

Convergence and Divergence:
An Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

East and West.
Philosophy, ethics, politics
and human rights

Band 10

ed. by H.-C. Günther

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Convergence and Divergence:
An Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

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Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind
im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH
99734 Nordhausen 2021
ISBN 978-3-95948-507-4

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Preface

"Convergence" is one of the focal issues of the contemporary world. We live in a world where current trends are oriented towards divergence, and we need more convergence than ever before. This issue can be posed in various degrees and modes, ranging from individual and family level to the facet of relations between religions and international politics. "Convergence and Divergence" is a new topic that can only be examined concerning the theoretical, philosophical discourses of recent decades, based on the experiences acquired in recent years. The issue of convergence has been posited in the past in the form of themes such as assistance, cooperation, friendship, and unity. In the past, such concepts conveyed certain meanings and literary loads and had a relation with the truths and values that have been the foundation and constituent of every nation's life. However, in the contemporary world, we are facing a different situation. In the shadow of global civilization and its norms, people with different backgrounds have come together, while the requirements of past convergences have been weakened and languished. Today, we know that we should pay serious attention to the differences and distinctions for being together, and we know that power, in its general sense, plays a fundamental role in all processes. Therefore, the focal question of this collection goes around the possibilities, conditions, and constraints of "convergence".

Now we live in a situation leaving different experiences of convergence and divergence behind. The formation of the European Union and the issues pursuing it, are the latest experiences in this field. At the beginning of the 21st century, we witnessed convergence in Europe. However, after less than twenty years, we are observing divergences and new challenges in this union. In the Middle East, we can see a complicated situation and divergent behaviors between countries with many cultural and historical similarities, which converted this region into the critical area of the world for years. What is the cause of divergence in the Middle East, and what will its outcomes be? The divergence crisis is more critical than it was initially thought. The causes and roots of recent divergences can be shown in the context of global thought and culture rooted in Western culture and civilization. This radical divergence sometimes appears at the level of politics and between Europe and America. Some of our African colleagues show promising signs of convergence in Africa, which has been mostly reflected in the African Union. However, even alongside such optimism, new forms of divergence can also be seen in this continent. The U.N.O is still the most important organization and the symbol of concomitance and unity of states with each other. Nevertheless,

its appropriateness with global status and its efficiency to settle contemporary world problems is critically under question. Is the U.N. able to play a new role in the convergence of nations while keeping the distinctions? It seems as though two rival tendencies of convergence and divergence as an inseparable dichotomy is present everywhere. Divergence is the primary visage of phenomena like conflict, war, and violence. Thus, research on convergence and divergence is an attempt to understand the roots of war and violence.

The outcome of the ideas of contemporary thinkers and the experience of nations show that the contemporary world's important problems can only be solved in the process of dialogue and through the interaction of cultures. The era of centrality of one civilization and culture and its dominance over others has come to an end. The precondition of understanding and participation is the recognition of "the other". If the current global civilization does not recognize "other" cultures, it will aggravate the crisis even more. Hence, the purpose of convergence is a form of coexistence and concomitance in which differences and distinctions could be recognized.

The initiative version of the articles in this collection contained a variety of themes that were presented in the form of lectures in the conference of "Convergence and Divergence". The international conference on "Convergence and Divergence; An Intercultural-Interreligious Dialogue" was held in Tehran from 11th to 13th of March, 2018. The primary purpose of these articles has been the collective participation of a group of researchers of philosophy and human sciences to clarify and explain the global problems. In this academic endeavor, some prominent Iranian and foreign professors and a group of young scholars were involved. The subjects of these articles are different, and this variety indicates various features and aspects of such a focal issue. Therefore, we consider this conference just the primary step for more developed researches.

We should express our thanks to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the formation of this conference. I am grateful to the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies. We appreciate the foundation of Alexander von Humboldt (Germany) for its support of this conference as in the series of Humboldt college conferences. We are also thankful to members of the Iranian Society of Intercultural Philosophy who have made a sincere contribution to the conference.

Ali Asghar Mosleh
January 2020

Loneliness and Boredom in the City of Modernity and the Pain of Underdevelopment in the Era of Modernism

Reza Davari Ardakani

Rousseau has written somewhere that a *polis* is made up of houses, while a city is made up of citizens. Athens and other Greek *polises* were not the collections of individuals, since the individual and the society had not come into existence in Greece. The head of the house was a *polis* member, with certain responsibilities and tasks to fulfill. Rousseau may have preferred the city to the *polis*, but he was not comfortable even in the city. He did not like the new society, which was in the process of its development at his time, and was worried about its future, but neither did he want to do away with it. Many people in the 18th century were in agreement and harmony with Rousseau on this hesitance. Anyone interested in the modern city's story and its streets must read Baudelaire, the poet of modernity. What Baudelaire had seen and perceived in the 19th century became evident to all in the 20th. It became evident to all that the city, or the modern city, with its science and technology, went its own way, while empathy and sympathy became harder to materialize. The modern city, even Haussmann's Paris, as Baudelaireans say, is a city of loneliness and alienation; its citizens are far removed from the zones of friendship and its blessings. The city of friendship is the city of love and pain. In the story of *Khosrow and Shirin*, when Khosrow asks Farhad where he is from, Farhad ascribes himself to the city of friendship.

First, he asked him whence he was

'From the land of friendship', he replied

'What is their business there', he asked

'They but sorrow and sell life', he replied

Dialogue existed in Athens and the Greek *polis* because the individual and the society had not been placed against each other. For Athenians, the "I" had not come into existence yet, so that they could recognize the "other" against him/her. At that time, Aristotle could still have imagined the "other" as a friend and even base the foundation of *polis* on this friendship. The Greek *polis* differs from the modern city in terms of both its foundation and its end. The foundation of the modern city is the social contract. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau knew well that people's consent does not make this contract, nor would it be terminated by their dissent. Instead, it is founded upon the notion of humanity, but is not *for* the people, even though people participate in it. Kant wanted all the individual human beings to be the end, but the movement of history had taken humanity's notion, as a universal, as its end. We have to listen to Dostoevsky, who considered the combination of love for humanity and hatred for real people as *the* danger latent

in modern politics. Further evidence can be provided in our time for the interpretation and confirmation of his insight:

1. When Ernest Renan's work, *The Future of Science*, was published, Romaine Rolland, who was still young, visited the philosopher and asked him what would happen to humans' wishes and affections in this future you have predicted? Renan replied, "To hell with human wishes. It is the science which must be improved".

2. Robert Moses, who connected the free world of America to the world of freeways, who, with his dagger, cut through the heart of the cities, especially that of New York City, had a combination of love for humanity and men's hatred in his heart. Frances Perkins, the Secretary of Labor in Roosevelt's administration, admired Moses while being upset that he "is not interested in the public". According to Perkins' statement, "Moses did everything for the people's well-being". However, in Moses's opinion, people were filthy and amoral, and he wanted to punish them. He loved the concept of humanity but had no interest in the people; that is, he considered people as a mass of population composed of scattered individuals who are busy with everyday life and whose means to their amusement must be provided.

Such perceptions are not related to personal characteristics or people's moral deficiency but are the necessities of order in the modern world facing power. The people dissolve into society in this complex order more than any other time and conform to society's traditions and activities. However, in the modern world, the human being experiences liberty alongside society's power and law. In a society whose path is determined by the movement of technological science, the liberal humanity enjoys the wisdom which directs science and technology and sometimes overlooks this liberty by order of wisdom. The agreement between wisdom and liberty balances people's lives, and until the collective wisdom is not subject to general distraction, balance is moderately secured in life's system. The facilitating wisdom of the modern society, as Freud thought, works as a mediator to combine nature and civil society based on a contract. This mediation is not always simple, and the relation between the individual and society does not remain fixed, for there is no guarantee outside society and individuals to maintain it. In older societies, the individual and the collective were not against each other, even, as was mentioned, the individual was a member of the *polis* in Athens and his individuality became meaningful by this membership. Older societies were relatively fixed. In a modern society based on liberality, although the individual exists in the society, he is not defined with regard to it; rather, he has become an individual by virtue of his liberty vis-à-vis society. The individual knows that

while society limits his freedom, it also provides him with security and shelter. The individual resides under the supporting wing of society. The problem arises when the foundation of society weakens, and hope is covered over. Although modern society was based on friendship to a lesser extent, it benefited from hope, determination, and liberty. Philosophers and poets were hopeful about society, life, and the future before the world wars, but there is no sign of hope, peace, and tranquility in the post-war philosophy and poetry. Society and politics have completely delegated the job to technology. The law is the law of technology, not the law of society. Society is displaced by technique and scientific technology, and conducting research has become a haven for negligence and a house of tranquility for some scientists, instead of being the basis of awareness and people's hope. In this situation, they rarely ask what has happened to society and where the world is leading. Also, there is no guarantee for maintaining the relationship between the "I" and the "other". As Sartre said, "Hell is other people", but Karl Jaspers and Martin Buber saw the "I" and the "other" or "I" and "you" with regard to loving struggle and being ready for understanding and based on this they had an optimistic viewpoint toward future's policy. What has happened in the second half of the 20th century and early 21st does not attest to their optimism. The relationships between men have always been based on a foundation the understanding and recognition of which is not simple or at least we do not properly know how the collective life of human beings started or how the community was strengthened and what changes have happened during the last 400 years. We are more or less aware of its end and know that the modern world has not much hope to reach its 18th-century standpoint. The estrangement that occurred about this standpoint has influenced people's thought and practice and their relationship. In older societies before modernity, the relationship between people was not an "I-other" relationship but rather an appointed relationship in tradition and religious order. Even when two people were against each other, their contrast was not an "I-other" one. They were two friends, neighbors, townsmen, countrymen, coreligionists who had disagreements. There was no relationship between nations and countries, and if there was, it was that of friendship and hostility. In other words, countries and governments did not reluctantly consider each other as a liberal other with rights. The existence of the "I" and the "other" and their contrast have emerged with man's transformation to self-consciousness and the confirmation of his liberty. Until the moral force between the two was able to secure balance and understanding, the question of the "I", "you", the "other", and "self" did not arise. Perhaps, the belief in human rights or nations right tranquilized this relationship for some time. Since almost a century ago, this relation has become weak and unstable; it has gradually become a question and is constantly becoming more complex. In other words, a weakness has penetrated

the pillars of society since the early 20th century, and people have lost the firm connection (Habl al-Matin) upon which they had once embarked. Furthermore, hope for the future and the moral force is no more powerful enough in their souls to lead them to peace and confidence. This is the condition of modern society. Developing and underdeveloped countries have their own pains. To sum up, Intellectuals in a society wherein trust, hope, and unity, think about the present, links the past to the future, and brings along order and stability. However, there are moments when there is no opportunity for thinking, when the eyes cannot see far away, and when the connection between souls and hearts is broken. In such a situation, idiocy, fear, and hopelessness dominate, and morality dissipates. There comes an era of chaos, and this era is the time of hardship and danger.

Religious Truth - What is that?¹

Hans-Christian Günther

Truth and religion are both problematic terms. Despite important recent research e.g., on the 'religion' of classical antiquity², it is still far from being common Knowledge how very problematic the term religion is. So I begin with the question - not what is religion, but - what do we call religion and what are some of the problems we should be conscious of in talking of religion.

Religion is a European term derived from Latin *religio* and was taken over in other European languages, which do not derive directly from Latin, as a loan word. This is because Roman Christians took over the word for their religion. However, as applied to the pagan Roman cult, it referred to something completely different from Christianity. The etymology of the word is not certain, but whatever it is, Cicero's definition³ of *religio* is perfectly correct as regards pagan religiosity of classical antiquity in general: *religio* denotes the scrupulous observations of the rules of cult. Pagan religion essentially was a mere set of rules how to deal with powers out of human control, powers which however govern human life in a mysterious unintelligible way: this is expressed in the Greek description of the gods as κρείττονας, the stronger ones. This religion was almost bare of any concept, if not that divine powers are both stronger, and thus higher than men and as such inscrutable. They are handled by a set of rules codified by ancient tradition. These rules were basically apotropaic, i.e., an attempt of damage limitation in the face of the eo ipso uncontrollable.

The attitude of the worshipper was fear or respect. In Greek εὐσέβεια, Latin *pietas*. Thus ancient religiosity was characterized essentially by a strict hierarchy: there was an unbridgeable gap: God-man. However, the Hierarchy God-man has its pendant in the hierarchical system of both the human and the divine world, which is strictly analogous. Ideally, both hierarchies point to a single ruler. Now in Latin, In fact, *pietas* refers to both: the respect for human

¹ Cf. Günther 2018.

² Cf. Günther 2013.

³ Cicero, nat. deorum 2.8.: ... religione, id est cultu deorum... "Religion, i.e. the veneration of the gods"; inv. 2.66: religionem eam, quae in metu et caerimonia deorum sit, appellant "religio they call what is in the fear and the rites of the gods".

superiors and to the gods.⁴ In Greek, however, the verb σέβομαι and the Adjektive σεμνός applies in a positive sense to gods only.⁵

The divine character in ancient pagan religion is the precise opposite of the God of the Abrahamic religions. In pagan religiosity, God's major attribute is that he is stronger, inscrutable, and thus he is capricious and incalculable, and therefore an object of fear, the worshipper approaches him with caution.

The God who reveals himself in the Jewish - Christian - Islamic tradition is - despite his supreme, omnipotent power, which is even stronger than that of the pagan gods who are still bound by the laws of fate - he is in his revelation the ultimately trustworthy and reliable, the one who invites man by an act of benevolence towards the latter to trust in him completely and promises the believer; the man who completely trusts in him and follows the path he opens to him, ultimate salvation. This God requests absolute trust, and he offers absolute trustworthiness, he offers precisely the absolute reliability we never find in any human being.

Thus if applied to Christian religiosity, the pagan *religio* is applied to a completely different attitude towards the divine and thus loses any precise meaning.

Thus it can - provisionally - be applied to any phenomenon holding in any other culture the place the Abrahamic religions hold in our cultures.⁶

However, we must be cautious not to impose concepts of Abrahamic religiosity unconsciously upon other religions.

If we jump for a moment from classical antiquity to our times we still find the attitude of the pagan *religio*, for example, in the Chinese ancestor worship, and let me point out that it is far from true that in modern China most people have no religion: ancestor worship is taken seriously by most ordinary people, certainly by the generation from ca. 45 years onward and in various degrees by younger

⁴ Cicero, inv. 2.66: pietatem, quae erga patriam aut parentes aut alios sanguine cognatos officium conservare moneat. "Pietas, what admonishes us to fulfill our duty towards the motherland or the parents or others who are our relatives".

⁵ Σεμνός applied to gods = venerable, applied to men "a nerd".

⁶ Modern Chinese uses for 'religion' a modern Japanese loan word:

宗教 zongjiao, jap. shukyo "teaching", a European concept, neither traditional Chinese nor Japanese religion is a "teaching", thus the Chinese constitution does not call Confucianism or ancestor cult religion, but qualifies ancestor religion as 迷信 mixin "superstition"; religions are characterized by belief, cult, organization, these are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Daoism, Buddhism (note that Catholicism and Protestantism are two different religions, as in Indonesian law too by the way).

people as well. Many young people are educated to pray before any school or university exam to the ancestors. When I asked once a 24 years old student whose parents commanded her to pray every such time, whether she takes it seriously herself, she said - and that is a typical answer: sometimes yes, sometimes not.

In religions like the pagan religiosity or Chinese ancestor cult, where worship is related completely to the do-ut-des principle, worship is ultimately only an attempt to damage limitation, it is based and cannot be but based on skepticism. Thus it's the precise opposite of a religion based on faith. To ask whether the Greeks or Romans - or the Chinese for that matter - believed in their gods makes no sense. Faith is characteristic of certain religions.

A religion that is based merely on a set of acts of worship is not based on any coherent concept.

However, it can be conceptualized by philosophy. Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy is rather a religion than philosophy in our sense. However, then religion is transformed into a system of thought which is guided by reason. The reason is the yardstick of this religion, only that we must never forget that this reason is in itself a concept of Greek thought, which rests on completely arbitrary, inexplicit axioms, which are never questioned. Other cultures have different ways of thought; these ways are neither rational nor irrational; they are merely different.

Indian thought has great analogies to Greek philosophy, and one may thus legitimately speak of Indian philosophy. Given that this is an analogy, not a complete identity, one may call original Buddhism a philosophy or a philosophical religion from the very start.

In contrast to this: The Abrahamic religions - as pagan religion - are per se not based on a philosophical concept. Of course, in contrast to the, so to speak, indefinite gods of pagan religiosity the God of the revelation is definite, he is a god who immediately has one defining characteristic: he is the one who reveals himself in a sacred text and thus turns towards the man with the benevolence of a father and invites man to follow his path. However, the attitude which genuinely corresponds to this act of revelation is obedience, trust, and faith. If such a religion develops a system of thought or is integrated into a system of thought, this is as with pagan religiosity only a secondary, and I would add a not absolutely necessary step.

Abrahamic religions did develop such systems of thought, and they developed them by shaping themselves versus each other. Moreover, they did this by applying to oneself the system of thought of pagan Greek philosophy, because this was the way of thought dominating the time and place where and when these religions shaped themselves. This lead to an antagonism - in various degrees -

between reason and faith, because fundamental tenets of Greek thought were ultimately incompatible with the basic characteristics of these religions.

Chinese ancestor worship, too, was used in the thought of Chinese schools of thought, schools of thought we call Chinese philosophy. However, Chinese thought is so different from western thought that I would prefer not to use this word.

This is particularly obvious if we turn to the use of traditional Chinese religion in Confucius.

Confucius' thought does not know concepts.⁷ It is not - as Greek thought - descriptive. It is never about facts. Confucius' thought is, so to speak, completely man-centered. The world is not a fixed set of facts man must know in order to find his place in this world. In Confucius, the world is that which takes shape in and by human behavior. The world is not the sum of things or facts; it is the sum of possibilities of human actions.

Man is ultimately pointed in his behavior towards the good. The thinker is a master who knows to touch the innermost place in man's heart/ mind 心 xin where he can activate the good, which resides in the depth of man's xin, heart, mind. The attitude demanded from the recipient of the master's word is not - as in Greek philosophy - the effort to join into rational reasoning, Συμφιλοσοφεῖν "join together in philosophical discussion", it is a reverence towards the master, i.e., opening up one's heart so that the master's word can reach its depths where the ultimate nature of man's being a man, the ultimate good resides.

In this spiritual exercise, the cult's place as a set of rules is this: the corpus of traditional rules of the cult which Confucius demands to study again and again is called 礼 li. In its religious sense, Li is the rules of respect towards the divine, or the world of the ghosts, towards the world, which inspires immediate respect and fear. Thus the study of li is an exercise that teaches respectful behavior.⁸ This respectful behavior becomes a habit and is thus also practiced in the human sphere, which is hierarchical, in analogy to the relationship god/ ancestors - man. The hierarchy among men is based on the same principle as the hierarchy of ancestors - worshipper, the principle of seniority in a family. Thus the earnest study of li automatically leads to proper behavior towards men, and in fact, li means not only the rules of a cult but also polite, respectful manners.

The man who is used to always practice li in the full sense arrives then at realizing his full potential as a man (人 ren), his being a man; he realizes it in his

⁷ See Günther 2017.

⁸ Lunyü 3.15: The master entered the grand temple and asked about everything. Someone said: who said the master knows all about 礼 (li) "ritual"? He asks about everything. The master heard it and said: this is 礼 (li) "proper behavior".

behavior towards another ren, he practices the virtue of 仁 ren in the sense of inter-human humanity, 仁 ren, pronounced identically, but written with two characters, that of 人 ren = man and the character 二 er for the number two.

To sum up the result of this very superficial survey of an extremely small number of phenomena we call religion: there are religions without any conceptualization. They consist of a set of rules to handle inscrutable higher powers. The predominant attitude of the worshipper is fear and skepticism.

There are the Abrahamic religions that start from the concept of a benevolent God who reveals a path for the man leading to salvation in sacred scripture. The attitude of the worshipper is obedience faith or trust.

A religion like Buddhism is from the very start based on a system of thought. The yardstick for the believer is his own effort of understanding and practicing this understanding.

Both, religions like those which consist in a set of rules or which are based on faith can be integrated into an intellectual effort, be it a philosophical one - then the yardstick becomes reason or antagonism between reason and faith may result - be it another intellectual approach which transforms religion into a tool for perfecting what is innate in man's innermost self.

Religious Truth

The word for 'true', 'truth' has in many languages of the world connotations of both genuine, authentic, and reliable, convincing. In fact even in Greek where the word for truth ἀλήθεια ("truth", literally α-ληθεια "not - being hidden") has an entirely different etymology, one of the most important texts for the development of the Greek concept of truth, Parmenides, speaks of πιστις αληθής 'true conviction' in pointed contrast to mere conjecture δόξα.⁹

Thus despite the fact that the original meaning of truth in Greek was completely different Greek philosophy later defined truth ultimately as something reliable, truth is something which already in Parmenides is reached by embarking in a way to reach the truth. This truth describes the whole of the world in the widest sense and in correct propositions, which detect through the chaotic multitude of phenomena that meet human perception the unity upon which this multitude is based. Truth is the perception of the world as a unity and as a whole.

In Plato, Truth again is grasped by embarking on the way of dialectics, i.e., the common effort to reach a consistent series of correct propositions and an ultimate non-propositional insight.

⁹ Parm. Fr. 1,30: ἡδε βροτῶν δόξας ταις οὐκ ἐνι πιστις ἀληθῆς "and the conjectures of mortals in which there is no true conviction" (2,4: πειθοῦς ἐστὶ κέλευθος, ἀλήθεια γὰρ ὁπῆδει "it is the way of conviction, for truth follows").

The highest degree of grasping the truth is σοφία,¹⁰ knowledge which has its basis in the capacity of the workman, I.e., Knowledge which enables to create something. The same is implied in the terminological word for Knowledge, science in Plato ἐπιστήμη:¹¹ a knowledge which originally can be a reliable basis for creating in reality what one has as a shape, an idea in one's mind.

The way to Knowledge is the way of λόγος, λόγος is thought shaped as propositions; the series of descriptive propositions leads towards the intuitive perception of the ultimate non-propositional truth which is immediately both descriptive and normative.

Descriptive means: the multitude of phenomena is perceived in the form (εἶδος¹²) that makes it perceptible to reason, this is at the same time the aspect of the phenomena by which they participate in the immutable order of the world in its wholeness and unity. Only in this way can they be known and relied upon by the human mind, and they can be known because the mind is the part of man by which man himself is part of the rational order of the world as a unity and a whole. Truth in this model of thought consists of human reason in tune with the universal reason which shapes the world as a unified order which is immutable and thus in the highest sense reliable.

The truth defined in this way is reached via an intellectual effort of man; the man himself must find in his limited intellectual capacities his connection to the divine intellect.

It is obvious that truth, as the ultimately reliable, aims precisely at that what the God of revelation offers to man. By his revelation, God offers to man immediately what human reason must try to reach alone by an effort few are fit for and which also is a constant struggle to reach an elusive goal which has to be conquered again and again. Obedience, trust in God's revelation, donates to man immediately the ultimate truth, which gives man his sensible place in the whole. Although the truth revealed in God's revelation is a gift, man can only receive it if he turns his heart towards God's revelation; if he responds to the offer, he receives in God's revelation. However, in this effort, he is not alone. God lends his hand to the man and leads man onto his path. The man who opens himself to God's revelation realizes that his acceptance of God's revelation was already a gift bestowed upon him by God's helping hand.

Here we are back to the origins of Greek alétheia we have briefly touched upon in mentioning Parmenides' poem. The poem's prooem describes man on a

¹⁰ Σοφία, σοφός sophía, sophós originally the knowledge which enables a craftsman to produce an object

¹¹ Ἐπιστήμη, ἐπιστάσθαι lat. scientia: knowledge, science, lit.: to take a stand upon something, to know to do something

¹² Εἶδος εἶδος "form" < (φ)ιδεῖν (ν)ιδεῖν (lat. videre) "to see"

way to the limits of the way to his mind.¹³ By divine help, he crosses his limitation and, meets a nameless goddess who offers his hand to him¹⁴ and reveals in a speech called a μῦθος¹⁵, a narrative, not ἀλήθεια, but the unshakable heart, center, source of ἀλήθεια, that where ἀλήθεια comes from, and this is a request to shape man's perception (νοεῖν) according to what is proper (χρή).¹⁶ The λόγος the utterance requested of man is his answer to what he encounters in the revelation of the nameless, i.e., ultimately wordless goddess. ,

λέγειν to speak that what is proper is basically the same as Heraclitus' λόγος, which is the request of the world upon man to get tuned into it by listening (ἐπαίων),¹⁷ listening as opening up to a voice that comes out of the silence of the wordless. Truth as logos in this sense is the mutual opening up of world and man towards each other. Man and world constitute each other in the space between the logos as the request of the world and the logos as the answer of man.

Thus the truth of the self-revealing God as the ultimately reliable one is rooted in the mutual openness of God and man towards each other. This openness happens where God and man meet in their being different, but being pointed to each other, it thus happens from inside the gap between God and man, the heart, the source of openness, and thus this gap implies being near and far at the same time. As the self-revealing God is characterized by speaking to men in their language, man is endowed by the capacity to open himself up by listening to a superhuman voice. In listening, he becomes obedient in the literal sense of the word to the word of God.

This original truth of openness is not yet normative, normative is only the truth of the ultimately reliable God experienced by the man who trusts in a religion of

¹³ Parm. Fr. 1.1: Ἰπποὶ τὰί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ' ἐπιθυμὸς ἰκάνοι, "the steeds who carry me as far as my desire reaches"

¹⁴ Parm. Fr. 1.11ff.: Ἐνθα πύλαι Νυκτὸς τε καὶ Ἡματὸς εἰσι κελεύθων, /καὶ σφραγὶς ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφὶς ἔχει καὶ λάϊνος οὐδὸς ... / ... ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων/ χάσμι' ἀχανὲς ποίησαν .../ ... Καὶ με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρὶ/ δεξιτερῆν ἔλεν... "There are is the double gate of the paths of day and night,/ and a lintel is around it and a stone threshold .../ ... it (the double gate) created a tight (my translation: normally translated: immense) chasm .../ and a goddess received me graciously and took my right hand with her hand ..."

¹⁵ Parm. Fr. 2,1: κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας "hear the mythos and carry it carry away"

¹⁶ Parm. 1.28f.: Χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι/ ἢ μὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ "it is proper that you learn all, on the one hand the well rounded unshakeable heart of truth"; Parm. Fr. 6.1: Χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὼν ἕμμεναι: "it is proper to say and perceive that being is".

¹⁷ Heracl. 1: Οὐκ ἐμεῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογέειν σοφὸν ἐστὶ, ἐν πάντα εἶναι. "Not listening to me, but to the λόγος it is wise to agree (be in tune with the λόγος): all is one." Heracl. Fr. 2: (τοῦ δὲ) λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον "of this λόγος which is forever men do become again and again lacking in understanding both before they have heard it and after they heard it once"; Heracl. Fr. 112: τὸ φρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μεγίστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας. "to be in one's right mind is the greatest quality, and wisdom is to speak and act according to physis (nature) in listening.

revelation, that demands that he acts according to its rules. Truth as openness, as the capacity of some sort of dialogue between man and God, however, applies even to religions that consist in acts of worship alone.

Confucius has two words for intellectual activity, which are complementary: 学 xue 'to learn' and 思 si. The second is difficult to translate; it means to think in a sense to let one's thought go, to long for in the sense of an indefinite longing. Confucius says si without xue is dangerous, xue without si is empty. xue is lifelong intellectual effort. This effort is guided by an openness that consists of a desire for a goal beyond what can be learned. Si is precisely comparable to Heraclitus' objectless epakouein; it also has affinities to Parmenides' noein. Truth in Chinese philosophy is 道 dao, originally the way, the constant being on the way to one's true essence. The truth of logical propositions is 法 fa, law. A term with a legal sense to be defined versus li. These open up a huge number of questions I cannot go into here further, but these concluding remarks may show the truth of Heidegger's dictum: if we think beyond the ultimate beginnings of our thought our beginning opens itself to the beginnings of other ways of thought, the ways of thought of other cultures.

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The convergence of "I" and "the other" in the conditions of "Power" dominance

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Abstract

"Convergence" is the way of being-together and having co-existence while the differences remain, thereupon, without neglecting or eliminating differences, "I" and "the other", are accompanied while maintaining distinctions. How is it possible that "I" and "the other" keeping distinctions link together and accompany each other? In the pre-modern era, the "reality" of every culture has been the origin of identity formation and the cause of the emergence of different types of co-operation and unity, and also it determined the way to look at "the other". However, in the modern era, with the gradual reversal of the values rooted in realities, the convergence with the pattern of Leviathan, which is, in fact, the convergence of the will of power, replaced the truth-based accompany. So today, in order to discuss convergence, one has to pose questions on how to create a link between "I" and "the other" in terms of the transformation of "truths" and the dominance of "power".

Keywords: Convergence, the other, Power, Truth, Intercultural

The issue of "convergence" is the result of the formation of new conditions in contemporary time. "Convergence" is the way of being-together and having co-existence while the differences remain, thereupon, without neglecting or eliminating differences, "I" and "the other", are accompanied while maintaining distinctions. Based on concepts such as "difference", "the other" and "truth", these conditions can be explained. In recent decades philosophical thought has drawn special attention to these three issues. This very attention makes up the particular circumstances we are experiencing. If across history, unity and identity have been authentic, the emphasis is on difference and distinction in the contemporary period. In the past, the formation of collective circles under truths was evoked. Nevertheless, today, due to the decline of the truths and their devaluation, the tendency towards self-preservation and individual desires has increased; hence, it is sorely possible to call people to unity under the issue of truth. If, in classical metaphysics, from Plato to Hegel, it was intended to prove the universal and absolute constitutions and pervasive denomination of truth, in the post-Nietzschean thinkers, the comprehensive narrations of truth have been ignored and maintaining differences and distinctions are popular trends.

Until the time some philosophers call "post-Nietzschean" period, most modern thinkers thought of unity under the truths and, accordingly, in the arena of social-political life, they intended towards collective configurations under the axis of truths. At times, these truths took the form of mythical, sometimes rational,

while they were also represented in values and conventions. For example, in ancient Greece, the basis of the Greek world's identity and unity was Paideia. Later in the Middle age Europe, above all, Christian truths played such a role. At the beginning of the modern era, the Christian truths went down. For this reason, thinkers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who thought of a foundation for state, on the other hand, encountered with the issue of the basis of the link between individuals for the formation of political unity. In Hobbes, the initial notion is around individuals who are in conflict and quarrel with each other due to conflicting interests.

As a modern thinker in the field of politics, Hobbes calls for a coalition based on the interests for establishing a state. Hobbes's Leviathan paradigm, in addition to all the points and outcomes, implies the beginning of an era in which the basis of unity and co-existence is the will of power. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the era of invitation to convergences in which the will to power in the form of intellectual systems has a face of truth-calling. For instance, the French revolution is the representation of the enlightenment era's ideals as though they are pure intellectual truths. Alternatively, Marx's call to revolution and achieving classless societies is another form of an invitation to convergence, which is realized based on his interpretation of historical materialism. However, the evolution of modern thought and civilization is oriented towards this fact that as time goes, the requirement for the link between me and the other becomes looser. With the reversal of values proclaimed by Nietzsche, the basis for the link between individuals and the quality of formation of collective configurations is re-questioned again.

If in the past, through the truth and the values based on it, in a union with "the other", "I" became "we", at present, with the reversal of the linking values, the question is raised out of the foundation of the link. One of the effects of the reversal of the linking values was to strengthen "I" and to concentrate on the distinctions of "I" versus others. Therefore, under the conditions of insisting on the preservation of distinctions, "I" simply does not turn into "we".

Given this spotlight, convergence is a question and an occurrence issue. Because an individual has emerged, who is not willing to ignore distinctions and would not like to be faded in a greater "we" to minimize differences. This "we" could be a nation, a party, a class or a group of coreligionists, and even humans as who he is. This general and collective configurations relied on truths and often had a historical-cultural form, whereas the contemporary era is the time of diminishing belief in "history" and "culture." Contemporary time is the time of frail belief in culture as in the Herderian context. It is likely to be the end of truth, history, and culture. In this situation, "unity" in its old common sense is no longer propounded.