one encounters outside the sanctuary of the homeworld. In the parlance of our times we would equate Fremdwelt with Otherness for both convey a sense of the strange and the unknown and we are only capable of experiencing that strangeness through the eyes of our own culture so that finally, we read it as a modification of our culture in order to make sense of it.

Alfred Schutz developed this notion of homeworld still further in two of his essays, “The Stranger,”<sup>9</sup> and “The Homecomer,”<sup>10</sup> Unlike Husserl, Schutz conceived of the self as a social being rather than as a transcendental ego. Like Husserl, he also posited that we see alien worlds through the perceptive lenses of our own homeworld, using the schemata of our homeworld to interpret our experiences in the alien one. But here, Schutz departs from Husserl for he would grant us the capability of realizing that this sort of interpretation is inadequate and that another schema of reference is necessary to face the new situation. Schutz would accord us a degree of expansiveness and openness of spirit, a capability of accommodating the alien into our existing schemata of orientation. This process is called social assimilation and refers to the adjustments we make and undergo when we are in new environments. In sum, we are capable of making the strange familiar and, then, of becoming comfortable with its familiarity. While we are in the alien environment at least, we are able to solve problems using the new schemata with the same ease with which we once solved problems in our homeworld. We are able to do this because, despite differences in the schemata, there are elements which are transcultural. A transcultural element is not necessarily the same as any element in our own society; it is, however, one that is compatible with our society. Through this mediation of transcultural elements, then, we take on the other’s schemata in such ways that they fit within our own homeworld schemata. Thus they too become

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<sup>9</sup> Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers II*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1964, pp.91-105.

<sup>10</sup> A. Schutz, *op.cit.* pp.106-119.

objectifications of our homeworlds as well. That is to say we interpret with them, reconstructing other schemata as we do so and reconstructing the new tool of interpretation in the process as well.

Tremendous changes have taken place in our homeworld while we were away however. We find ourselves as strangers in our own land, for our homeworld has changed, as is its nature to do. So there is adjustment to be made. We take on these new changes, keeping those we assimilated in our travels however. Our reference has been altered, transformed to a broader level so that we comprehend more widely, more deeply as we continue the dynamic process of interpreting, of understanding.

The traveler analogy is reminiscent of the early forays out from the very comfort of the home that each child must take. Each step and each return brings a widening of the homeworld. But while the analogy of the traveler is useful in helping us understand the process of inclusion of the alien into our homeworlds, the alien Other has entered our homeworlds by different routes for some thousands of years. We assume the schemata of the alien in many ways and we need never leave our homes to do so. Many schemata may have entered our lifeworlds violently through the interactions that characterize war, slavery, oppression, through the clashes of cultures rather than the more civilized meeting of them through commerce and trade.

No matter how the mundialization of our homeworlds took place in the past, take place it did, and each generation has interacted with and constructed and reconstructed meaning from the understandings occurring in their cultures from such transculturations. Within the experiential structures of the village, it is still possible for humans to transverse a variety of worlds. One wants to say that this bodes well in a moral sense, for surely it was because of the presence of other lifeworld schemata in her own that allowed justice to prevail for those saved by Antonina Wyrzykowska. Yet saying so, one knows at once that for the same reason, injustice and barbarity also prevailed in that lifeworld. Mundialization, the inclusion of other lifeworlds into our own is simply the way of humanity. We are societal creatures and the way of societies is to reach out to other societies, past and present. To say that is not to say that certain ways of “reaching out” are not wrong or evil. Nor indeed is it to say that evil methods of mundialization are justified because some marked good appears to have come about in the end. We hear so

often the argument that this or that colonization was justified because the colonized now have access to germ theory, modern medicine, education or any number of modern tools for living. It is time to leave the thinking patterns which pit means with ends in this way. Let us be done with that kind of thinking entirely. Let us not be fearful of condemning our own pasts when we should so that we do not repeat the measures of those pasts in the name of bringing a fuller better life to a greater majority. That is surely a shaky rationale by now, rusted thin enough to reveal the greed and destruction beneath it.

### **How Can We Foster the Positive Possibilities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's Mundialization Processes?**

As Derrida so often and so famously has answered when asked to explain deconstructionism, "It happens," let me here say the same of mundialization. It happens, as sure as rainfall, it happens. We live in a time when mundialization seems to be happening on a greater, if not a grander, scale and more quickly than ever before. Amid the deluge, we have caught our breaths long enough to proclaim our time as the Age of Globalization. And having done this, some of us have plunged beneath the flooding waters of this or that mundialization, but others of us take some refuge in the notion that mundialization is an old process. It is, in fact, the name we give to whatever process is involved in transculturation. Transculturation involves the transfer of one cultural schemata to another with all the changes, adaptation, elaboration and amputation that transfer involves. In the end, transculturation chiefly involves reconceptualizing the most basic of meanings in the foreign and the homeworld. The shared understandings of lifeworlds are changed through transculturation. Transculturation does not imply the disappearance of one culture in favor of another, it can, however, imply the cultivation of a more common ground between and among cultures. In that common ground, we may also have the opportunity to bury our old self-deceiving reliance on ancient fears even as we bury notions such as superior races of people and other such debilitating anachronisms which blot our globe. On that common ground we can sow instead political concepts like democratization and civic power. More than this, on that common ground we can partake in the development of these concepts. By doing so, we will look

at our histories anew, reinterpreting for the present. We will make, as Gadamer might put it, a truth for our present.

The mundialization of such notions as human rights, civic society, and democratization present most salient opportunities for fostering the possibilities of living peacefully together in recognition of each other's civil rights. Moreover, the mundialization of these concepts and our participation in them offer a very real opportunity for civic society to have influence over one of the most pervasive of mundializations, that of neo-liberalism. Mundialization itself may be as natural as rain in that it is part of the human condition but a human condition is always subject to amelioration as are few other conditions of nature.

John Dewey's dream of a Great Society in which individual members develop to the very highest of their capacities through interacting in democratic structures may have its day at last. Dewey, in his day, was appalled by what he saw as unfettered liberalism, a market driven economy that did not take into account the needs of people. This, of course, is the same criticism leveled at the neo-liberalists today, and rightfully so. In the name of freedom, we see more and more developing nations recklessly developing markets at the expense of their national resources and those sectors of their populations least able to survive. There is no comfort in noting that the growth of transnational corporations has begun to obliterate our anachronistically held justifications for oppressing the Other. The Other of the strange culture has ceased to exist for the corporate transnationals. Instead it is accepted in the name of progress, freedom, entrepreneurship and development that the other to be exploited is one with which we are all too familiar, the poor and the helpless in both developed and undeveloped countries. In this way, neo-liberalism is not discriminatory. In developed countries, we have seen the effects of the "lean state" with its deregulation, privatization and dismantling of the structures of the welfare state in the name of freedom to compete. Global efficiency and competitiveness must bypass the rights of workers, ecological considerations and, especially, considerations of those who cannot enter into the competitive fray. If liberalism as a world system is cyclic, it has different characteristics this time around because it is not confined by national borders as in the past. It is not nations which control capital, transnational companies do.

The globalization of communication has increased the intensity of the globalization of neo-liberalism. It has also increased the intensity and spread of political notions and, now, I think we will see that the deliberate interactions between and among these ideas will grant us new opportunities for intervention and, therefore, in shaping certain mondialization processes. Dewey's Great Society of citizens involved at every level of community governance and community life may yet become a reality. For it is not just transcorporations which reach across national borders, civic society now does too. Hence we have international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) taking up the plight of the poor, the sick, and the trod-upon. Hence we have civic groups, for example, challenging the protection of corporate globalization by the World Trade Organization. These challenges take the time-honored forms of muckraking, demonstrating and lobbying but they are aided enormously by the Internet in ways not possible before. We have only to think of how the organization of protest has been aided by easy Internet communication and instant access to valuable information to grasp the importance of the globalization of this communication tool.

In some countries, like my own, South Korea, civic groups have embraced democratization structures at every level. They are constantly finding ways to hold lawmakers accountable and they use media at every opportunity to enlist more public support and awareness. This is hapening in a nation which held its first democratic election only a few years ago seems miraculous indeed. But it would not be possible, I think, without the great leaps made through the globalization of communication technology. Those leaps, of course, are connected to the new era of telematics. Global communication facilities have the power to move things visible and invisible around the world. This power covers ideas as well as money and it covers both opposition and support for states or governments. It unites civic groups the world over. And the uniting of civic groups on a global scale brings us very close to Dewey's Great Society on a grand scale too.

Dewey envisioned a civic society trained in a participatory democracy environment. I dare say one sees more hope of this with the mundialization of our home worlds than could be seen in the communities of 50 or 60 years ago. The concepts which seem to be mundializing so rapidly are still not universal in a metaphysical sense, but



they are in a global one. Once such concepts become part of our reasoning constructs, they are opened again to interpretation, elaboration, and to the reasoning tools within the constructs of our lifeworlds.

An individual's practical reasoning reaches maturity through the mediation of the forms of coexistence. Lifeworld schemata regarding reasoning have changed and matured over generations so that the meanings involved in the reasoning process individuals are born into, and use to act upon and reconstruct their lifeworlds in their interactions with them and each other, have also gained in essence and scope. The emergence of so many civic societies cutting across national boundaries is proving to be a necessary condition for our reciprocal understanding and communication. The gradual mundialization of homeworlds would point to an eventual creation of one great communal world in which the I and the Other become a 'we,' embodying others and I in a dynamic tension of harmony. It is, after all, as Dewey believed, by virtue of the things they have in common that people build communities. A globalized mundialization of concepts like tolerance and human rights may indeed bring us closer to the construction of one great world community.

Humanity's so oft professed longing to live together in peace can only be realized when equality is truly universally accepted. UNESCO has, probably more than any other organization, scattered the notion around the world in every possible way. Yet it is not a universally accepted notion, not even in the West, from whence, purportedly, it was first articulated. Many nations of the East and South particularly have been suspicious of the very notion of equality precisely because the articulation of it as a principle has been claimed by the West where there seemed little evidence that it was very active either there or in Western encounters with the rest of the world. These suspicions certainly were present when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was first drafted over fifty years ago. The mundialization of several political concepts however has done much to promote the acceptance of equal rights as a component of democracy. All nations, including those in the West, need to see it as a lifeworld interpretive schema for understanding and continually reconstructing reality. That has not happened yet, of course. But it is not as curious as it might first appear that some of the most empowering arguments for human rights are now being articulated in some of the most troubled areas

of the world. Witness South Africa, for one, or the Asia Human Rights Charter of May 1998. The civil, political, economic, and social rights stipulated in the original Universal Declaration are now recognized by an ever-widening international community. Ideas like tolerance and equal rights are especially embraced by those who have had or have seen those concepts denied in tragic ways, and yet have been able to know of their existence, even in struggle, elsewhere. This recognition and embrace may be seen as part of a long, painful transculturation process. That process is by no means finished and there is no reason to believe that it ever will be. Nevertheless, out of the transcultural process which partakes of communicating as a mode of understanding, a transcultural ethics is being formed, and, as befits a Great Community, equal rights is at its very heart.

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