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The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.

—Jane Addams



WORLD PEACE IN TRUTH

Mortimer J. Adler

The prospects for a world community and world peace are necessarily linked to a prior question concerning cultural unity. And cultural unity is itself linked to an even more basic question concerning the unity of man and the unity of truth. My conviction about the latter—the unity of man and the unity of truth—is generated by three theses. The first is that the human race is a single biological species, renewed generation after generation by the reproductive determinations of a single gene pool. Hence, man is one in nature; that is, in specific nature. All individual members of the species have the same species-specific properties or characteristics.

The second thesis is that, the human race being one, the human mind is also one. I am here using the word “mind” to signify the

complex of cognitive and ratiocinative powers and propensities that, when exercised, result in human thought and knowledge, in social institutions, and in the productions of the arts and technology. The human mind, thus understood, is a species-specific property: it is to be found in every individual member of the species, and it is the same in all.

The fact that mind, in the sense indicated, is subject to variations in degree (some individuals having its constituent powers to a higher, some to a lower degree), does not in any way negate the proposition that the same powers, to whatever degree, are possessed by all human beings. However, the truth of this thesis does preclude the notion that there is, within the human species, a primitive mind that is characteristically different from a civilized mind, an Oriental mind that is characteristically different from an Occidental one, or even a child mind that differs in kind, not just degree, from an adult one.

What I have just said is, I take it, the fundamental thesis of a movement called “structuralism,” which has a current vogue but which, if I understand it correctly, is based on an insight that can hardly be regarded as novel, however novel may be the particular psychological discoveries of Jean Piaget and the particular anthropological discoveries of Claude Levi-Strauss, from which the movement draws its inspiration.

My third thesis is that world peace is an ultimate desideratum—not as an end in itself but rather as an indispensable means or condition prerequisite to the achievement of a good human life by all human beings in some future generation.

I must now add three propositions to that third thesis:

- That world peace is impossible without world government.
- That world government is impossible to establish and, even if established, would not long endure and prosper without world community.
- That world community requires a certain degree of cultural unity or unity of civilization, a condition that certainly does not exist at present.

In the light of these initial theses and the propositions attendant upon the third, I can now state the problem. It concerns the kind

and degree of cultural unity required for world community as a basis for world government and world peace. It involves two questions. One asks, how much cultural diversity should and will persist after enough cultural unity is achieved to create a world community? Stated another way, how much cultural diversity is compatible with the unity of man and the unity of truth? The second question follows: What kind of cultural unity is demanded by the unity of truth, and what kind of cultural diversity is precluded?

Both questions refer to the unity of truth. While some may agree with my first thesis about the unity of man, and even with its immediate consequence—the unity of the human mind—they may justly wonder whether I have not slipped a ringer into the discussion by adding the unity of truth as a third term to that pair. I will explain that third term and try to show that it is inseparable from the other two, the unity of man and the unity of the human mind.

Before I do so, I must say something more about the fact that the cultural unity or unity of civilization that is indispensable to world community does not exist at present and has never existed in the past. Cultural diversities that have divided and still divide mankind include the following dichotomies: Greek vs. barbarian; the Middle Kingdom vs. barbarian; Jew vs. Gentile; Christian vs. infidel; civilized vs. primitive man; and East vs. West or West vs. East. In all such divisions, one side claims to possess truth and light, and the other is regarded as being in error and in outer darkness. As long as such divisions persist, a world civilization or culture and a world community will not come into existence.

Can those divisions be overcome? And, if so, how shall they be overcome? That is the problem we face. As I see it, the key to the solution of this problem lies *in principle* in the unity of truth; and that term added to the unity of man and the unity of the human mind, constitute, as I said, an indissoluble triad.

Now what do I mean by the unity of truth? To begin with, I had better say a word about truth itself.

In the history of Western thought a profound understanding of truth has prevailed from the time of Plato and Aristotle to the present. This understanding rests upon a single supposition; namely, that there exists, quite independent of the human mind, a reality which the human mind thinks about and tries to know. On that supposition, the truth consists in our thinking that that which is, is; and that that which is not, is not. Our thinking is in error when

we think that that which is, is not; or that that which is not, is. In the field of veracity and prevarication, we tell the truth when we say what we believe or think, and we tell a lie when we say the opposite of what we think or believe. This led Josiah Royce to quip that a liar is a person who willfully misplaces his ontological predicates, putting “is” where he should put “is not,” or the reverse. In contrast to the liar, a person honestly in error is one who unintentionally misplaces his ontological predicates; and the correction of error consists in getting them straight—saying “is” where “is” is required, and “is not” where “is not” is required.

Thus defined, the human mind has a grasp on the truth to whatever extent the judgments it makes agree with or conform to reality—that is, to the way things are or are not. To say this does not involve us in claiming that the human mind has a firm, final, and incorrigible grasp on any truth, though I personally think that there is a relatively small number of self-evident truths on which our grasp is firm, final, and incorrigible. However that may be, we must acknowledge that truth is in principle attainable, even though we may never in fact actually attain it. If truth were not attainable, it would be unreasonable for us to engage in the pursuit of truth. That pursuit would be futile and self-defeating if, in the course of it, we did not manage to achieve approximations to the truth—statements that, while not indubitably true, are nearer to the truth, better than, truer than the statements that they correct and replace.

To this conception of the truth—whether fully possessed or only approximated—I must add one other insight that, again, is typically Western. It is related to the supposition which, as I said, underlies the conception of truth as consisting in the mind’s agreement with reality, the supposition, namely, that there is a reality independent of the mind with which the mind’s judgments can agree or disagree. The additional insight expands that supposition to include the point that this independent reality is determinate. Either a particular thing exists or it does not exist; either it has a certain characteristic or it does not have a certain characteristic. It cannot both be and not be at one and the same time; it cannot have and not have a certain characteristic at one and the same time.

If such determinateness did not obtain in reality, it would follow that the statement that something *is* the case and the statement that it *is not* the case could both be true at the same time. If, according to our conception of truth, both of two contradictory statements (one asserting “is” and the other “is not”) cannot be true at the same time, the determinateness of reality must be presupposed. In

short, the principle of noncontradiction holds for both thought and reality, and it holds for thought because it holds for reality.

(To this I must add the parenthetical observation that, in the controversy between Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr over quantum theory, Einstein was, in my judgment, philosophically sounder than Bohr. The Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy has epistemological, not ontological, significance. It should be interpreted as indicating the indeterminacy of our measurements in subatomic physics, not the indeterminacy of reality in that area. The fact that we cannot assign an equally definite position and velocity to an electron in motion does not mean that the electron lacks a completely definite position and velocity.)

With this conception of truth and with the principle of noncontradiction as an essential part of it, I can now explain what I mean by the unity of truth. It is merely an extension, but nonetheless a very important extension, of the principle of noncontradiction. To affirm the unity of truth is to deny that there can be two separate and irreconcilable truths which, while contradicting one another and thought to be irreconcilably contradictory, avoid the principle of noncontradiction by claiming to belong to logic-tight compartments. Thus, for example, one approach to the conflict between religion and philosophy, or between science and either philosophy or religion, is to claim that these are such separate spheres of thought or inquiry, employing such different methods or having such different means of access to the truth, that the principle of noncontradiction does not apply. One thing can be true in religious belief and quite another thing, though contradictory of it, can be true in scientific or philosophical thought.

This approach was taken by one of the great Arabic philosophers of the Middle Ages. Replying to a work by Al-Ghazzali called *The Destruction of Philosophy*, which rejected certain Aristotelian teachings that contradicted basic truths of the Muslim faith, Averroes wrote *The Destruction of the Destruction*, in which he argued that there can be two separate truths—one in religion and one in philosophy—even though they plainly contradict one another. This Averroist doctrine was later rebutted by St. Thomas Aquinas in a famous medieval disputation in which he defended the unity of truth by arguing persuasively that there cannot be two separate truths that are irreconcilable, no matter how separate their provinces, methods, or sources may be. In effect, he delivered the destruction of the destruction; and in my judgment he won the argument.

Let me ask you now to follow the argument that develops the consequences of maintaining the unity of truth. By doing so, you may either become persuaded or discover reasons for thinking that Averroes may have been right and Aquinas wrong. You may, in the light of the consequences, think that, rather than accept them, it is better to reject the ultimate presuppositions upon which the unity of truth rests. The criteria of truth and falsity do not apply to all areas of human culture, but wherever they do apply, there we should expect the unity of truth to prevail and be troubled if it does not. By the same token, in the area of matters to which the criteria of truth and falsity do not apply, cultural diversity is fitting and proper. Two examples, drawn from opposite extremes of the scale, will illustrate this basic distinction.

On the one hand, mathematics is an area in which the criteria of truth and falsity are universally thought to apply, and it is also an area in which the transcultural character of truth is universally acknowledged. On the other hand, cuisine is a matter of taste, not of truth, and so in matters of cuisine we expect and are not at all troubled by cultural diversity. It is appropriate to speak of French, Italian, and Chinese cuisines and to express a preference for one or another that we do not expect others to share; but it is not appropriate to speak of French, Italian, or Chinese mathematics (except in a purely historical sense). Any mathematical theorem or demonstration that is true commands an assent that transcends all national and cultural divisions.

I have just said that in whatever sphere of human judgment it is proper to apply the criteria of truth and falsity, we can and should expect agreement about what is true or false to transcend all the national and cultural divisions of mankind. I must add at once that such agreement may exist in different degrees. There is a stronger and a weaker bond of agreement. The stronger, which I will call “doctrinal agreement” exists when, at a given time, those who are competent to judge agree about what is to be regarded as true, or at least a better approximation to the truth, and expect the propositions thus regarded to receive universal assent until better—truer—propositions are advanced. The weaker, which I will call “dialectical agreement,” exists when those who are competent to judge disagree about what is to be regarded as true, but who, nevertheless, being persuaded that the truth is in principle attainable, are at least united in their acceptance of certain logical procedures for resolving their doctrinal disagreements and thus carrying on cooperatively the pursuit of truth.

There are two cultural areas in which we have universally acknowledged the existence of a large measure of doctrinal agreement. They are mathematics and the experimental sciences, together with their applications in technology. There are two other cultural areas in which doctrinal agreement does not exist, not even within the single cultural tradition of the West; *a fortiori*, certainly not in the world, embracing four or five distinct cultural traditions in the Far East as well as that of Western civilization. I have in mind the areas of religion and of philosophy, including moral and political philosophy as well as natural philosophy and metaphysics. The question, to which I will return presently, is whether in these two areas it is appropriate to apply the criteria of truth and falsity and, therefore, to expect agreement in at least its weaker form. If not, then religion and philosophy fall across the line that divides the cultural areas to which the criteria of truth and falsity apply and those to which they do not. Religion and philosophy then become like those matters in which the criterion of taste rather than truth is applicable—such matters as conventions or customs, languages, dress and cooking, social manners, and the fine arts. Since there is no disputing about matters of taste, we cannot even expect dialectical agreement in the sphere of our judgments about the fine arts any more than we can expect it in the sphere of our preferences with regard to cuisines.

The question, I repeat, is, on which side of the line of demarcation do religion, metaphysics, and morals fall? Do they belong with mathematics and experimental science on that side of the line where the criteria of truth and falsity are applicable? Or do they belong with aesthetic judgments and preferences as to cuisine, dress, and manners on that side of the line where there is no disputing matters of taste, and cultural diversity should be expected to prevail?

There may be matters which *appear* to straddle the line of demarcation between the unity and universality of truth and the plurality and singularity of tastes. Prudential judgments in the sphere of morals may be matters of this sort, partaking both of the objective and the subjective. So, too, in the sphere of social institutions, customs and positive laws may have both a natural basis and a conventional or voluntary determination and so may partake of the universality of the natural and necessary as well as the singularity of the conventional and contingent.

However, whatever is infected, even in the slightest degree, with singularity or subjectivity falls on the side of taste rather than on

the side of truth. In terms of the controlling question with which we are here concerned (namely, what elements of unity should we expect or demand in a culture and what latitude should be allowed for cultural pluralism?), those elements of a culture that are *partly* matters of taste as well as those elements that are *wholly* matters of taste are matters about which we should tolerate cultural pluralism. Pluralism is intolerable only with respect to matters that are *wholly* or *purely* matters of truth, e.g., mathematics.

If the criteria of truth and falsity are not applicable to philosophy and religion, we have no troublesome problem to solve; for, as they are then no different from such matters as cuisine, dress, and the fine arts, we can and should expect pluralism or diversity rather than unity to prevail with respect to them, not only as between East and West, but also within the Western tradition itself. If religion or philosophy is nothing but “a way of life,” as it is sometimes said, or if it has no cognitive character or basis, then why should there not be as great a diversity of religions or philosophies on earth as there are cuisines, habits of dress, or languages? We do have a problem, however, and an extremely difficult one, if philosophy and religion claim to be true in the same sense that mathematics and experimental science claim that truth is in varying measures approximated and, at least in principle, fully attainable in their spheres of thought and inquiry.

Let us make the assumption that presents us with a problem. Let us assume that philosophy and religion do claim cognitive status for themselves, i.e., aspire to be knowledge and, therefore, subject themselves to the criteria of truth and falsity. What consequences follow from this assumption?

On that assumption, mathematics and science are necessarily only part of the whole truth—the truth that we seek to learn about the world, about nature, society, and man. On that assumption, philosophy and religion constitute additional portions or segments of the whole of the truth to be attained. Now, staying within the boundaries of Western civilization or culture, the principle of the unity of truth entails the consequence that the several parts of the one whole of the truth to be attained must coherently fit together. As we have already seen, there cannot be irreconcilable contradictions between one segment of the whole of truth and another. What is regarded as true in philosophy and religion must not conflict with what is regarded as true in science.

Moreover, since it is only in the spheres of mathematics and experimental science that doctrinal agreement has been achieved in large measure, if not completely, the truths agreed upon in those areas *at a given time* test the claims to truth that are made in philosophy and religion—areas in which doctrinal agreement has not been achieved to any appreciable degree. In other words, a particular religious belief or philosophical view must be rejected as false if, at a given time, it comes into conflict with the scientific truths agreed upon at that time. It is worth noting that two of the greatest philosophers and theologians in the Western tradition—Augustine and Aquinas—fully accepted this mandate, and they did so because they fully accepted the principle of the unity of truth and regarded the criteria of truth and falsity as applicable to philosophy and religion.

To say that there is one whole of truth, all the parts of which most coherently and consistently fit together, does not preclude the parts from being different from one another in a variety of ways—with respect to the objects with which they are concerned, with respect to the methods by which inquiry is conducted, and with respect to the sources or bases of the truth being sought. The truth being sought may be about numbers or justice, about natural phenomena or God; the truth being pursued may be sought by investigative procedures or by armchair reflection, by ratiocinative processes, by intuition, or even by mystical contemplation; its sources may lie in experience or in revelation. No matter how diverse may be the objects, methods, and sources involved in the different parts of truth, they all remain, nevertheless, parts of one whole, and as such they must coherently and consistently fit together.

So far, as I indicated above, I have stayed within the boundaries of Western civilization. Now let us broaden the scope of our discussion to include the whole of mankind—all human cultures, East and West. Wherever the fruits of technology are used or enjoyed, the truth of science and mathematics is acknowledged. The fruits of technology are now used or enjoyed all over the world—in the East as well as in the West. It follows, therefore, that the truth of science and mathematics is acknowledged all over the world. It is the only part of the whole of truth that is common to East and West. The same mandate that has been operative within the Western tradition should, therefore, be operative when we go beyond the Western tradition and consider the philosophies and religions of the East as well as the philosophies and religions of the West.

Just as, within the Western tradition, the truths of mathematics and science that are agreed upon at a given time have been employed as the test for accepting or rejecting Western religious beliefs or philosophical views, so, in exactly the same way, they should be employed as the test for accepting or rejecting Eastern religious beliefs or philosophical views. The principle that whatever is inconsistent or incompatible with the truths of mathematics and science that are agreed upon *at a given time* must, *at that time*, be rejected as false is universally applicable—to Eastern as well as to Western culture. Its universal applicability is assured by the universal acceptance of the fruits of technology. This presupposes a universal assent to the truths of mathematics and science from which the products of technology are derived.

The only way in which this consequence can be avoided is to remove Eastern religions and philosophies from the picture by regarding them as making no cognitive claims at all, i.e., by putting them along with cuisines, manners, and the fine arts on the other side of the line of demarcation that divides those areas of human culture to which the criteria of truth and falsity are applicable and those areas which are concerned with matters of taste rather than truth.

Still proceeding on the assumption that philosophy and religion are areas of human culture to which the criteria of truth and falsity are applicable, let us now remember the distinction made earlier between the strong and weak form in which agreement in regard to truth may exist. It will help us in dealing with the problem of the diversity of philosophies and religions, not only in the West but in the world, including the various Eastern cultures as well as the civilization of the West.

The strong form, let me remind you, consists in doctrinal agreement at a given time among all those competent to judge the matters in question. The weak form consists in dialectical agreement; that is, in agreement about the logical principles and procedures by which doctrinal disagreements are to be resolved. This distinction between a doctrinal and a dialectical unity of men engaged in the pursuit of truth is very much like the distinction between substantive and procedural justice. Where we disagree about points of substantive justice, we must at least agree about the procedural justice of our appeal to due process of law as the way to resolve our substantive differences. Just as our agreement on the principles of procedural justice unifies us in our efforts to resolve our disagreements about points of substantive justice, so our agreement about the intellec-

tual procedures for dealing with doctrinal disagreements about what is true or false unifies us in our efforts to pursue the truth. We are all at least engaged in a single universe of discourse. We are talking to one another in ways that can be fruitful, rather than isolated from one another by barriers that make conversation futile.

Now with regard to philosophy—philosophy, but not religion—we have achieved in the West the requisite dialectical agreement to a large degree. For the most part—though not without exceptions—doctrinal disagreements among Western philosophers fall within one and the same universe of discourse. They are engaged in dialogue with one another, and that dialogue is carried on in accordance with certain common rules of procedure—a common set of logical principles and standards. In addition, the dialogue is for the most part carried on with a common aim; namely, to resolve doctrinal differences or disagreements and to achieve an approximation to philosophical truth about which there can be doctrinal agreement, as there is a large measure of doctrinal agreement about the truth of mathematics or experimental science at a given time. Even if doctrinal agreement is never achieved in philosophy to the same extent that it has been in mathematics and experimental science, it is at least regarded as, *in principle*, attainable.

When we turn from the West to the whole world, and particularly to the Far Eastern cultures in their relation to one another as well as to the West, the situation is not the same. There is not one dialogue being carried on, nor one universe of discourse embracing all who are engaged in the pursuit of philosophical truth. Dialectical unity does not exist as between East and West; nor for that matter does it exist between any one of the major Eastern cultures and any of the others. The reason why it does not exist may be that none of the Eastern cultures claims truth for its philosophical doctrines. If that is the case, then, as I have said before, there is no problem. Eastern philosophies, unlike Western philosophies, must then be regarded as matters of taste rather than truth. They do not conflict with one another or with Western philosophical thought in a way that requires resolution, any more than differences in cuisine conflict with one another and require resolution.

However, if the several Eastern cultures regard philosophy as an area in which the criteria of truth and falsity are applicable, and if the criteria are operative in the same way in philosophy as they are in science and mathematics, then it must be possible to establish a measure of dialectical agreement, as between East and West as well as between the several Eastern cultures, a measure sufficient to

make some progress toward resolving the doctrinal disagreements that exist.

Let me repeat the point that constitutes the nerve of my argument. The fruits of technology are now universally put to use. This confirms the universal acknowledgment of a worldwide transcultural doctrinal agreement about the best approximations to truth that we have made so far in mathematics and experimental science. That doctrinal agreement involves an agreement about the rules of logic and of discourse which enable men to pursue the truth co-operatively and to resolve their doctrinal disagreements. The logic of science and of mathematics is, like science and mathematics, global, not Western. Though the method of philosophy may not be the same as that of mathematics or science, the basic framework of logic is the same. A contradiction is a contradiction whether it occurs in philosophy, in mathematics, or in science. Unchecked equivocation in the use of words generates fallacious arguments, whether in philosophy, in science, or mathematics. And so on. This is my basis for saying that at least a dialectical agreement should be achievable on a worldwide scope in the sphere of philosophy. I said “achievable.” It does not exist at present to any appreciable degree.

The problem of religion is more difficult than that of philosophy. First of all, we have no problem at all if religion does not claim to involve knowledge and is not concerned with the true and the false. If, however, it claims to involve knowledge then we must face the further question whether it is indistinguishable from philosophy as a branch of natural knowledge, or regards itself as quite distinct from philosophy and all other branches of natural knowledge because it and it alone has its source in divine revelation, accepted by an act of faith that is itself divinely caused. In the latter case, religion claims to be supernatural knowledge—knowledge that man has only as a gift from God. In contrast, natural knowledge, in all its branches, consists of knowledge that man acquires by the exercise of the powers of observation and thought with which he is naturally endowed.

Parallel to this difference in the way that religion is viewed when it is regarded as involving knowledge is the difference in the way that it is viewed when it is regarded as leading man to his ultimate salvation—on earth or hereafter. Either religion consists of a code of conduct that can be formulated and followed by man’s own unaided efforts, and hence it does not differ in any way from a philosophically developed code of ethics; or religion, through ritual

and sacrament, affords men access to help from God—help that is indispensable to man if he is to achieve salvation, in which case religion as a way of life is as distinct from a merely human code of ethics as, in the sphere of thought, religion as supernatural knowledge is distinct from philosophy.

In their orthodox forms, the three great religions of the West—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—all claim to be knowledge based on divine revelation and all promise God's help in achieving salvation. With the possible exception of the religion of the Sikhs, this cannot be said of any of the great religions of the East. The religions of the East are indistinguishable from philosophical doctrines and codes of conduct. If they are in conflict with one another on essential points, they cannot all be true. If their beliefs are in conflict with the truths of mathematics and of science, they must be rejected. If, on the philosophical plane to which the Eastern religions belong, the views they espouse are in conflict with the views advanced in Western philosophical doctrines, that doctrinal disagreement should be ultimately resolvable, but only if all the conflicting views can be embraced within a single universe of discourse; that is, only if the dialectical agreement that does not now exist between East and West can be established in a measure sufficient to make progress toward the resolution of doctrinal disagreements.

In other words, if the religions of the Far East are indistinguishable from philosophy, then they raise no special problem. We are confronted with a special problem only in the case of the Western religions that claim to have a supernatural foundation in divine revelation and that promise supernatural help in the achievement of salvation. In that case, dialectical agreement cannot serve as a basis for making an effort to resolve doctrinal disagreements. In that case, even though religion claims to be a matter of truth rather than of taste, dogmatic religious differences will not yield to adjudication by any of the logical means that are available to us in the spheres of mathematics, science, and philosophy.

Precisely because Eastern religions are indistinguishable from philosophy and do not make the dogmatic claims that are characteristic of the Western religions, they do not constitute an obstacle to the cultural unity of mankind that is more difficult to overcome than the philosophical diversity that now exists in the West or in the world. It is an obstacle that can be overcome by a measure of dialectical agreement sufficient to make progress in resolving doctrinal disagreements. The dogmatically opposed Western religions

(which, though Western in origin, are now worldwide in scope) do constitute an obstacle that appears to me insuperable. I cannot think of any way in which it can be overcome.

In conclusion, I want to add a number of supplementary observations that point up the general tendency of the foregoing analysis and argument.

First, as I have pointed out, no dialectical agreement exists at present between the West and the various cultures of the Far East. Eastern and Western authors may appear to be talking to one another, but we are deceiving ourselves if we think they are. That being so, if Eastern and Western authors are not engaged in dialogue with one another, then a fruitful discussion cannot be generated by reading them together.

Second, an objection might be raised to the basic presuppositions of my argument, and it would probably run as follows. My argument presupposes the correctness of the Western view of reality and of truth as governed by the principle of noncontradiction. That is the basis of everything that has been said about the unity of truth. Some, if not all, Eastern thought holds a different view—that reality, at its very core, is made up of contradictions, and that we can approximate the truth only to the extent that we are able to embrace affirmations and denials or contradictory statements about it.

My answer to this objection is twofold. On the one hand, I must remind you that the East as well as the West accepts the truth mankind has so far achieved in mathematics and science, even as they use the products of technology based on these truths. The logic underlying the achievement of truth in mathematics and science presupposes the truth of the principle of noncontradiction, as applied to reality itself and to the judgments men make about it. Eastern thought can escape from the consequences of this only by being intellectually schizophrenic. On the other hand, if the East insists that the truths of mathematics and science are superficial, however useful they may be, and that philosophy or religion which aims to get at the heart of reality must violate the principle of noncontradiction because reality at heart is contradictory through and through, then there can be no dialogue between East and West on the philosophical or religious plane, for there is not sufficient dialectical agreement to carry on an intelligible and fruitful conversation.


Third is the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity. Everything that I have said about the unity of truth, and about the distinction between doctrinal and dialectical agreement, applies only to matters that are subject to the criteria of truth and falsity and the principle of noncontradiction. This, in my view, is the realm of the objective in human life. In sharp contrast to it is the realm of the subjective—the realm of feeling and of personal predilection, with respect to which, like matters of taste, there is no disputing and no adjudication by logical means.

A book by Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, criticizes Western civilization for its almost pathological addiction to objectivity and its underevaluation of the subjective aspects of human life. Roszak's mistake is not in his argument for the recognition and enlargement of the subjective, but in his assigning dominance of the subjective over the objective. That is hardly the right prescription if, as I think is the case, the objective and the subjective are not rival claimants for the dominant role in human life and culture, but rather supplement each other, each enriching human life and culture in its own characteristic way.

This leads me to suggest that one possible view of the most profound difference between East and West is that the West has made what is by far the major contribution to the advancement of mankind in the realm of the objective, whereas the East has made a comparably great but quite different contribution to the advancement of mankind in the realm of the subjective. Thus viewed, there is no conflict between them, for there cannot be any conflict between areas of culture in which the criteria of truth and falsity are applicable and areas of culture in which these criteria are not appropriate at all.

Fourth, I submit that cultural diversity should be tolerated, i.e., accepted as unavoidable, only in those areas in which the criteria of truth and falsity and the principle of noncontradiction do not apply; that is, in the areas concerned with matters of taste (with conventions or customs in eating and in dress, with social manners, with styles in the fine arts) and also in every aspect of human life that is subjective rather than objective. What I shall call “culturalism”—the acceptance or, worse, the promotion and defense of cultural diversity without observing the line of demarcation between matters of truth and matters of taste, or between the realms of the objective and the subjective—is, in my judgment, as deplorable as nationalism, for both are irremediably divisive of mankind and present obstacles to world community and, therefore, to world gov-

ernment and world peace. Cultural differences, in those areas in which they are acceptable, or rightly to be tolerated, are all superficial. They represent a diversity in the nurture of human beings that overlays the essential or specific unity of human nature—the biological unity of man and the psychological unity of the human mind.

A great epoch in the history of mankind lies ahead of us. It will not begin until there is a universal acknowledgment of the unity of truth in all the areas of culture to which the standard of truth is applicable; for only then will all men be able to live together peacefully in a world community under world government. Only then will world civilization and world history begin. Such unification of mankind, called for by the biological unity of the species, will not preclude the persistence until the end of time of cultural diversity in all matters where such diversity is appropriate, as well as the persistence of philosophical or religious pluralism as long as men are engaged in the pursuit of the whole truth which, while attainable in principle, is not likely ever to be fully attained. 

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