Towards Intercultural Philosophy of Education

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Abstract In this paper, we propose an understanding of philosophy of education as cultural and intercultural work and philosophers of education as cultural and intercultural workers. In our view, the discipline of philosophy of education in North America is currently suffering from measures of insularity and singularity. It is vital that we justly and respectfully engage with and expand our knowledge and understanding of sets of conceptual and life-practice resources, and honor and learn from diverse histories, cultures, and traditions. Such honoring provides responsive conditions for our coming together in and across differences in order that we may productively and creatively address and overturn grammars of violence, destruction, and dis-ease in these complexly troubled times. Committing ourselves to deconstructing historical and contemporary beliefs, values, and practices that are compromising human and planetary flourishing, we undertake responsibilities to go cross-cultural and intercultural.

Keywords Intercultural philosophical dialogue · Global citizenship · Wisdom traditions · Navigating cultural differences through dialogue · Buddhist social transformation · Social responsibility and critical pedagogy

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Introduction

> In short, it is the task of Philosophy to know, to love, and to heal—all in one. It knows as much as it loves and heals. It loves, only if it truly knows and heals. It heals if it loves and knows…. It is not foreign to the nature of Philosophy to act with wisdom, to love with discernment, and to perceive with detachment. (Panikkar 1992, p. 237)

Panikkar (1918–2010), a philosopher, theologian, mystic, and poet, indeed a magnificent *world-soul*, devoted most of his life to fostering intercultural, interfaith, and inter-philosophical understanding and fellowship. In his essay, "A Nonary of Priorities," Panikkar proposed that, in our times, the renewal of Philosophy has to come from cross-cultural studies of philosophy. The latter, Panikkar explains, "does not study other philosophies but changes the very perception of what Philosophy is" (1992, p. 236). Following Panikkar's insight, we suggest that cross-cultural and intercultural[1] perspectives and approaches also benefit philosophy of education and have the potential to change the very conception and perception of what philosophy of education can be and what we as educational philosophers do. This suggestion, we believe, is particularly pertinent and urgent today when the field of philosophy of education within North America, let loose from its historical moorings in the traditions of Anglo-American analytic and Eurocentric "Western" philosophy, has important opportunities to reorient itself and venture in new directions that might enable us to increase our service and contribute to a world currently very much mired in social and environmental problems on a global scale, and facing serious survival challenges.

In this chapter, we propose an understanding of philosophy of education as cultural and intercultural work and philosophers of education as cultural and intercultural workers. As such, we are committed to deconstructing historical and contemporary beliefs, values, and practices that are compromising human and planetary flourishing. Again, taking the lead from Pannikar, we also propose that philosophers of education world-wide become leaders searching for, exploring, and exemplifying worldviews/values and practices that might move us away from damaging epistemologies and ethics and towards love's knowledge and healing. As we shall contend, this search is best facilitated by undertaking responsibilities to go cross-cultural and intercultural. In our view, the discipline of philosophy of education in North America is currently suffering from measures of insularity and singularity. It is vital that we justly and respectfully engage with and expand our knowledge and understanding of sets of conceptual and life-practice resources, and honor and learn from diverse histories, cultures, and traditions. Such honoring provides responsive conditions for our coming together in and across differences in order that we may productively and creatively address and overturn grammars of violence, destruction, and dis-ease in these complexly troubled times.

As to be anticipated, putting this proposal to work is not without significant challenges and complications, some of which we will detail in this paper. However, it is our conviction that the benefits outweigh the costs, and we are certain of our application examples speaking to these benefits.

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[1] Throughout this chapter, we deploy the terms "intercultural" and "cross-cultural" in recognition that the former refers more to an in-between relationship open to cultural identity transformation, including cultural innovation or hybridity, based on mutuality and reciprocity while the latter refers more to cultures moving across geographies and being compared and contrasted for their differences and commonality. Generally speaking, interculturality signifies a greater degree of critical and dynamic understanding of culture and possibilities of cultural innovation and transformation than cross-culturalism. But the two are not mutually exclusive, and in any case, the latter is necessary for the former.

Philosophy of Education and Transformation of Culture

When problems develop that threaten the sustainability of people and their environment, we have to look at the hosting cultures and their contribution to these problems. The dominant cultures of today spreading all over the planet are characterized by the reduction of all values to monetary value, disappearance of the sacred, pervasiveness of instrumentalism that leaves trails of a trashed world behind, and unbridled consumption and corresponding production that is overwhelming the carrying capacity of the planet (Bai and Cohen 2007). Late capitalist societies seem mired in what Eppert (2013) is calling a 'separationist ethos' (p. 36); that is, an ethos that stresses differences and dualisms in conflict, an individualism that posits self before and over others and environment, a narrow utilitarianism that justifies the use and abuse of others, a materialism that enables the 'consumption' of others and environment, a scientism that supports objectification, and so on. The beliefs, values, and practices that go with these characteristics are an integral part of hegemonic cultures.

In times such as ours, when suffering and trauma abound, when violence and violation continue (their scale and reach enabled by modern technologies), when species are increasingly becoming extinct, and when ecosystems are collapsing (Macy 2007), philosophies are being addressed to engage in conversation and contemplate how we might globally contribute to a world in which our children, species, and environment can live well and thrive. How do we venture forth from this mire individually, communally, and collectively? And, as Gough (2004) and Mall (2000) pose, how do we form solidarities in order to help heal and sustain our present day world?

For philosophers of education, too, the same questions as above are to be raised. The context of education is broad in contemporary culture. There is formal schooling, such as K-12 and beyond; and various other social contexts are involved in educating human beings. Parenting is an essential and prominent context of education; workplace environments provide leadership and professional development and also constitute significant educational venues. Wherever humans are engaged in the transmission and transformation of worldviews and values, habits and practices, education of some manner and kind is taking place (Bai and Romanycia 2013). All those involved in education need to participate in examining worldviews and values, and their enactment, assessing how they do or do not serve mutual flourishing and sustainability, and making suggestions and showing examples of different possibilities of imagining and handling reality. This is where philosophers of education as cultural and intercultural workers can enter the scene and offer much needed contributions, by inviting contemplative critique, challenging beliefs and values underlying inequities, and shedding light on past and present ways of wisdom and being-in-the-world. Philosophers of education the world over who are working with and learning from diverse cultural resources and traditions would be in beneficial positions to speak to and offer insight into possibilities for addressing the complexities of global times.

Can We Recognize Philosophers as Cultural Workers?

Throughout history, philosophers, also known in different cultures as wise elders, or sages, have been leaders of people. As leaders, their vocation was to identify weaknesses and sicknesses in the culture that were compromising mutual flourishing, and point to practices of thinking, perceiving, feeling, acting, and interacting that would promise better flourishing. In other words, philosophers have long been cultural workers and, in many

instances, have risked criticism, ridicule, ire, hatred, and even their own lives in order to contribute to society's fuller wellbeing. We have no better example than Socrates who was put to death by his fellow citizens for 'corrupting' the youth of his days with his new visions of the world.

The entrenchment of conventional truths, of which culture is largely composed, and which can threaten to induce a state of 'sleep' in the citizenry (Saul 1995) can be so strong that anyone who stands up and points to what is not working in the culture and suggests different ways to look at and work with social realities may indeed risk much. As Hall (1976/1981) observes, culture is largely unconscious. It is largely unconscious because individuals participating in a given culture are inducted into it as if what the culture presents is naked reality. Elements of a given culture—beliefs, values, customs, ethos, technologies, practices and habits—are presented to individuals as pre-givens, with a sense of truth that "this is just what reality is all about."

In addition to Socrates (470-399 BCE), other philosophers or sages from the Axial Period who travelled unchartered and 'risky' territory include Confucius (551-479 BCE), Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 BCE), and Zarathustra (ca. 628-551 BCE). The Axial Age is very special for humanity. It was a major turning point in human history in terms of ontological shift: a call to humanity by the Axial Elders[2] for a move out of ethnocentric and heteronomous mindsets and into a "cosmic centric" (Panikkar 1992) and autonomous moral agency (Bai 2014). Bai has argued that this Axial Age call to humanity has not yet been fulfilled, and is still in—we may add, slow—progress.

Philosophy inescapably emanates from, responds to, and experiments with culture. Let us muse a little on how this works. Broadly speaking, culture is composed of worldviews, values, habits and practices. Different cultures mean different sets of these contents. In other words, different cultures have different ways of conceptualizing, interpreting, configuring, and negotiating reality. This insight is key for us. Unaware of this insight, we can all-too-readily get entrenched in ethnocentric notions that one's own worldview possesses exclusive truth claims, and other worldviews are mistaken, invalid, and inferior.

It may be helpful to identify a physical analogy here and contrast such ethnocentrism with an example of how intercultural understanding and interchanges may have worked more fruitfully. Different cultures have different ways to respond to hunger: with different food ingredients and preparations, i.e., cuisine, and dietary customs. Cultural history has shown ample examples of how cuisines and customs of different cultures mingled and mixed, always adapting, adopting, and changing. In the domain of worldviews and values, cultural exchange and interchange, however, have not been as curious, adventurous, generous, kind, and fruitful as in the cuisine-culture scene. Culture wars between different worldviews and values have been the norm throughout history. Many bloody battles have been and are still being fought in the name of Reality and Truth Claims.

If we understand the function of philosophy as cultural work, the aim of which is to attend to the problematic aspects of a culture or cultures and introduce and implement alternate ways of negotiating reality, then philosophy's primary activity would be to search for worldviews and values that promise or have been shown to be efficacious in responding to the problems that a culture is experiencing. Philosophy of education in North America can contribute fruitfully to such activity by engaging in philosophical cross-cultural and intercultural studies.

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[2] We have left out from our list of Axial Elders the name Lao Tze because of the disputed historicity of this figure, but an acknowledgement needs to be made that the Daoist thought is part of the Axial teachings.

As part of embarking on this path, however, it is important that we more fully unpack both what we mean by North American or "Western" "philosophy" and also how we are given to understand "culture." A first major hurdle for educational philosophers educated in a "Eurocentric tradition" to work through is to become more aware of and unpack the social constructedness of this tradition and to become more open to the viability of alternate worldviews as philosophies with considerable wisdom, legitimacy, and value. Let us now take a brief further look at scholarship that seeks to expose and contend with the entangled (and dark) history behind so-called "Western" philosophy. From there, we will propose philosophical moves, based on Hadot's (1995) argument, reinforced by Foucault (2001), that philosophy represents a way of life, and specific and rigorously ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological orientations.

Unpacking and Learning from History of Interculturality

It is by now well documented that economic, cultural, and intellectual exchange between occidental and oriental geographies has been prevalent since ancient times. Scholars have refuted the socially constructed trajectory that Western philosophy derives directly and linearly from the Greek, and have also shown long histories of considerable influences of ideas between East and West (Armstrong 1993, 2006; Clarke 1997; Dussell 2000; Hobson 2004; Smith 2008). As religious studies scholar King (1999) maintains, rooting Western culture "in ancient Greece is as problematic as the exclusion of Africa and Mesopotamia" from its multifarious histories (p. 11). Such scholarship places into significant question any claims for the homogenous identity of Western philosophy and deeply problematizes essentialist claims still shadowing contemporary educational understanding that East and West are remote from and inaccessible to one another (Eppert 2013, 2014). Indeed, philosopher Ram Adhar Mall (2000) asserts, "[t]oday we cannot carry on as if the ancient classical-occidental model of history were still valid. It must be stated that Greek historical thought is closer to the Asian than the Christian-European" (p. 121).

King (1999) pointedly challenges the parochialism of Western philosophy and continued resistances of European and American philosophers to engage non-mainstream thought from a number of angles. For example, he reflects on the West's own diverse and shifting understanding of what counts as philosophy over the centuries and the unfortunate increasingly narrowing professionalization of its purview as it came over time to separate itself from mythos, orality, the natural sciences, theology, tradition, psychology, and the common everyday (as opposed to the professional elite and 'high culture') (pp. 2–5). This increased differentiation, he asserts, has resulted in philosophy tending to be "conceived of as an abstract and solely mental activity, to be sharply distinguished from the physical and spiritual realms" (p. 5). He observes how these shifts were variously, i.e., politically, socially, culturally, and institutionally, by the secularization of philosophy such that today "many contemporary philosophers retain an air of anti-religious secularism that shapes both their awareness of the nature of the discipline in which they are trained and their understanding of its variegated history" (p. 5).

Additionally, Western philosophy has been deeply implicated in practices of colonialism and imperialism. King writes that the conception of philosophy as "the exercise of rationality" involved a constructed demarcation and disassociation from what it described as 'non-philosophy', which in ancient times was attributed to sophists, who were foreigners in Athenian society, as well as to women, slaves, and oral storytellers, and later came to encompass that which was non-European (pp. 6–9). He notes that the secularization of

philosophy and its increasing professionalization within higher education, along with its increased alignment with the sciences, was one way in which it could further marginalize 'spiritual' non-Western philosophy (p. 5). He further observes that modern Western philosophy, informed by European Romanticism, has also revered autonomous individuality and creativity, which serves to "underplay the role of tradition and community in all creative and critical thought", [and] also perpetuates what might be called 'the trickle down theory of knowledge' that emphasizes key figures but neglects broader contexts (p. 7).

King advocates that philosophy in American and European societies can benefit from more fully contending with their own historical, political, and social situatedness, attending to the "ruptures, heterogeneities and discontinuities" in its histories and becoming more embracing of diversity in time and space (p. 9). He asserts: "[I]ntellectual resistance to engagement with 'other cultures' is severely hampered by the tendency to reify the concept of 'culture' and to conceive of 'cultures' as self-contained and static entities" (p. 11). The implication of King's observation for the recognition of philosophers of education as cultural workers is then to recognize culture as fluid and organic rather than isolated and sovereign. King's point is similarly made by Mall (2000) who emphasizes that wisdom is no one's possession, and that cultures have always borrowed from and been influenced by one another. Like King, he urges American and European philosophers to remember that the Western way of doing philosophy is not the only way, nor is it necessarily the 'right' way; dualistic either/or notions of 'right/wrong' are precisely what have underpinned much of imperialistic and colonial drives: "no culture is a windowless monad, so all cultures possess to varying degrees intercultural overlappings" (p. 15). For Mall (2000), philosophy is intercultural first and subsequently Greek, Indian, Chinese and so on; it is by its very "nature intercultural" (pp. 1–2). By 'intercultural', Mall does not mean eclecticism, abstraction, aesthetitization, romanticism, or exoticism (p. 5). Rather, he articulates intercultural as a moral and mental category, a philosophical conviction, attitude and insight that no "philosophy is the philosophy, and no culture is the culture" (p. 5). Both King and Mall speak to the importance of intercultural philosophical dialogue in today's globalized world, and King reminds that linguistic differences, while needing to be carefully attended to, should not prevent such dialogue, especially considering that many 'Western' philosophers do not know ancient Greek, and study Plato and Aristotle in translation (p. xiii).

In sum, insofar as philosophy follows the insights of many of its own contemporary theorists and ethicists, it is challenged to be open to and enter into hospitable relations and respectful dialogue with diverse philosophies and manners of philosophizing.

Dialogical Encounters for Intercultural Learning

The search for alternate, promising worldviews, values, and inter/cultures able to promote human flourishing, especially within the contexts of a world that is increasingly digitally connected, ever quickly changing, and complex, is not solely or even primarily the solitary endeavor that philosophical inquiry has sometimes been imagined as, both East and West. Rather, if nothing else, the times require that our intercultural inquiries be carried out collaboratively by engaging as educators with those from other traditions, religions, geographies and so on, following the leads of philosophers as ancient as Socrates and as contemporary as Tu Weiming (see, for example, Tu 2007). Tu is regularly engaging with those from East and West in his attempts to understand and promote wellbeing and sustainability in a world where the traditional, modern, and postmodern increasingly intersect.

In North American higher education, campuses are increasingly comprised of students from diverse national, cultural, ontological and epistemological backgrounds. This reality presents a wonderful and appropriate contemporary philosophical challenge for those of us working on these campuses: namely, to learn more deeply from difference and to practice an ethics of hospitality. We are proposing what Paulo Freire (2006a) referred to as the student–teacher contradiction, in which the dynamics and roles of teacher and student continually shift between the players such that they see themselves as student–teachers and as teacher–students. Our work as philosophical intercultural workers calls us to radical humility, requiring us to become students, embracing what Zen Buddhists call *Shoshin* (初心) or "beginner's mind"—a consciousness characterized by openness, emptiness, lack of preconceptions, and eagerness to learn—as we seek out and learn from those representing other cultures, *epistemes*, and ways of being. Such rigorous and humble philosophical practice also helps us avoid falling into the modernist western cultural trap of privileging our knowledge and ways of seeing. It is this sort of rigor that was, as Hadot (1995) argued, at the heart of philosophical practice; philosophy consists of what he termed the "spiritual practices" enjoined upon us by the Greek schools of philosophy. These practices involved reason, study, engagement with others, as well as learning to live and to die. They are analogous to an athlete's training or applying a medical cure.

As Freire (2006a, b) proposed, critical pedagogy requires dialogue. Hadot (1995) articulates dialogue as one of the rigorous "communal spiritual practices" (p. 90) of philosophy wherein we open ourselves to change, to discovery, and to an engagement with another. Theorists such as Freire, Hadot and Buber share a vision of dialogue not simply as a form of verbal conversation but rather as an ontological means of encounter or meeting (Buber 1958/2000), and in referring to philosophy of education, we are suggesting that it represents, far more than any set of educational practices, an ontological orientation to teaching and learning. When dialogue is conceived as a particular relational way of being in the world, it brings with it or requires the rigorous practice and development of particular sets of capacities or virtues (Aristotle 2000). Buber introduces seven of these capacities (1947/2002, 1958/2000, 1965). The first he referred to as becoming aware: listening in its broadest sense incorporates the senses, intellect, emotions, and intuition. Second is confirmation of the other, a respect for another as Other and a validation of another's ontological status. Third is inclusion or empathy, which he articulates as the ability to incorporate others' experience or presence within the expanding sphere of one's own experience. Fourth is presence, the affirmation of one's own ontological and epistemological standpoints. Fifth is the willingness and ability to explore the unknown and different, what Buber (1947/2002, 1948) referred to as the "holy insecurity." Sixth is ability to cognize and grapple with paradox. Finally, there is an ability to synthesize what is being perceived or see the big picture and how all its parts connect to create a whole: what Buber (1965, p. 62) referred to as a "synthesizing apperception."

Freire (2006a) defined dialogue as "the encounter between men [sic], mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (p. 88). It is a direct, open meeting between people that occurs in general and specific contexts that mediate that meeting, and it allows and challenges participants to speak to and address their ontological, epistemological, linguistic, and cultural realities: their worlds. As languages of various kinds are often an essential interactive element, these dialogues can be seen as a form of what Merrill Swain refers to as "languaging": a "dynamic, never-ending process of using language to make meaning" (2006, p. 96).

As Buber (1947/2002, 1958/2000), Freire, and a number of contemporary sociocultural theorists suggest, we establish our humanity through such encounters, and dialogue thus

becomes what Freire (p. 88) refers to as an "existential necessity"; according to Hadot (1995), it "corresponds exactly to a spiritual exercise" (p. 93). It is also an act of creation, in which the participants are not only sharing their realities but also creating, in and through the dynamics of their meeting, hybridized new realities in a synthesizing fashion.

Freire furthermore asserts that such dialogical encounters require a loving commitment to others and the world, humility, faith in humanity, and hope for the possibility of becoming more fully human; he suggests that the horizontal dynamics that are thus established contribute to developing profound trust in others and in humanity. He further asserts that dialogue requires critical thinking, but, significantly, he grounds critical thinking itself in a relational ethos that requires the discipline of being able to discern an "indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them" (p. 92). We are required, Freire maintains, to be in and with others and the world. That, we would suggest, is at the heart of our philosophical praxis as intercultural workers.

Encountering Otherness and Navigating Cultural Differences

While cross-cultural and intercultural dialogues present unique opportunities for addressing limits on self-understanding imposed by the situatedness or context and one's own inquiry, history has shown repeatedly that the worldview of knowledge-seekers inevitably influences what is noticed and deemed worthy of exploration and what is disregarded or left unseen. As suggested previously, the outcome of one's interaction with or inquiry into another culture or worldview, in other words, is colored by one's own, historically and socially contextualized worldview or ideology (Mannheim 1929/1936).

The view that ideology plays an important role in the act of understanding and interpreting anything has profound consequences for those who wish to study diverse cultures, and especially for intercultural philosophers who hope to find "conceptual resources" in non-Western cultures that can challenge the discourses of modernity and its deleterious productions. If indeed the intention of philosophers as inter/cultural workers is to experience fresh insight and inspiration from alternate worldviews, then a primary and integral aspect of this work must involve developing an awareness of the mostly tacit pre-theoretical understandings and social practices that form the context for one's encounter, dialogue, and exchange with diverse philosophies, traditions and practices. Without such awareness or contextualized understanding, there is a danger that the traditions turned to among philosophers embedded in 'Western' belief systems may be selectively translated and so accommodated to hegemonic values and assumptions that they may accede the many rich resources they have for critiquing and serving as alternatives to them.

McMahan (2008) offers a valuable example of how this has played out in relation to the ways in which Buddhist philosophy has been taken up in the modern West. He documents how Buddhism's encounter with modernity not only changed it, but how the conditions of modernity—as manifest through various ideological forces, textual sources, historical, social and cultural practices, overt philosophies, and tacit assumptions—created implicit parameters for what interpretations of Buddhism became possible and impossible. McMahan demonstrates how certain elements of Buddhist traditions have been selected because they serve the needs and interests of the modern world, while others (that may be more typical of Buddhist experience throughout history) have been ignored, suppressed, or reconstituted in terms of modern discourses. In its accommodation to Western thought, culture, and social practice, aspects of Buddhism have been reformulated to fit into

particular metanarratives of American and European culture, and now into an increasingly globalizing modernity. This, notes McMahon (2008), could have two potential and opposite effects:

> It could position Buddhism to bring novel conceptual resources to the West and modern world that might indeed offer new perspectives on some of modernity's personal, social, political, and environmental ills… At the opposite end of this continuum are forms and fragments of Buddhism that have been absorbed into western culture so thoroughly that they lose any potential to offer any real alternative to or critique of its values and assumptions or offer anything new. This is where Buddhism fades into vague New Age spiritualities, self-help therapies, and purely personal paths of self-improvement. While there may indeed be personal benefits to such approaches, they are largely subservient to popular values and often merely instrumental to their ends: making money, working efficiently at the office, having a rich and satisfying private life. At the continuum's furthest extremes, these fragments fade into popular culture, splintering into shards of Buddhist imagery that become tropes for countless commercial products (pp. 260–261).

There is ample evidence that Buddhist philosophy and practice can offer the West—and more broadly, the contemporary world—vital perspectives, insights, and critiques. Indeed, many intercultural philosophers have made it their business to explore and exhibit how Buddhism's sophisticated techniques of meditation and its vigorous ethical philosophies can be fashioned into formidable critiques of materialism, consumerism, and the pathological aspects of global capitalism (e.g., Loy 2003, 2008; Macy 2007). However, care needs to be taken in the ongoing translation of these and other philosophies and practices because, as McMahon points out above, there is a danger that they could become so thoroughly accommodated to popular (post)modern cultural and intellectual discourses that they assume unprecedented meanings and purposes and, in the worst case scenarios, lose the power they have to really challenge (post)modernity's status quo and offer alternative possibilities (Nelson 2012).

The work of philosophers as inter/cultural workers, as such, requires not only becoming more receptive to the influence of ideas from diverse cultures and worldviews, as if this were a neutral affair of just "looking out." Properly and sensitively done, it also involves a "looking in", or the development of awareness of the ways in which what is seen in any "other" is influenced by mostly tacit social concepts, ideologies, and practices. To the extent that philosophers as inter/cultural workers can remain attentive to the ways in which their meeting with different cultures is always and inevitably circumscribed by the norms, values and concerns of their own cultural tradition(s) and prejudices, the possibility for a more honest interaction wherein knowledge and understanding is actively and mutually negotiated opens up. After all, human beings are not only social beings—the products and creators of culture. They are *also* meaning-makers participating in what Shotter (1993) calls "conversational realities" occurring in cultures that are themselves historically evolving processes subject to constant revisions, reinterpretations, and transformations.

Indeed, on an alternate note, it is important to remember that cultures are organic, and are always influenced by encounters and exchanges. As such, while it is important to take note of the above, we concurrently need to recognize that traditions are themselves continually in flux, bearing birth to new and alternate traditions and changing ideas to meet the challenges of changing times. Buddhism itself constitutes a prime example of such flux as it began in India and then moved eastward, shifting and changing as it blended with previous traditions in different cultures, and these last decades is now taking root in the

West (Bresnan 2003, p. 374). As cultures are organic, so is it natural that intermingling and translations take place as the needs of the times invite. In some ways, and history has shown this to be the case, the editing of traditions is inescapable, but it is critically important for those engaged in the work of translation to become conscious of participation in the editorial process—of the ways in which what is chosen and left out will impact how well and humbly we meet and learn from one another. Value distinctions can be made between various interpretations of text(s) and traditions(s), especially if the interpreter/editor displays some degree of depth and attention to context.

Cultural Learning from the Wisdom Traditions

We—the authors of this chapter—are variously familiar with the cross-cultural and intercultural dimensions of philosophy. Some of us are bi-cultural, and all of us have studied Western and Eastern philosophies and adopted long-term practices associated with the latter. Some of us have variously had opportunities to work closely with and learn from students and scholars who represent different nations and cultures, epistemologies, and ontological orientations. Our personal experiences and academic studies have committed us to performing cultural work in education. Of particular interest for us have been the teachings of Eastern wisdom traditions, especially Buddhism and Daoism. We recognize Buddhist and Daoist philosophies, and their embodied practices, as having much to offer for critically countering the harmful worldviews and values that are central to the increasingly global hegemonic cultures of instrumentalism and consumptive materialism that utilize binary, linear, dualistic, and fragmented individualistic ways of thinking. It is worth noting that there is, as well, an intersection between these dialogical and contemplative practices, as noted below. The intersection lies in the primary grounding of the Asian philosophical traditions in relationality, and we would suggest that in our work as educators and philosophers of education this orientation—one that is philosophical, ontological, and epistemological—offers a way forward in the world. We are undertaking and would encourage further explorations into relational contemplative orientations and practices (Bai et al. 2009, 2014; Scott 2014; Eppert 2014). Even in the midst of deliberate solitary contemplation, Freire (2006b) still understood the "essentiality of to be *with*" (p. 29).

In our view, it is precisely because many Eastern philosophies are embedded not in a separationist but rather in a relational ethos—understanding reality as inherently interdependent rather than isolationist—that they can speak well to contemporary social and environmental crises. They resonate in the attention given to the integration of self with environment and cosmos and also the integration of mind, body, soul, and spirit (Eppert 2008, 2009). Moreover, they tend to variously emphasize not an either/or approach to dualisms but rather balance, flow, and integration. They too contend with possibilities for healing from aggression, suffering, and trauma (Eppert 2008, 2012). That said, it is important to keep in mind, as King (1999) reminds, that just as scholars need to be wary of homogenizing occidental intellectual thought, so too are oriental philosophies participants in need of rigorous debate, argumentation, and differentiation. King attends, for example, to materialist Indian philosophy that radically counters Western generalizations regarding the mysticism of Indian thought, and he worries that this philosophy will be neglected because of the West's general attraction to India's more spiritually oriented philosophies (p. 22). When engaging in intercultural philosophical dialogue, it is wise not to impose socio-constructed assumptions and expectations on the philosophies of others. As King

writes, "the western philosopher would do well to adapt Mr. Spock's famous line from the television series *Star Trek*, and admit that—'It's *philosophy,* Jim, but not as <u>we</u> know it!" (p. 36).

King provides a number of reasons for which one might want to consider it worthy to engage in intercultural philosophical dialogue. Doing so can provide greater understanding of one's own background and traditions, including its 'blind-spots' (p. 37). Moreover, such dialogue reflects more fully the "cultural and intellectual diversity of humankind" and can "provide intellectual stimulation, new and creative syntheses of old ideas, and the potential for the development of new approaches, orientations, and world-views" (p. 37).

An Example of Intercultural Philosophical Work in Global Citizenship

In this last section of our chapter, we wish to give an example of the kind of intercultural work that philosophy of education can undertake in the way we have been theorizing and proposing. In this example, we propose the intermarriage of philosophical worldviews in order to not only open a respectful space for intercultural dialogues but also make way for possible intercultural collaborations in contending with issues that cannot be solved effectively from a single perspective. The realm of global citizenship is where the present illustration takes place. In what follows, we will briefly mention two different views on social transformation, as a facet of global citizenship practice, and then present how an intercultural application of Buddhist philosophies conceive of social transformation, which may add another dimension into global citizenship practice.

First, social transformation, framed within (neo)colonial visions, is supposed to have much to do with poverty alleviation, and hence, from this perspective, global citizens are expected to help "an unfortunate Other" (Jefferess 2012, p. 27) through charitable action (Jefferess 2012; Tarc 2012; Taylor 2012). This way, global citizens are believed to have "the ability to act, and specifically to 'make a better world' *for* .… others" (Jefferess 2012, p. 29) by 'reaching down and uplifting the less advantaged.' Some scholars implicitly and explicitly posit that although this action is helpful in some way, it may not actually make a significant social change; rather it may end up perpetuating extant unequal power relations and social injustices (Cook 2012; Jefferess 2012; Tarc 2012). For this reason, at least from a post-colonial perspective, global citizens should extend their action from charitable work to critiquing socio-political structures that give rise to social injustices or to uncovering the "systems and structures that produce poverty and suffering" (Jefferess 2012, p. 38). In turn, this approach, despite its possible positive effects, from Buddhist perspectives, should also be carefully considered because "deconstructing or destroying things does not mean something better will necessarily come about. Condemning things does not necessarily require insight or fortitude" (Mukpo 2013, p. 37).

For Buddhists, social transformation must be both an external and internal path. In other words, it must be grounded in two pillars; namely external actions or actions toward things seemingly independent of the self *and* internal actions or actions to transform our own mind (Hattam 2004; Jones 1989). Even social transformation must *begin* with or be *primarily* conditioned by the transformation of the mind, both individual and collective, that has to do with liberating ourselves from the illusion of a separate self and resulting endless desires to solidify the ego-self (Jones 1989; Loy 2003). Notably, the futile effort to fulfill insatiable ego-based thirsts, within the Buddhist worldview, gives rise to greed, hatred, delusion, and other unhealthy emotions which, in turn, bring about human suffering (Loy 2003; Nhat Hanh 1998; Rahula 1959). Especially, at the collective level, through a

Buddhist lens, "[s]ociety can be nothing other than a product of mind. Because our minds are under the influence of a powerful illusion, society must in large part be 'delusion institutionalized' (Jones 1989:69)" (Hattam 2004, p. 260). Thus, society cannot be radically transformed if our inner actions are not prioritized. Indeed, according to Buddhist social theorist David Loy (2003):

> If we have not begun to transform our own greed, ill will, and delusion, our efforts to address their institutionalized forms are a likely to be useless, or worse. We may have some success in challenging the sociopolitical order, but that will not lead to an awakened society. Recent history provides us with many examples of revolutionary leaders, often well intentioned, who eventually reproduce the evils they fought against. In the end, one gang of thugs has been replaced by another. (p. 35)

However, inner action does not merely mean liberation from suffering brought about by ego-centric desires. It also means continuous cultivation of compassion and wisdom, which is the gateway to not only individual enlightenment but also social and global enlightenment. To do this, first and above all, we should have *faith* and *confidence* in our individual and collective good nature (Nhat Hanh 2006, 2007; Mukpo 2013). At least at the individual level, Nhat Hanh (2007) explains, "[w]hen you have the energy of faith in you, you are strong … the word *faith* [emphasis original] is better translated as "confidence" and "trust," because it is about something inside you and not directed toward something external" (p. 15). He continues:

> If we look carefully, we can see that the energy of awakening, compassion, and understanding is already there inside us. Recognizing these energies as an inherent part of your very being, you have confidence in these energies. And if you know how to practice, you can generate these energies to protect yourselves and to succeed in what you do. (p. 16)

These positive energies are probably what Buddhist teacher Mukpo (2013) calls "basic goodness" (p. 26). He maintains that "[u]nlike information, basic goodness cannot be transmitted, but only pointed out. The heart must wake up to what is already there. When we recognize and trust our primordial nature, we have confidence" (p. 26). Like with the individual, society also has its basic goodness:

> It [society] has also been described as "a friendly association" because just as the nature of humanity is basic goodness, society's natural energy is care and kindness. From that, the ceremony of enlightened society arises… A good society is a matter of individual minds self-empowering their instinctive goodness. (p. 79)

From this perspective, we would argue that heading towards an enlightened society and an enlightened globe, fundamentally we, as global citizens, should trust and help others recognize and trust this basic goodness of humanity. Certainly, we are not depicting a utopia with a naïve or superstitious mind. Reality has shown that since so many of us have deep "faith" in human "problems," then our society and our world are full of "problems," and consequently our life is nothing but a "problem-solving" trip. So, logically speaking, the other way around would also be true. Why do we have to begin our social transformation process with pity (for others), doubts, mistrust, and criticisms? Why do we not begin the process with trust in our individual and collective self-worth? If we have faith in our good nature and cultivate it, an enlightened society and globe will emerge.

In brief, as presented above, Buddhism offers another way of understanding social transformation by extending the meaning of action. Accordingly, action in Buddhism is an

all-encompassing concept requiring both internal and external practices. As noted, to facilitate our inner actions (and our outer actions as well), we must have deep faith in the good nature of humanity, of society, and of the whole world and continuously cultivate it. It's time for *each* of us, as a global citizen, to walk with dignity, with our head up, and with persistent confidence in our inherent great potential and hence in an emerging enlightened world.

Concluding Thoughts

In the final section above, we have witnessed Buddhist philosophies contributing to how we might collectively re-consider possibilities for personal and social transformation. It is now time to draw our paper to a close. Our paper has sought to recognize philosophy as an intercultural dialogue and philosophers of education as cultural and intercultural workers. We view this turn toward culturality and interculturality as a vital ethical imperative for the North American field of philosophy of education and for contemporary times. Developing an awareness of the inescapable influence of both tradition (our socio-culturally conditioned past) and prejudice (our present circumstances and agendas) on understanding and knowledge, and being open to, engaging with, and learning from diverse philosophies is one of the greatest *responsibilities and challenges* for philosophers as inter/cultural workers. However, it cannot be emphasized enough that it is a responsibility not only that we open ourselves to diverse worldviews but also that we do so responsively, from "basic goodness."

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