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Dialogue and love as presuppositions of learning in a multicultural world

In this paper I will deal with some aspects of dialogue, love and multiculturalism. In the first and the second aspect I see very much important presuppositions of a multiculturalism enriching each other. If the person is not able to communicate, to love and define what goals she/he would want to achieve, the person will be not able to enrich the multicultural world! Therefore, I am pressing on the conditions and kinds of dialogue, of the art of love, and in the end, I am giving some ideas about the multiculturalism.

It is more difficult nowadays than in the past to form an synthesis of the arts and different branches of knowledge. Even in the ethics, we have a difficult time to bring over the solution of most complex things.¹ While the constituent elements of culture and ethics are on the increase, there is a decrease in the individual's capability to perceive and harmonize them, so that the picture of a „universal man/woman” has almost disappeared. Still, each man/woman has the duty to safeguard the notion of the human person as a totality in which predominate the values of intellect, will, conscience, and brother- and sisterhood, since these were established. This education

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has its source and cradle in the family where children, in an atmosphere of love, learn the true scale of values, while approved forms of culture are almost naturally assimilated by the developing minds of adolescents. Because of the boom in books and computer publications, and new techniques of cultural and social communication, there are many more opportunities favourable to the development of a universal culture in the time of globalisation and multiculturalism. All human beings should in this sense cooperate in a cultural framework and collective activity characteristic of our times to humanize and imbue them with the open spirit of tolerance. These advantages are insufficient to confer full cultural development unless they be accompanied by a deeply thought out evaluation of the meaning of culture and knowledge of the human person.

Forms of dialogue

The basic attitude of the dialogic person is fully turning to the other with body, mind, and essence. When in dialogue, people *look at* each other, *talk to* each other, not at or past each other. They do not close their eyes or look at the ceiling or floor when talking. These are signs of inner monologue. Rather they look directly at the other and speak directly to the other without evading or diluting the issue. They listen, really listen, instead of planning what they are doing to say when the other person stops talking.

Dialogue takes one of two forms – technical dialogue or genuine dialogue. Technical dialogue is the exchange of information. Usually it is an Adult-Adult transaction, crisp and uncontaminated by Parent or Child. Technical dialogue results in objective understanding. In the midst

of technical dialogue, genuine dialogue may spring into being. The process is similar to intimacy happening in the midst of an activity. Genuine dialogue may even occur during a silence, not just in the tender glances between lovers or a shared mystical silence, but also when the spell over an encapsulated person, who was spellbound in childhood, is lifted and his/her essence shines through.

The intent in genuine dialogue is to establish a living mutual relationship. This is not an intellectual activity. There are no gifted or ungifted here, only those who give themselves and those who withhold themselves. In the moment of dialogue each has in mind the other person, is “all there” with the other person, is not thinking of something or someone else, nor fantasizing that the other is different than he actually is.

Dialogic relations

In the dialogic relations a person gives of him/herself, gives of his/her essence to the situation. To give oneself does not mean to lose one's own concreteness or identity, to get lost or swallowed up in the problems, dreams, or activities of someone else. To give oneself means to extend one's concreteness and this requires: some kind of relationship between at least two people, an event they experience in common, and one person, without forfeiting his own identity – or reality – living through the common event from the standpoint of the other.

If one forfeits his/her own reality, as often happens in a coming together, the relationship is symbiotic rather than dialogic. Some people refuse to encounter others with the totality of themselves. They may allow one ego state to be expressed and close off the others. In such a

case their dialogue, whether technical or genuine, will be very limited. Like a person who is constantly Adult, constantly Parent, or constantly Child, they repress parts of their personality. In a marriage, for example, if one or both persons have a script theme of "Life is serious. We are here to work, not play," the Child will be encapsulated and the marriage will lack a sense of fun. Or if their script for a particular Parent-Child relation, e.g., "You be the little girl/boy, and I will be the big daddy/mama," the Adult may be shut off. This kind of scheme can be simple transformed into a relationship between the cultures!

To really live is to really meet, really encounter others in genuine dialogic relations. This is not easy. The demands are considerable. They include: mutual claims, sacrifices, promises, and risks. The claim is for complete and vital engagement with the other. The sacrifice means a letting go of other possibilities because a mutual relationship demands a kind of exclusiveness at that particular moment. The promise, which can be spoken or unspoken, binds one to the other. The risk is to be vulnerable, is to give oneself wholly to someone else... The characteristic attitude and word for this kind of relation is I-Thou, and into every individual I-Thou encounter, the Eternal Thou enters in (say believers). Yet, even in the most significant relations, people move back and forth in I-Thou and I-It attitudes. The world of everyday activities requires objective relating. However, the person who lives exclusively in the world of I-It does not really live.

The demands of a dialogic relation are difficult but they are possible because the essence is love. The life of dialogue is not one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do.

Spheres of dialogue

People can establish dialogic relations in any or all of the four dialogic spheres. According to Martin Buber, the *first dialogic sphere* is "from stones to stars." Is there anyone who has not found meaning when encountering a golden sunrise or glowing sunset, a field of mustard or desert of sand, the crash of waves or the quick movement of a small stream, a storm-tossed cypress, or a weeping willow? The writer of the eighth psalm of the Bible experienced this sphere. Perhaps he walked out one night, looked up at the stars, meditated on the meaning of existence, and encountered the Eternal Thou. His words reflect the dialogue: "When I look at the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou are mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour."

The *second dialogic sphere* is less commonly experienced. It is with animals and is known by those people who have deep down in their being a potential partnership with animals - most often persons who are by no means 'animalistic' by nature, but rather spiritual. In this dialogic relation a person leads an animal into his/her personal sphere. If the person is not phony, if he/she is not pretending to be interested but really is, the animal may respond from the whole of his/her being.

The *third dialogic sphere* is that of a spirit which has entered the world and can be perceived by the senses or, though hidden in the present, can unfold dialogically. The spirit is always revealed in some form. In a piece of art, a piece of practical carpentry, a tasteful dinner, or a bit of poetry, the spirit of the person creating it shows through. When I first read Martin Buber's writings some years ago, I met Buber's spirit through his writings. This

same encounter happens when I read or recall certain passages in the Bible. If when I read, I “listen” as though the speaker is in my presence, I cannot treat the Bible objectively. The spirit of the original speaker encounters me in dialogue. The works confront me and demand of me a response.

The *fourth dialogic sphere* is that which can exist between two or more people. The dialogue may be onesided or fully reciprocal. For example, between a student and his teacher, or a patient and his therapist it is onesided, because the focus is on the student or patient who does not have a reciprocal concern for the teacher or therapist. In this onesided relationship the teacher or therapist tries to imagine what the other person is at this very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking, and not as a detached content, but in his very reality. When this happens, the other person feels accepted, affirmed, and confirmed. If the relationship changes and the student or patient “imagines the real” of the teacher or therapist, and experiences the teacher or therapist at this level of reality, then the relationship between them may change to one of friendship. Each experiences mutual affirmation in a reciprocal dialogue.

Dialogic community

When people are in a dialogic relationship to each other they stand together as a “we”. The sense of “weness” may be a temporary experience such as may occur when a tragedy brings people together, or the “we” may be constant as in some churches, religious communities or other “institutions” where a few or many are committed to an I-Thou relation with each other and

strive daily to live their faith as a part of a holy community.

It is the sense of “we” that leads to the sense of community. Community is not just a group of individuals bundled together and perhaps moving toward one goal. No, although community may include this, it also includes a dialogic turning toward each other, a breaking through of encapsulating armor and an experiencing of each other’s worlds. Community is not a goal to be directly sought; it is a result of people having a common goal in relation to the nature of mankind, the love that was there at the beginning. Marriage (and every other relationship) is sometimes a dialogic community, sometimes not. Community is where community happens! In this sense it is necessary to mention that multiculturalism in the positive expression is there where different people with different cultures live in relatively peace and harmony.

The essence of community is love. Love is an ethical responsibility of an I for Thou. It is unconditional good will. It is wanting the best for the other without thought of return. Responsibility means responding to the claim of each moment out of the depths of being. This involves a decision to respond directly.

Decisionlessness is a failure to direct one’s inner power and therefore is the essence of evil. Decisionlessness is due to anxiety or fear in the Child ego state of not doing things perfectly. This feeling contaminates the Adult. Yet love requires an openeyed trust in the world and its people, including oneself; a trust that all is of value and redeemable, that each can turn from futile decisionlessness and take the direction toward the absolute power. The direction is the heart of a community.

The spiritual self

Dialogic relation is possible because of the spiritual self that is inherent in all people. We are God's Thou and our spiritual self is at the deepest core of our being. On a principle similar to that of a percolator coffee pot, the spiritual self bubbles up and transforms the personality. Because each ego state is useful and necessary, the core of being – which is the loving spiritual self – can permeate all ego states, the entire person, body, and mind.

If the spiritual self permeates a person's Child, that person will express positive childlike qualities such as affection, warmth, curiosity, and a playfulness. If the spiritual self permeates the Adult, a person will make decisions on the basis of facts, but also on the basis of other people's feelings and well-being, and with an awareness that many decisions need to be made to preserve the total environment rather than exploit it. If the spiritual self permeates the Parent, a person will express only those nurturing and positive caring qualities that can be found in parents and will not express Parent behaviour that is destructive to self or others. All ego states can be transformed when a person chooses to experience his or her spiritual self. Like the cup that runneth over love can first percolate throughout a person, then pour over toward others.

It is because we have a spiritual self that we can enter into I-Thou relations, and the spiritual self needs to be used or it becomes closed off and atrophied. When it is used, people act with loving kindness in spite of everything. Although it may not be possible to love everyone, it is possible to show loving-kindness to all people, especially if one is in touch with the spiritual self, which in turn is open to God.

People who hold on to old resentments or outdated fears, who wallow in a sense of guilt, who experience themselves or the world as evil or as without value, send out negative "vibrations" that pollute or destroy themselves or others. Such people have forgotten, or never knew, that in the beginning love created people – and that creation was good, otherwise we would not be. Negative feelings can be changed by conscious, deliberate, voluntary contact with your spiritual self and with the spiritual core of others. It may not be easy to get in touch with other spiritual selves if somebody has been out of touch and alienated. Yet, only the person, you, can do it, and no one can do it for you.

The first step must be a genuine desire to reach out to all the spiritual forces that can be met in the four spheres of dialogue. It may seem strange if you are accustomed to busyness, to physical achievement, and to intellectual efforts. This requires more than intelligence. It requires awareness, right here, right now. Stop now as you read... Become aware, for example, of that piece of rock nearby, the fleck of dust on the glass, the feel of sun on your skin... Do not think, do not study, do not analyze. Just let your physical environment come into your consciousness. Open all your ego states to wider influences and allow for spiritual contact with each sphere of dialogue.

The practice of physical relaxation so that even the tension in the small muscles drains away is an aid to getting in touch with the spiritual self. When lying on the floor or sitting in a comfortable place, you can turn off your intellectualizing and be open to yourself and your environment. You can sense the love that you knew in the beginning to be like a percolator within. You can allow this percolating love to send out positive vibrations of love and healing.

A second step must be a genuine desire to get in touch with all the spiritual forces within you. It may be hard to believe you have a spiritual self that is a reflection of eternal love. Yet this belief is a necessity. Continuing awareness of this core of being leads to the feeling of strength, joy, and forgiveness, and conversely allows you to express your strength, joy and forgiveness toward others as well as toward yourself. In prayer you reach toward God; in meditation God reaches toward you. Both are necessary if you are to get in touch with the spiritual self within.

During the Reformation, Martin Luther, wrote that all of life is a crossing of the Red Sea. This means that coming out of slavery is assuming responsibility for who we are and what we do. This is a life-long process that never ends. Yet love directs us to take a dialogic stand toward all of existence. This is the beginning, because when we turn and go forth to meet love, we discover love has already come to meet us – and this is our salvation. We are chosen and we can choose. All the world calls us to innumerable communions, calls us to respond out of the depths of our being, calls us because we were born to love. Each of us also calls each other to innumerable communions, calls each other to respond out of the depths of being, calls each other because were born to be and born to be loving.

Living in love

Therefore, another presupposition for the dialogue is love... Otherwise people would not be interested in the other person. To live in love is to believe in rainbows, and the promise given that mankind will not be destroyed. To live in love is to enter into dialogic encounter with other peoples and all of existence. To

live in love is to experience personal wholeness and integrity. To live in love is to trust the eternal Spirit, to listen when it speaks, to act when it calls, which is every minute of every day. To live in love is to be awestruck by the wonder of how it all is interrelated – oceans crashing on the shore, yellow mustard fields blooming after the first spring rain, wind moaning through giant pines, a dog barking loudly to protect its master, the eyes of the sick, hurt, and lonely pleading for acceptance, the innocence of an infant reaching out in trust and the tenderness of a hand responding with „I love you.”

Living in love is a life style for those who are dialogically oriented. Such people are open and vulnerable. They respond with their minds, their bodies, and their spiritual selves. Other people are important to them and so is the world in which they live. Dialogic people are self-revealing. Their essence shows through.

Martin Buber claims there are two kinds of people, image people and essence people. Image people are primarily concerned with the impression they make on others. Image people are like overly adapted children. They continually wonder what others are thinking of them. Essence people, in contrast, simply give of themselves, knowing that their basic responsibility is to respond. Their external personality boundaries are permeable, so they move in dialogic encounter with all the spheres of existence.

Encapsulated people

In contradiction of meeting beloved and open people we meet also “encapsulated people”. Living in love is difficult or impossible for encapsulated people. Such people refuse to give of themselves and refuse to let others in. Their responses to themselves and others is conditional and measured.

In many relations, one or both persons are encapsulated. They are shut off from each other because of fear, guilt, resentment, or disinterest, or because they were adapted in childhood to keep their distance. Encapsulated people may be high in achievement, but they are low in loving ability. In any kind of relationship, if the partners are encapsulated because of their childhood training or traumatic experiences, they create psychological walls which say „Stay away!”, or „Leave me alone!”, or „Do not get to close!”

In any kind of relationship, if one or both people are encapsulated because of *fear*, the fear may be realistic and the armor necessary to avoid being brutalized, physically or verbally, or the fear may be unrealistic and carry-over from childhood experiences. A little girl with a loud and abusive father is likely to experience fear later in life if her husband speaks loudly, even though he is not abusive. This fear is unrealistic and is a carry-over from the past.

In any kind of relationship, if one or both „partners” are encapsulated because of *resentment*, resentment may be justified, but being encapsulated is not. Many persons expect their spouse to be a mind reader of their needs and desires and are offended if the reading is inaccurate. Many people harbor resentments for small slights when such things would be dismissed if the relationship was vital. (The analogy to the intercultural dialogue is not far away).

In any kind of relationship, if one or both are encapsulated because of *disinterest*, they are also critical of something about the other – appearance, intelligence, personality, etc.- and perhaps have found someone else more existing. But people are not boring. Beneath the armor, the layers of phoniness, and the psychological games which are played out of habit or delusional self-protection, is the person who was born to love and for love.

Lovingness can be called forth. Psychological walls can melt away in redeeming dialogic encounters. But to pierce the armor of an encapsulated person is difficult. The psychological thickness of the external personality boundary may be so thick that it is permeable only during a crisis. It may be so thick that others, or the person him/herself, may give up trying to get through it.

Love as a basic instinct

If the primary significance of the energy of the universe is a straining toward existence, its secondary significance is a straining, almost equally as imperative, toward the greatest and the most enduring unity in the relationships of human beings, one with another, or, in other words, toward the establishment of an actual, tangible communion with other people.

There is no possibility (in a short paper) to go into detail as to all the various manifestations of this longing for unity. On the professional plane, in the world of sports, in local affairs, in matters of national importance, and even, yes, even in international and multicultural affairs, the urge toward unity and peace is one of the most fundamental in the human make-up. It culminates in intensity through the sexual and bodily instinct, that is to say, through the force of love at the level of the sense perceptions and of the emotions expressing in such an extraordinarily intense way the profound and universal need for love and for companionship which is the fundamental constituent of human nature. And there is no need, either, to underline and expand upon the subject of how this deep-seated urge toward unity is contradicted in practice, and even endangered to the point of failure, total or partial.

Formation of the “ego”

The conscious personality – let us call it the „ego” – is slow in forming because it is slow in breaking away from the emotional and instinctual mists of infancy and very early in childhood. (This is very important to know for multicultural education, because the younger the person, the better it will be to learn from others.) Its formation appears as a progressive and difficult adaption to needs that become more and more elaborate and further and further involved in relationships with others. From the Baby to the Adult of twenty-five years of age there takes place a progression from total dependence on others for life and life’s needs to total participation of these with others – or at least for everything to proceed smoothly along the lines which the study of evolution suggests, there should be this progression. In the progressive acquisition of his/her autonomy, which is his/her constitutional necessity, the thinking human being should acquire, at the same time and in the same proportion, the feeling for spontaneous self-sacrifice that would him/her to participate more and more in communion with the rest of the human race, and make her/him correspondingly less dependent upon it at all the different levels on which human life is actually lived. Without being in the least paradoxical one might say that the human being is less autonomous to the degree that he/she falls short of self-discipline for or adjustment to the community. Anyone who has a need of others to acquire a feeling of security or fulfillment shows thereby that he has retained the emotional attitude of early childhood; anyone who cannot rely on or trust in his/her own resources – we would say, try out his/her own unique personality – is in direct proportion dependent, or lacking in autonomy.

The ideal normal adult man/woman would be he/she who fully, spontaneously and positively felt the need not of others but to be with others and to be something to others. But the ideal adult man/woman does not exist. Every personality tends toward this ideal, more or less; but no one completely succeeds in attaining it precisely.

Problems of educating and learning about myself and the others

For the „educator” the most difficult undertaking undoubtedly consists in striving to form for oneself the most complete picture possible of the interior world of a person, without, naturally, projecting into one’s own interior outlook. This, however, is the supreme necessity. Since education amounts in actual fact to befriending, guiding, correcting, and coordinating the autonomy of the person, his/her initiative and his/her endeavors, so must one realize to the full all that he/she is capable of at any given moment of his/her evolution and development. Many of the educational errors arise, it would seem, from the educators and coaches demanding things from the person in the other culture without fully realizing that these are beyond their powers. Such demands can but increase to an excessive degree the unhappiness normally inevitable at each stage of development in the relation between at least two people from different regions, continents, cultures, or nations. And in the measure in which this distress is excessive, the possibility of an adaptation to ensuing situations is paralyzed, or at least partially so.

One example from the sports: An athlete at the start of his/her career does not begin by lifting a hundred

pound bar bell. Even supposing that he/she could do so, the effort would be so exhausting for such a small result that he/she would quickly give up the sport, unless he/she were so obsessed that in the violence of his/her energy he/she had to give up anyway through bringing about some accident to his/her muscular power of movement. She/he will begin with ten pound weights, and she/he will so gradually and progressively increase the power of his/her performance that he/she will hardly be aware of it him/herself when one day he/she will lift the hundred pound with ease. The comparison is quite classic.

At the extreme, this kind of educational „boosting” can lead to the growth of an attitude that wants to throw up the whole thing, the whole „coming together”, the whole „learning from other cultures” – like the athlete and the weights. It turns upon a theory that arises from confused thinking. From the fact that a certain person, in a certain actual situation, is perhaps not yet altogether capable of avoiding a certain fault, it is deduced quite falsely that he/she is not bound by objective and universal moral rules. From such a proof of failure it is then assumed that this is an indication of the standards attainable by him/her. This can be a kind of narcissism, in the sense that, to fly from a conflict and from a necessary sacrifice, one gives to a particular subjective course of behaviour a general character it does not possess. The moral ideal in treating each other from different cultures which the human rights describe, the absolute standard value of being equal according to race, gender and religion, does not depend upon individual variations from it.

A moral and intercultural education centered upon the demands of good and on the virtues in the most positive sense will permit the person not to be swallowed up in an egocentric evaluation of his/her weakness. The faults - which are inevitable – that he/she

will commit will help him/her, instead, to know his/her identity better. This is certainly so, but what is more important, they will help him/her to know, by contrast, the resources in him/herself or the problems in his/her relations with others.

(Multi-)culturalism in the public sphere

Multicultural (political) philosophy explores ways of accommodating cultural diversity fairly. Public policies often have different consequences for members of different cultural groups. For example, given the importance of language to culture, and the role of the modern state in so many aspects of life, the choice of official languages will affect different people very differently. Similar issues arise concerning the cultural content of education and the criminal law, and the choice of public holidays. To avoid policies that create unfair burdens, multicultural theory turns to abstract inquiries about such things as the relation between culture and individual wellbeing, or the relation between a person's culture and the appropriate standards for judging them. Multiculturalism raises related questions for democratic theory also. Culture may be important to deciding on appropriate units of democratic rule and to the design of special mechanisms for representing minorities within such units. Each of these questions is made more difficult in the context of cultures that reject the demands of liberty or equality. The challenge for philosophers is to develop a principled way of thinking about these issues.

Political philosophers from Plato to Mill largely managed to ignore the question of culture. The societies in which they wrote enabled them in large part to take it for granted that the appropriate unit about which to ask

questions concerning justice or democracy was a society that shared a culture. As a result, problems of justice or democracy were seen as superimposed on a homogeneous community. Although Mill saw nation states as inevitable, he believed that members of smaller cultural groups would readily give up their inherited culture to join other, stronger nations.

Demographic and political changes throughout the twentieth century have made traditional assumptions about the relations between cultures and politics largely irrelevant to public life. Almost all of the world's countries now have substantial minorities from more than one culture. As a result, the ideals of political philosophers, whether concerning democracy, justice or membership, must be redeemed in settings very different to those for which they were first proposed.

Different states are multicultural in different ways. Belgium, Switzerland and Canada are federations of different language groups. Australia, Canada and the USA have substantial aboriginal populations. And most developed countries have large but geographically dispersed immigrant populations. Geographical concentration makes federalism and secession viable options for dealing with cultural difference. In its absence, what is needed is some way of building a political culture that does not exclude those who are different.

Theories of (multi-)cultural rights divide on a number of questions. While not all cultures are individualistic, most prominent views about multiculturalism share a root commitment to the view that culture matters because of its role in individual people's lives.

They differ, however, in their detailed accounts of how and why it matters. Three accounts are prominent. First, some have suggested that culture is largely incidental to political life. While this cosmopolitan view

does not deny that people have strong cultural attachments, it supposes that the state has no business taking up any sort of stance in relation to them. Instead the state should treat culture in the way many states treat religion, as a private matter on which the state is officially neutral. Ideally people will be able to help themselves to the resources and possibilities of all of the world's cultures. Second, some have assigned each person's own culture an important role, either as an important aspect of identity or as a precondition of that person's ability to develop autonomously. On this view, the demands of justice are the same across cultures, but among those demands is the protection of the cultural conditions essential to individuality. Third, some have claimed that politics is an essential form of cultural expression, and that institutions should be designed to allow cultures to express themselves politically.

Cosmopolitanism is in many ways an attractive ideal, but there is some reason to doubt that it provides a realistic model for organizing political life. Most of the world's people have neither the resources nor the opportunities to move readily between cultures. Perhaps as important, few have any real inclination to do so. In the light of these circumstances and the central role of the modern state in coordinating economic and other activities, states have no real alternative to adopting policies with significant cultural consequences. Official languages must be chosen and the legal framework within which people go about their affairs defined. Any response to these issues will make it easier for some cultural groups and more difficult for others.

While advocates of cosmopolitanism might doubt the long-term significance of such effects, important questions of fairness arise concerning the effects of any such choices. Multicultural liberals make fairness the starting point for their accounts of cultural policies. They insist that accommodating cultural difference is

fundamentally different from discredited policies of segregation that sought to exclude minorities. Some philosophers argue that aboriginal peoples should be given extra resources and political protection in order to enable them to maintain their cultural context. Because that context provides the background against which they are able to become autonomous, the state has a special responsibility to make sure that it is secure. Otherwise they would be unfairly deprived of something others receive free. The only way to protect that interest is to allow them to exclude outsiders from their society. In the same way, boundaries between states should be drawn in such a way as to enable as many people as possible to find themselves with a secure culture. Within self-governing areas, immigrants may be chosen with an eye to the society's cultural stability. Others have made parallel arguments emphasizing the extent to which cultural identification provides a secure anchor in a changing world.

Still, any way of drawing boundaries will leave some people as members of dispersed minorities. Some thinkers advocate integrative policies for such groups so that maintaining some of their traditional practices does not pose a barrier to successful participation in the larger society in which they find themselves. Examples of such policies include allowing religious groups special exemptions from common pause days (when most businesses tend to be closed) or providing heritage language classes for the children of immigrants. In the UK, some have advocated extending anti-blasphemy laws to non-Christian religions. On similar grounds, many liberals advocate an inclusive educational curriculum. Such policies are sometimes said to offer advantages for members of the dominant culture as well as for minorities. In the longer term, they may well lead to the disappearance of many aspects of the cultures they aim to protect. As a result, the ultimate consequence of

multicultural liberalism may well be the development of a cosmopolitan culture, in which cultural difference has a status little different from that of religion. While such a loss of diversity may be regarded as unfortunate, multicultural liberals defend their policies in terms of the interests of the current generation, and so have no commitment to diversity as such.

For multicultural liberals, cultural rights are always understood as rights that individuals have to certain cultural conditions. They are not rights that cultures have over their members. Those who wish to reject their inherited culture are always entitled to do so, however difficult they may find it. As a result, multicultural liberals insist that illiberal cultural practices are outside the bounds of toleration. While there are sometimes pragmatic and humanitarian grounds for limiting the use of force to eradicate such practices, communities that coerce dissident members are not entitled to support in so doing. Thus, everything from arranged marriages to coerced participation in religious rituals is outside the range of special protection or even toleration, however important they may be to the survival of the cultural context. Rights of exit are important for the same reasons.

Differing conceptions of property rights also complicate liberal attempts to protect minority cultures. Many aboriginal cultures (and some religious groups) have traditionally held land in common. If members wish to leave to join the surrounding society, they cannot take their share of the land with them without endangering the material basis of the culture. In such cases, there may be no way of protecting culture without sacrificing individual liberty.

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the most important virtues of being and learning in a multicultural system is dialogue, love, tolerance and knowing the own character. Our world becomes more and more international. And many people ask in this time where I come from, where should I go, and what should I ought to be? In answering these questions, we need a clear identity and an answer to the question of what it means to be part of this particular culture. Therefore, before I am able to go into an international and multicultural relationship or discussion about it, we have to consider the conditions of an atmosphere of a fair dialogue. But the first presupposition of entering a dialogue is to be interested in the other person, and a kind of love to the others. Love is at first openness for the other and being friendly in the hope of companionship, and in dedicating of oneself to the other. After this we are able to learn from the other persons and with them.

Notes:

¹ Therefore, I call my books „*Komplexe Ethik*” (first volume on „Basics”/Grundlagen, second on „politics”/Politik, Vienna 2005 and 2006, jms-printings). I would like to say thank you very much to Professor Sandu Frunza and his edited book „*The challenges of multiculturalism in Central and Eastern Europe*”, Cluj 2005. That book is a great resource of the main problems in our time of transition; the book gave me a lot of suggestions for writing something on the given topic.