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Hermeneutics of Peace

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Abstract

Peace is one of the major concepts in political philosophy. Various schools in political philosophy and different political philosophers have presented different views about the ways that can help achieving peace among nations. In recent years, the idea of the "clash of civilization" has intensified efforts regarding the issue of peace. In this paper, it has been claimed that "dialogue among civilization" can be a very fruitful way towards peace. Relying upon the "Hermeneutics of Difference", cultural interaction through civilizational dialogue has been formulated as an alternative way for achieving peace.

Keywords: Interculturality, Dialogue, Peace, In-Between (Inzwischen), Dialogical Peace, Cultural Evolution, Civilizational Dialogue.

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Introduction

The concept of Peace cannot be confined to any particular discipline. Philosophy, political thought, theories of international relations, ethics and polemology, each have dealt with the notion of "peace" in their own particular way. What is common among all of them, however, is that they usually deal with the notion of peace in relation to the problem of war. In this paper, after a short review of the history of thought about the issue of war and peace, Nationalism and its relation to the notions of war and peace will be analyzed. In this regard cultural nationalism and its latest political manifestation, namely the idea of "the clash of civilizations" will be analyzed and then the idea of dialogical peace will be pursued.

Nationalism, War and Peace

Modern Nationalism

Unlike modern political thought that considers various factors as the origin of war, contemporary social and political thought consider nationalism as the origin of

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war. Giddens and Berlin both refer to various cases of political conflict and war originating from modern sense of nationhood. According to Giddens:

> Nationalism can be defined as shared feelings of attachment to symbols which identify the members of a given population as belonging to the same overall community. [And]...the global diffusion of the nation state has been accompanied by an ever increasing accumulation of the means of waging war in the hands of nation states.(Giddens, 1986, p.155)

Berlin has pinpointed the fact that the need to belong to a collectivity which goes back to Greeks has always been concomitant with the sense of confronting "the Other". Nationalist sense of belonging has always emphasized the difference between one group and its neighbors, the existence of tribal, cultural or national solidarity, and with it, a sense of difference from, often accompanied by active dislike or contempt for, groups with different customs and different real or mythical origins, and so was accepted as both accounting for and justifying national statehood (Berlin, 1982, p. 338).

Such a sense of difference has in recent years become the foundation of notions such as "the end of history" and "the clash of civilizations". In his article, "The Clash of Civilizations" Huntington (1993) has referred to the emergence of new cultural conflicts on the world arena. According to him, "clash of civilizations" is the last stage in the process of conflicts in modern history of the world. He defines "civilization" as "cultural units" and gives six reasons for "clash" among them.

Ethnonationalism and the War of Civilizations

One way of reading Huntington's paper is through the textual hermenuetics proposed by Ricouer and Skinner. According to Ricouer (1991), a text can be read as a written discourse. A written discourse has both common and particular characteristics when compared with the spoken discourse. Ricouer considers four "traits" constituting an speech as an event and a text as a written discourse.

Regarding a text as a "fixation" of "intentional exteriorization", Ricouer (1991) distinguishes between what is spoken in a speech and what is "said" in a text. According to him, what in effect writing fixes is not the event of speaking but the "said" of speaking, where we understand by the said of speaking that intentional exteriorization constitutive of the aim of discourse thanks to which the sagen, the saying, wants to become Aus-Sage, the enunciation, the enunciated. In short what we write, what we inscribe, is the noema of the speaking, It is the meaning of the speech event, not the event as event. (Ricouer, 1991, p. 146)

By referring to the three levels of the speech act, as locutionary, or "the act of saying", illocutionary, or "that which we do in saying", and perlocutionary, or "that which we do by saying", Ricoeur concentrates on the third level as "the least inscribale" and yet that which "is the discourse as stimulus". Ricouer, in his article "the hermenuetic function as distanciation", describes the perlocutionary level as having "direct influence upon the emotions and the affective dispositions"(Ricouer, 1991, p. 147). In his words, perlocutionary act,

> [B]eing primarily a charachteristic of oral discourse, is the least inscribable element. But the perlocutionary action is also the least discursive aspect of discourse: it is discourse qua stimulus. Here discourse operates not through the recognition of my intention by the interlocutor, but in an energetic mode, as it were, by direct influence upon the emotions and affective attitudes of the interlocutor (Ricouer., 1991, pp. 79-80).

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Ricouer, Therefore, Gives the Word Meaning

"A very broad connotation that covers all the aspects and levels of the intentional exteriorization that, in turn, renders possible the exteriorization of discourse in writing and in the work" (Ricouer., 1991, p. 80)

In a similar vain, Quinten Skinner (1988) has applied the speech-act theory to the study of texts and political ideas. By distinguishing "motives" from "intentions", he says:

> To know a writer's motives and intentions is to know the relationship in which he stands to what he has written. To know about the intentions is to know such facts as whether the writer was joking or serious or ironic or in general what speech-act he was performing. To know about motives is to know what prompted those particular speech-acts, quite apart from their character and truth status as utterances (Skinner, 1988, p. 73).

Skinner (1988), therefore, emphasizes "on the idea of the text as an object linked to its creator" and thus on what the creator of a text "may have been doing in creating it" (p.78). In order to do that he refers to two "general hermeneutic rules" for the "recovery" of a writer's intentions. His first rule is to

> focus not just on the text to be interpreted but on the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues or themes with which the text is concerned. This rule derives from the fact that any writer must standardly be engaged in an intended fact of communication (Skinner, p. 77).

Skinner considers this rule to be applied as a critical as well as an heuristic device, in order to test the plausibility of ascribing any particular intention to a writer in a particular work.

And, Skinner's "second rule" is to 'focus on the writer's mental world, the world of his empirical beliefs'.

Huntington's text, therefore, when read as Ricouer and Skinner have suggested, has a "world" and a "message". By reading Huntington's article, "The Clash of Civilizations", one can observe both the "world" and the "message" constituting his text. Huntington's "world" is clearly described by him in the form of "reasons" for the "clash" among civilizations. The first reason, in his view, is the existence of "basic" differences amongst various civilizations. The Second reason is "the diminishing of the world". The third reason is the experiencing of economic modernization that has led to the social alienation of people around the world. The fourth reason is the emergence of a kind of civilizational consciousness emerging out of the dual impact of the west, namely the powerfulness of the west and the cultural particularism of non-Western societies. Huntington's fifth reason is cultural differences, which are cause for disharmony amongst cultures. The last reason is regional economic integration (Huntington, 1993, pp. 22-29). Huntington expresses this view of the world as that in which

> the fundamental source of conflict... will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. ... The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault line of civilizations will be the battle line of the future (Huntington, 1993, p. 22).

With such a view of the world, Huntington enters into a discourse in a written form and gives a message by his perlocutionary act of ultimatum. Huntington's message can be read all throughout his article. In a way, this message of ultimatum has permeated the article which is pre-structured by his view of the world. His world is that of a threatened subject and his message is an ultimatum to the "threatening" other; his fundamental concerns is that:

"a west at the peak of power confronts non-West that increasingly has the desire, the will and the resources to

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shape the world in non-Western ways" (Huntington, 1993, p. 26).

Huntington then makes it clearer as to what he means by the "non-West"; according to him,

> as the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has emerged (Huntington, 1993, p. 30).

He then expresses his thought through a speech-act of a threatening ultimatum; he says:

> The west is now at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations .... . The very phrase "the world community" has become the euphemistic collective noun replacing the free world to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the United States and other western powers (Huntington, p. 39).

Then he adds:

The central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be, in Kishore Mahbubani's phrase, the conflict between "the West and the Rest" and the responses of non-Western civilizations to western power and values" (Huntington, p. 41).

So, as Huntington can see it, "a new form of arm competition is thus occurring between Islamic–Confucian states and the West." Therefore, he concludes his argument by the final ultimatum:

> In the short term it is clearly in the interest of the West to promote greater cooperation and unity within its own civilization ..., to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Islamic states; to moderate the reduction of Western military capabilities and maintain military superiority in East and Southwest Asia; to exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states; to support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests; to strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western Interests and values and to promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions (Huntington, p. 49).

As such, therefore, "the clash of civilizations" is the ultimate outcome of the existing situation as seen by Huntington. Therefore, the notion of "clash" is the talk of the ultimate; the ultimate "clash" for the ultimate "result".

The thought of ultimatum is the metaphysics of the "ultimate" and the "ultimate" is the naming by the metaphysical power-subject. Ultimatum is an speech-act saturated with power and spoken by the subject of superiority in power relations. Therefore, the talk of "clash" is the ultimate word in the metaphysical language of will to power. Such language of threat and ultimatum is rooted in Hobbsian atomism and its monological epistemology. In Hobbsian vision everyone is threatened by others and is mediated to them by power. Such self-understanding is the extension of an atomistic and mechanical-empirical conception of the world. Therefore, man's self-understanding is affected by power. Huntington's "reasons", as regards the "inevitability" of the clash among civilizations, are actually cases of behaviorist "reasoning" applied to the arena of intercultural relations. Indeed, the theory of "the clash of civilizations" is the new-global plane entered in by the behaviorist theory of Modernization. However, unlike its previous forms of speech-act, in which Modernization theory tended to prescribe to other (non-western) societies the way for "development", now it threatens other (non-western) civilizations to extinction.

Unlike Huntington, who has associated culture (or civilization) to war, there are theoretical arguments which clearly associate culture to peace. In "the world conference of cultural policies", held by UNESCO in

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Mexico City in 1982, the notion of peace defined by Benito Hoarez was upheld. According to Hoarez, peace is relationship among various people and is equal to the respect for the cultural "other". As such, peace is attainable in the world through the expansion of "cultural relations". A similar view has been articulated in Mitchel's "cultural diplomacy". According to him, cultural language can be in the service of a friendly diplomacy. The relationship between culture and peace has been dealt with in Freud's notion of "cultural evolution". The question, however, is how such a relationship between culture and peace can be actualized. Differential Hermeneutics is a possible answer to this question.

B - "Differential Hermeneutics"

According to hermeneutic philosophy, understanding (verstehen) is pre-structured in the world in which we live with others. From the Hermeneutic perspective these pre-structures make up one's being. The problem, however, is our alienation from what has made us up and is making us. It is like an alien (atopan) that is ignored. Hermeneutic tends towards familiarization of what has remained alien. Such familiarization is the result of Andersverstehen, "understanding differently". This understanding is not just consensus or repeating something after the other, but amounts to "a willingness to enter the border zone or interstices between self and other" (Dallmayr, 1996, p. 47). In fact this understanding can be attained only at "the risk of self-critique and self-decentering" (p. 47). The result of this understanding, in Gadamer's view, is the intertwining of Difference and Identity:

Difference exists within Identity; otherwise, identity would not be identity (Dallmayr, p. 49).

As such, hermeneutics is:

"[A] process of reciprocal questioning at the intersection between self and other, between familiarity and strangeness (Dallmayr, 2000, p. 831)".

Liberation from alienation is therefore possible through the familiarization of the atopan (the alien) which is a – part (both a part and apart) from/of us. The sphere of this familiarization is, however, "in-between". As Gadamer puts it: "The true locus of Hermeneutics is in-between" (Gadamer, 1989, pp. 295-307). This process of familiarization, however, can take place on the cultural level through a process of "double injection" referred to by Derrida (Dallmayr, 1996, p. 57). Derrida, on the one hand, rejects "cultural assimilation" and, on the other hand, warns of "cultural narcissism". Difference, hence is kernel to a hermeneutics of cultural identity. For Derrida, "what is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself."(Dallmayr, p. 58). This differential hermeneutics of self identity is possible through the sphere of "in-between":

"Life-world is surely given, it is given to me and to us, but in such a way that it is cogiven with whatsoever may be given at all" (Waldenfels, 1998, p. 73).

The co-givenness of the life-world is, however, not confined to the intracultural level:

A part from [the] intracultural articulation of the life-world, we have to take into consideration intercultural worlds varying historically and geographically (Waldenfels, 1998, p. 75).

In other words, the life world is inclusive of distances both within and between cultures. A similar view is presented by Wim Van Brinsbergen by the notion of "intercultural philosophy". According to him intercultural philosopher is primarily

> a mediator, striving towards an empirically underpinned and practically applicable theory of cultural mediation. ... Interculturality always presupposes a medium which cannot be relegated to any of the cultural orientations which are being mediated within it; this opens up an immense space for manoeuvring. On the other

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hand an empirical orientation means that we limited ourselves in this space, not only by explicit and intersubjective procedures, but also by a critical awareness of our on epistemology and of its globally available alternatives. In this context there are enormous challenges and potentials for intercultural philosophy (Wim Van Brinsbergen, p. 2).

Van Brinsbergen then invokes Dialogue in relation to intercultural philosophy and asserts that

> The dialogue is not only one of the oldest philosophical genres, it is also a form of communication which has established itself in the modern, and especially the postmodern, world as the most ideal form: with assumptions of equal contributions from both sides, equal initiative, equal rights, for the participants in the dialogue. One tends to assume that, from a pluralistic perceptive, the dialogue offers the best possible conditions for revealing the relevant aspects of a matter, perhaps even revealing truth itself. The word dialogue is often mentioned in the same breadth as the word intercultural (Wim Van Brinsbergen, 1999, p. 3)

Such inclusiveness can be conceived and understood by a "diatopical hermeneutics", which, in Raimondo Panikkar's word is:

> [T]he required method of interpretation when the distance to overcome, needed for any understanding, is not just a distance within one single culture or a temporal one, but rather the distance between two (or more) cultures, which have independently developed in different spaces (topoi) their own modes of philosophizing and ways of reaching intelligibility along with their proper categories. (Panikkar, in Dallmayr, 1996, p. 61)

So, unlike Huntington's global atomism, which leads to clash in a global level, Hermeneutic begins with the differential co-being as the ontology of human-being-in-the world; an ontology which is extended to global level. In a way here we can think of an "ontological difference" between being-antagonistic and co-being. This conception of human being, however, is itself rooted in Herder's conception of humanness which is not geo-culturally confined. This conception "constitutes a bulwark against the relentless standardization of the world" (Dallmayr, 1996, p. 55). Standardization of self-understanding is in accord with the Cartesian ethnosubjectivism coupled with Hobbsian atomism and conjoined with realpolitik, in which:

Whatever exceeds the confines of sovereign cogito must either be appropriated / assimilated, or else be excluded and controlled (Dallmayr, 2000, p. 829).

What is lacking in such perspective is the possibility of the experiencing of "reason's exposure to what is unfamiliar or alien" (Dallmayr, 2000).

In contrast to such vision, and in accordance with "Hermeneutics of Difference" in Gadamer's thought:

> [I]t is completely mistaken to infer that reason is fragmented because there are various languages. Just the opposite is the case. Precisely through our finitude, the particularity of our being which is evident even in the variety of language the infinite dialogue is opened in the direction of the truth that we are (Gadamer, 1977, p. 16).

Indeed, such Heideggerian perspective seeks the common root of the harmony of languages through an inter-civilizational perspective. This perspective is succinctly described by Mehta as:

[H]aving climbed back to the source from which western metaphysical thought has sprung up, [Heidegger] not only finds in this source a wellspring hidden in itself much that has remained the Unthought through sustaining foundation of Western philosophy, but, taking the step back, leaps from this point into a

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region which is above the opposition of East and west, beyond the clash of traditions and the conflict of religions. This region of all regions, suspended in itself, is itself above all regional loyalties and the Babel of conflicting tongs.(Mehta, 1976, p. 463)

According to Heidegger, then, thinking can lead to the unconcealment (aletheia, "unverborgenheit") of our being-human, now buried under an antagonistic self-assertion which has permeated the life-world (Lebenswelt) both within and between cultural-civilizational sphere of our existence; an existence which forbids the possibilities of our selfhood. We, therefore can be what we, as authentic selfs, are, only through the realization of the existential link (Bezug) which is now buried (verborgen) by instrumentalization of language in all levels (Heidegger, 1971, pp.165-183). Such "link" can in fact insure a more peaceful world for human existance. In Gadamer's word:

> The future survival of humankind may depend on our readiness ... to pause in front of the other's otherness-the otherness of nature as well as that of historically grown cultures of peoples and states. In this way we may learn to experience otherness and human others as the 'other of ourselves' in order to partake in one another (Gadamer, Das Erbe Europa, p. 31-34. In, Dallmayr, 1996, p. 53).

One can therefore, in agreement with Fred Dallmayr say that any dialogue needs to be "both intra-and inter-civicizational", so that linkages can be established "across both historical and geographical boundaries" (Dallmayr, 2001.p. 72).

Such dialogue can facilitate true "diminishing of the world" by closing the distances which seem inevitable from a monological perspective . This is when the globe becomes truly globalized. This would help us to follow the "path" towards what Dallmayr would call "grassroots globalization or globalization from below", which means:

"the attempt to forge or build up the global city through the interaction of cultures and peoples from around the world" (Dallmayr, 1999, p. 330).

Conclusion

Whereas ultimatum, as a form of monological speaking, is a concealing speech-act, in a cultural monologue it is double concealment. Because it re-conceals what is already concealed. Reconciliation, however, can un-conceal what is concealed. Reconciliation means hearing differentially, which means listening to the voice of the other by entering the in-between of the "dialogue". Cultural dialogue makes global reconciliation possible; therefore, what is distant comes to the nearness (nahe). Therefore, by bridging the distance between civilizational selfhood and otherness, global "gathering" is experienced. Such bridging is possible through dialogue. So, unlike monologue and ultimatum, which is destructive distancing, dialogue is constructive gathering.

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