

A Multicultural Strategy: Harmonization without Being Patternized

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The New Millennium has been expected to be a promising era for peace and development. Contrary to all expectations, its very outset is shrouded in terror, fear, hatred, tension, conflict and war among many other forms of suffering and misery. What on earth is wrong with this world and humankind? And what is the possible origin of such misery and suffering? Conventionally, some of the Buddhists tend to conceive of life itself as the fountainhead of all the misery and suffering due to insatiable desires and passions. Likewise, some of the Daoists (Taoists) share more or less the similar view by regarding life as a tumor and death as the breaking of the tumor. These ideas seem to be somewhat relevant to human nature in a negative sense, but irrelevant to the *de facto* human condition because they appear as special types of “black humor”, making people feel nearer to tears than laughter.

With respect to the *status quo* today, one of the most destructive and blind forces is assumed to lie in misunderstanding or lack of mutual understanding across cultures and values concerned. This leads naturally to the advent of radical faith in either violence or the law of the jungle, so to speak. History has proved that any radical faith of such a kind is liable to render the situation worse apart from conducting to dehumanized actions and disastrous consequences. To handle this core problem is no easy matter at all. To say the least, it calls for adequate attention to the enhancement of mutual understanding via intercultural communication and studies as well. All this may firstly require seeking after certain universal guidelines or working strategies as a starting point. In this regard some observations are offered hereby for further discussion. They start with a particular reference to F. S. C. Northrop’s comparative philosophy first, and then look into the Confucianist notion of harmony without uniformity (*he er bu tong*) that can be also translated as harmonization without being patternized. It is to me as one of the multicultural strategies or philosophical principles thus deployed to meet with the chaotic times relating to globalization or glocalization at present stage.

I. The Meeting of East and West as a Good-natured Hypothesis

Mass media witnesses a voluminous publicity of globalization today. It is one of the most imposing culturescapes we encounter here and there in many areas. Globalization as a worldwide phenomenon is often described in such metaphorical terms as “global village”. It has its undeniable impact on us to the extent that we think of its effects, positive or negative, in various ways. Talking about the *status quo* of the “global village”, its “potential villagers” across the world can hardly see eye to eye with each other on this point. Some of them assume it as an actual reality; some regard it as a seeming possibility; some view it as an idealistic fantasy; some hold it as a form of discourse power intended to allure a weak culture to model itself on its strong counterpart; some even go on to condemn it as a hidden monster to promote “the law of the jungle” via sugarcoated promises, serving as a driving force of post-colonialism; others simply take actions, radical or moderate, to stop it by forcing it back into Pandora’s Box. Different attitudes and positions represent different values, judgments and interests alike. Quite naturally, there arises endless disputing about it.

Yet, the conception of the so-called global village is seen grounded on a rolling pebble of hypothesis. For such a village is nowhere to be found in fact and its blueprint still remains as a dream-like image. Self-evidently the world as a whole is still divided culturally and geographically into two major hemispheres, East and West. The two parts used to be depicted by Kipling as follows:

East is East, West is West,

And never the twain shall meet. ^[1]

Of course, outdated is this arbitrary argument about the traditional boundary between East and West. A considerable number of scholars throughout the world have made tremendous endeavors to remove such boundary by proposing a necessary and constructive synthesis.

Among many others, F. S. C. Northrop is relatively forward-looking as a result of his early initiative to stir up an intellectual pondering on the possibility of intercultural transformation. As is signified in his book of *The Meeting of East and West* (1945), he attempts to break up Kipling's dogma. His counterargument could be generalized into two lines in contrast to Kipling's:

*East is East, West is West,
And why not the twain shall meet.*

F. S. C. Northrop lived through the two wars. He sharply observed the ideological conflicts demonstrated by the two allies in 1940s known as the traditional democracies and the communist Russia, and was therefore aware of the eve of the forthcoming Cold War. But as an idealist and pacifist, he failed to see through the entire nature of political power and its dominant force. Instead, he pursued his ideals by advocating the importance and necessity of mutual understanding, intercultural communication and complimentary interaction between East and West. He was considerably observant and optimistic for the time then. Accordingly he voiced such a viewpoint with straightforward clarity in the Preface:

The time has come when these ideological conflicts must be faced and if possible resolved. Otherwise, the social policies, moral ideals and religious aspirations of men, because of their incompatibility one with another, will continue to generate misunderstanding and war instead of mutual understanding and peace...It is hardly likely that these sources of conflicts can be faced and removed *in practice* within the halls of parliaments and the heated actions of the market place, where slogans are carelessly bandied about, special interests are at work, and passions are easily aroused, unless the problems raised are first traced to their roots and then resolved *in theory* within the calmness of the study where the meaning of words like "democracy" and "communism" can be carefully determined and the issues which they define can be looked at more objectively. It is with this timely, important and difficult undertaking that this book is concerned, as its sub-title indicates. ^[2]

Its sub-title is "An inquiry concerning world understanding". As is read in the passage cited, Northrop was deeply concerned and even grew worried about the destructive force of misunderstanding stemmed from ideological conflicts as a hidden cause of war. At the same time he was highly conscious of the service of mutual understanding and its possibility of peace. Hence he made a crying demand for filling up the gap between East and West. He went on to distinguish between practice and theory regarding the effect of such work. Because of his skepticism in view of the practical operation, he placed more stress on the theoretical aspect. He claimed the credits of the calmness of the study and the significance of exploring the roots or spirit of both Oriental and Occidental cultures. His hypothesis lies in that a world understanding could be reached by virtue of sufficient knowledge and complimentary synthesis of the two cultures in the main. All this implies a hidden form of dialogue among civilizations and cultures as it seems to me.

As a result of his exploration of the two broad cultures in pursuit of world understanding, he arrived at a two-term-based relation of epistemic correlation. The relation is supposed to take place between two components: aesthetic and theoretical. The former symbolizes the spirit of the Eastern culture while the latter the spirit of the Western culture. One is accounted, according to Northrop, for the emotional, aesthetically intuitive and ineffably spiritual nature of man and the universe, and the other for the scientific methods of hypothesis, deduction, logic analysis and experimental confirmation. Henceforth one is conducive to the development of art and the becoming of artist, while the other to the development of economy and the becoming of scientist. Eventually there arises a reconciliation of practical wisdom. In other words, just like art and economy, artist and scientist, the aesthetic component and the theoretical component work to foster a complimentary relationship. As is affirmed in Northrop's terminology, the two components "supplement each other in society in a remarkable manner...so that the equally real and important differences between men do not lead them to their mutual destruction, it should eventually be possible to achieve a society for mankind generally in which the higher standard of living of the most scientifically advanced and theoretically guided Western nations is combined with the compassion, the universal sensibility to the beautiful and the abiding equanimity and calm joy of the spirit which characterize the sages and many of the humblest people of the Orient."^[3] In spite of Northrop's oversimplification and overgeneralization of the Oriental culture in terms of mainly Chinese and Indian cultures, and his pompous announcement of a science-technology myth, his good-natured intention to bridge between East and West should be acknowledged and recommended. For he believed that such bridging between of East and West can secure world peace, a good society and human freedom, a kind of profound freedom based on the fulfillment of practical needs by means of economy, and of spiritual needs by means of art. All this serves as the philosophical foundation of a happy life, so to speak.

Nevertheless, what to be heeded is his lapsed judgments of the two-term-based relation in which there is a hidden Occident- or Euro-centrism even though he tried hard to approach other cultures for nourishing a cosmopolitanism of his own. Such centrism is later on merged with some traces of American-centrism as is revealed in his book—*The Taming of Nations: A Study of the Cultural Bases of International Policy* (Macmillan, 1953). In its last chapter he champions a centrist notion that the American city of Philadelphia could move toward a world state. It is therefore attacked by Nakamura Moto, a Japanese thinker, because of its liability to put the reader under a strong impression of Americanized cultural imperialism.^[4] Even so, no one denies Northrop's constructive endeavors to promote a necessary consideration and understanding of heterogeneous cultures in favor of achieving world understanding. His mission is left undone, thus calling for more consideration of an effective framework or alternatives in the current context. It is undoubtedly an urgent task because we are now living in greater jeopardy than ever before regarding the omnipresent shadows of terrors and clashes the world over.

II. Harmony and Uniformity in Perspective

The attention Northrop pays to the Eastern culture induces to his conclusion of the aesthetic component as the cultural spirit of the East. This is basically valid with regard to the way of intuitive thinking and artistic creation in particular. Yet, it is just one episode of the whole story. In the case of Confucianism as the cornerstone of Chinese culture, it is characterized with a strong pragmatist reason as is reflected in its ethical and political doctrines.

This pragmatist reason is both evinced and demonstrated in the ultimate goal of Confucianism that is no other than the societal ideal of harmony (*he*).^[5] Compared with this ideal, the most important virtue of human-heartedness (*ren*) as the kernel of Confucianist ethics turns out to be secondary due to its instrumentality. The same is true of other Confucianist doctrines like the golden mean (*zhong yong*) as a principle of correctness, and the rites-music culture (*liyue wenhua*) for moral cultivation and personality development.

The political philosophy of Confucianism is a pragmatist one by nature. Harmony (*he*) as its highest form of achievement is to ensure and actualize social order or stability by which further development is rendered possible, and in which every member from old to young and from male to female will live a good and just life. The ideal is institutionally facilitated by a system based on two disciplines known as rites (*li*) and music (*yue*) that would function to moralize one's conduct and humanize one's heart. In addition, the two disciplines aim to help one complete his personality through self-discipline and self-cultivation in order to nourish the virtue of human-heartedness (*ren*) and then harmonize human relations (*ren lun*). The essence of rites (*li*) *par excellence* is distinction relating to social stratification. The essence of music (*yue*) is unification with attempt to unite people of different social ranks in concord. "Once the two essentials are united organically, it is expected that they will have a restraining and moderating effect on one another, enabling society to reach a state of perfect order ... which nevertheless maintain contact, join forces, and cooperate. This is the societal ideal of Confucianism."^[6] That is to say, so long as people embrace and foster the virtue of human-heartedness and become self-conscious of harmonizing human relations, the societal ideal of harmony is supposed to be fulfilled. The Confucianist logic as such is determined by the pragmatist reason rather than the aesthetic intuition.

The notion of harmony (*he*) can be traced back to *The Book of Changes* (*Zhou yi*). It is said that the *Xiang* commentary (*Xiang zhuan*) on the *qian* hexagram (*qian gua*) mentions the conception of "great harmony" (*tai he*) for the first time. "It explains that all beings find the ultimate and proper purpose of their existence by transformations of the *qian* path: hard and soft are reconciled and united, producing the perfect harmony by which all beings are created and on which they thrive, and bringing a state of ultimate peace to the world."^[7]

However, it is Confucius who develops the ideal of harmony in the light of his political philosophy and ethics apart from his poetics. As is read in *The Confucian Analects* (*Lun yu*), the concept of harmony (*he*) is repeated and stressed as many as eight times on different occasions. Among many others, two expressions are most fundamental. In the first place, Confucius speaks of the merit of harmony through the voice of his contemporary You Zi as they share the same viewpoint:

In the process of conducting the rites, seeking harmony is the most valuable principle (*li zhi yong, he wei gui*). Of the ways prescribed and cherished by the ancient sage-rulers, this is the most beautiful and therefore followed alike in dealing with matters great and small. Yet, if harmony is sought merely for its own sake without having it regulated by the rites, the principle will not work in fact. (1:12)^[8]

Why harmony is so important then? As we know, the rites in ancient China would be employed as a kind of performing art to some extent. Their performance would involve not only rules of proprieties or rituals, but also music and dance all together. In its actual process of organic cooperation and integration, harmony is the ultimate goal in view of unity in variety. Its charm and appropriateness are all determined by the proper implementation of rules, the suitable choice of music and its instruments, and the right number of dancers and even dancing rows, etc. Yet, the importance of harmony is not simply confined to the artistic performing of the rites for the sake of aesthetic contemplation and appreciation. It is analogically extended to the domain of politics and governance. Therein harmony as the keystone of good leadership radiates upwards to the superiors, and downwards to the subordinates, thus facilitating a concord and cohesion among the people from all walks of life in the society. This is the chief reason why the ancient sage-rulers prescribed and cherished the principle of harmony. In order to retain its function, they would also regulate it by means of the rites in accord with specific situations. Otherwise, it will end up in vain when harmony is attained for harmony's sake by patternizing or covering up all the dynamic differences involved.

Aside from the political dimension, harmony as a principle is also applied to human relations. Hence there arises another interesting argument in the *Analecets*. When talking about the key discrepancy between the gentleman (*junzi*) and the petty man (*xiaoren*), Confucius utilizes the same principle of harmony (*he*) in a sense of harmonizing human relations with others instead of forming a clique without any principle. As he asserts,

The gentleman harmonizes his relationship with others but never follow them blindly (*he er bu tong*). The petty man just follows others blindly disregarding any principle (*tong er bu he*). (13:23)^[9]

Right in this context, by “follows others blindly” is meant to form a clique disregarding not merely the nature of harmony among human relations, but also the principle of justice for all the human beings alike. A gentleman is claimed never to do so because he tends to put himself in other's position and be preoccupied with the common good. In striking contrast, the petty man is different in that he cares more about personal interests than anything else. He ignores public ethics and readily mingles himself with his so-called mates of the similar caliber in pursuit of the similar ends without thinking of doing justice to others and society as a whole. In other words, selfish and narrow-minded as he is, the petty man takes the idea of *he* merely as a vulgarized means of being uniformed within an informal group for the sake of its own purposes, regardless of any commitment to the common good or community interests. He and his like in no way appreciate and even understand the real harmony as a moral rule that is based on the virtues of human-heartedness and righteousness. Instead they distort harmony and shape it into uniformity instead.

Characteristically, the two categories of harmony (*he*) and uniformity (*tong*) indicate two different ideals. The former is oriented towards the community good and grounded on the virtues of *ren* (reciprocal benevolence, human-heartedness, kindness and love) and *yi* (righteousness or justice). It would be possible only when one's personal cultivation develops into the high state of gentlemanship and enables one to go beyond one's own interests. The latter is directed towards the individual good and determined by one's own desires (*yu*) and profits (*li*). It is confined to selfishness and therefore working at the cost of others' welfare. Moreover, either harmony (*he*) or uniformity (*tong*) suggests a kind of means preconditioned by personal values. The former is intended to integrate and reconcile organically certain things for a higher telos related to the collective-based many, whereas the latter is intended to patternize imposingly all things for a lower telos related to the self-centered few. Accordingly, the gentleman as a moral being is prone to persuade and convince people with reasonability as he considers things most duly and appropriately in all possible aspects. He is so capable and trustworthy that he will win support, respect, cooperation and even submission from others. The petty man as an egoist is always ready to attain his own interests of various kinds by imposing his will upon others, or to patternize mental and behavioral mode within a clique or gang by force. If not, he would go off the track and turn into a yes-man, pleasing people around for the sake of a pretentiously harmonized relationship at the expense of the preconditions or principles concerned. Such a relationship he caters for is definitely false and short-lived as it disguises his real intention to fulfill his personal purposes and practical interests. This type of personality is therefore accused to be *xiangyuan* (a person who appears honest and cautious but is actually pretentious as a name-dropper or deceiver). It is by nature “a thief of morality” (*de zhi zei ye*)^[10] who will ruin all the virtues.

As has been discerned from above, Confucius' conception of harmony (*he*) and uniformity (*tong*) is generally moralized and thus confined to the undertakings of human relations, personal cultivation, and state governance. When traced back to its original source, more of its significance can be rediscovered. It is derived from what Yan Ying says allegorically about the categories of harmony (*he*) and uniformity (*tong*):

Harmony (*he*) is different from uniformity (*tong*). Seeking harmony is like making a soup. One uses water, fire, vinegar, soy source and

prunes all together to stew with fish and meat. The chef *mélange* harmoniously all the ingredients for a tasteful soup. In the process of making, he adds something more into it when finding its taste a bit too light; and he reduces something less when finding its taste a bit too heavy (*zaifu he zhi, qi zhi yi wei, ji qi bu ji, yi xie qi guo*). The gentleman enjoys such a soup because it keeps one's mind in peace. The interrelationship between the ruler and his courtier should be correspondingly similar in this case. When observing what the ruler thinks right contains something wrong, the courtier points out the wrong aspects and meanwhile reinforces the right aspects. When observing what the ruler thinks wrong contains something right, the courtier points out the right factors and meanwhile rules out the wrong factors. By so doing the governance is retained in peace and harmony without violating the rites such that the masses are freed from the mind of competitiveness and contentiousness. ... The ancient sage-rulers used to adjust the five flavors (sweet, sour, bitter, spicy, salty) for soup and harmonize the five sounds (*gong, shang, jue, zhi, yu* that parallel to the five-note scale of 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) for music in a metaphorical sense that they did this in order to ensure the calmness of their minds and accomplish their conduct of state affairs (*xianwang zhi ji wuwei, he wusheng ye, yi ping qi xin, cheng qi zheng ye*)...But there arises a problem if what the ruler thinks right or wrong is readily and repeatedly considered right or wrong by the courtier called *Ju*. This is just like making a soup with water only. It will be tasteless and no one would like to have it. It is also like playing the same note by the musical instrument of *qin-se*. It will be boring and no one would like to listen to it. The same is true of the idea of uniformity (*tong*). [\[11\]](#)

As is discerned in the allegory, no one can make a nice soup out of a single ingredient like water only. Nor can one compose a fine piece of music with a single sound. In striking contrast, the soup that is so cooked out of a variety of ingredients becomes more tasteful. It features an organic mixture of the five flavors, say, each flavor keeps its identity but at the same time merges with other flavors, making all of them richer and more appetizing. The same is true of music with the integrated melody of the five sounds. Hence it is advantageous to have more ingredients involved because they produce better results when brought into function by the principle of harmony. Likewise, harmony as a category denotes much more significance as follows:

Firstly, It embodies a complementary relationship within which all the components are interactive and mutually beneficial. This is not merely observable in the making of soup and music, but also in the conducting of state affairs as is shown in the cooperation between the ruler and the courtier. Even though both sides do have opposite views and different judgments, they would consider things from each other's standpoints according to the principle of harmony. When the positive aspects are properly combined while the negative ones are tentatively suspended in pursuit of the common good, it serves to decrease the wrong actions but increase the right actions in the praxis of governance and the process of decision-making. Hence harmony is always cherished as the highest strategy in the art of leadership or political philosophy in China. Contrarily, if the courtier follows the ruler blindly, the two sides seem to pose a gesture of bilateral agreement or false harmony, which may well be called "uniformity" (*tong*). Then, what they decide on could be lopsided and misleading from the perspective of the *de facto* situation. Such characteristics of uniformity (*tong*) self-evidently go against those of real harmony (*he*) in effect.

Secondly, the strategy as such connotes a dynamic process of creative transformation. During the process, all the elements involved undergo a transformational synthesis, thus changing and collaborating with one another but meanwhile maintaining their individual identity. Just as is savored in the soup, the salt is dissolved but its taste remains inside. It is moreover mixed up with other ingredients like vinegar to produce something more distinct and tasteful. The process as such is creative and productive in its true sense. It draws upon diversity in a harmonized form rather than uniformity in a patternized mode. As a rule diversity in a harmonized form features compatibility with different elements that are treated as something necessary and indispensable. It is therefore able to constitute an organic whole in which different elements are transformed and interacting with new vitality, thus conducing to new-born things in a reconstructive and recurring system. This gives rise to chain reaction and sustainable development as well. Quite reversely, uniformity in a patternized mode rejects different elements but accepts what is alike only. Hence it is characterized with a mechanical multiplication of the same substance or a one-plus-one connection. Such sameness has no catalyst and produces no chemical change or combination. Just as the soup analogy shows, one single ingredient makes nothing rich and appealing. Such being the case uniformity in a patternized mode is assumed to be static and short-lived, whereas diversity in a harmonized form to be dynamic and long-lived.

Last but not least, the category of harmony also suggests a dialectic state. United therein are the opposites. This makes possible further development and all the other services aforementioned. Yet, it must be pointed out that Yan Ying's description of harmony as a principle focuses on the positive aspects of unity in opposites only. His knowledge of the dialectic relations revealed by means of harmony is so limited that he fails to detect the intrinsic struggle or conflict among the opposites. In a word, the soup he proposes is a collected soup in harmonious proportion. Likewise, his understanding of unity remains at the level of reconciliation. His philosophy of this kind is obviously intended to supply a theoretical foundation of his political reformism. Such reformism is in my mind worthwhile if compared with any blood-shedding revolution or intercivilizational clashes in whatever rhetoric or propaganda.

III. The Need of a New *Philosophos Poiesis*

As is noticed from above, the first section of this paper discusses the Northropian cosmopolitanism with regard to the meeting of East and West. It is then followed by a rediscovery of the Confucianist ideal of harmony (*he*) in contrast with uniformity (*tong*). We could hereby draw a kind of relevance from it against the present-day socio-cultural background.

It is no secret that globalization haunts almost every corner of the earth at present stage. Its main function is often likened to a double-edged sword under certain circumstances. That is to say, it can be employed diplomatically either as an intruding force to patternize values worldwide or as a defensive impetus to stir up glocalization here and there. Confronted with such a paradoxical situation, we need a new *philosophos poiesis*. This term is used here in a Greek sense. By *philosophos* (φιλοσοφος) is meant loving of wisdom; by *poiesis* (ποιησις) is meant the act of creating or making. It should be “new” because it is open to further developments and modifications. This new *philosophos poiesis* calls for public attention, cosmopolitan outlook and transcultural creativity. My personal pondering in this regard ends up provisionally in a proposed strategy in the multicultural domain. It is inspired by the meeting of East and West, and grounded on the principle of harmony (*he*) instead of uniformity (*tong*). It can be termed as harmony without uniformity (*he er bu tong*). Since globalization thus dominated by strong culture(s) works in a way to patternize rather than harmonize other cultures or things as a whole, I would rather alter it into harmonization without being patternized (*he er bu tong*) for the sake of clarity. This principle runs parallel to unity in diversity, featuring a one-and-many interrelationship. It is therefore believed to be creatively transformational because different components are interacting with each other within an organically harmonized whole. It is receptive and inclusive to the extent that it incorporates new sources into its own and secures a longstanding process of continuity or vital power for sustainable development.

As a multicultural strategy, harmonization without being patterned is also expected to offer its service in such areas as practical morality, human relations, cultural conflicts, and international affairs, etc. Regarding the cultural conflicts that often put the world into jeopardy, for example, the strategy itself signifies a dialectical approach to the interaction between opposites. This is noticeable in Zhang Zai’s hypothesis:

As there are forms, there are their opposites within (*you xiang si you dui*). These opposites necessarily stand in opposition to what they do (*dui bi fan qi wei*). Opposition leads to conflict (*you fan si you chou*). Conflict will necessarily be harmonized and resolved (*chou bi he er jie*).

[\[12\]](#)

Just imagine what if the conflict remains unharmonized and unresolved. It will continue to be intensified and thus conduce to other forms of clash or warfare. Originally the hypothesis is made with reference to all things or beings in the universe, say, how they are produced, changed, and reconciled and made co-existent by the *qi* as the material force. The *qi* is of paramount importance and serving as a hidden mover as is further explained by Wang Fuzhi as follows,

Viewed from the transforming capacity of the *qi* as material force, the *Yin* and the *Yang* bring forth respective forms in polar pairs. Hard and gentle, cold and warm, birth and death are opposite and in conflict, for instance. They help accomplish each other, free from any reason for ever-lasting and enemy-like conflict, however. Eventually they will disperse and return to the universe of Ultimate Void (*tai xu*). Viewed from the human nature, human beings are born to be opposite to the external things. To preserve things at the expense of humans or vice versa gives rise to opposition. Opposition as such leads to conflict. However, humans cannot but make use of things to benefit themselves. This is done by means of reconciling and resolving the conflict. Hence the key to the problem of conflict is similar in the light of human nature and material force. [\[13\]](#)

Detected in the hypothesis is a dialectic feature. It exposes the natural existence of the opposites among things or beings, and the interdependent relationship between the opposites as such. As a result of the interaction between the opposites, there arises opposition and then conflict. However, conflict will be removed as the two sides within the opposites develop into unity by virtue of harmonization or reconciliation. Harmonization (*he*) in this context is distinctive from patternization (*tong*). The former is ready to accommodate and reconcile differences in pursuit of a common ground, while the latter rejects any differences and attempts to uniform all by one frame of reference as if it is exclusively single-tuned or single-tracked. The emphasis on harmonization or reconciliation in this regard corresponds to the conventional

focus on the value of unity in ancient Chinese thought and thus bears an important message in many fields of human practice.

Take political culture for example. The principle of harmonization without being patternized tends to encourage an organic synthesis between rule by law and rule by virtue according to the specific social setting and cultural legacy. It reserves the differences but seeks a common ground among them. By so doing would it be possible to set up a complementary interrelationship. The principle is highly conditional in that it is designed to integrate what is positive and constructive while keeping aside what is negative and destructive. However, it has no intention to deny or cover up the existence of opposition and potential conflict. Rather, it lets them interact to the extent of complementing and benefiting each other instead of turning them into a big chaos or going out of control in a laissez-faire manner. In addition, it takes into due consideration the suitability of cultural soil. As has been proved historically, rule by law grows well in one cultural soil, but it does not in another cultural soil due to unfavorable conditions. If transplanted by force disregarding the specific circumstances, it is liable to wither or get distorted. This reminds us of a fable that reads:

In China the River Huai marks a borderline for different geographical features. As is usually assumed, when an orange tree is planted to its south, it bears edible fruits. When it is transplanted to its north, it bears non-edible fruits. Their leaves and fruits look alike in appearance, but their tastes are extremely different, say, one is sweet and nutritious and the other is bitter and poisonous.

Metaphorically speaking, if a political culture is thus transplanted in spite of the local conditions, the outcome will be much more than a bitter and poisonous kind of fruit. Hence a creative mode of transcultural transformation is desirable and so is the due consideration of cultural differences concerned. In this case what really counts as one of the guidelines lies in the philosophic foundation of harmonization without being patternized (*he er bu tong tong*). For harmonization (*he*) recommends transcultural transformation and reconcile cultural differences. It is in contrast with patternization (*tong*) that tends to worship might as right and exercise the law of the jungle in order to wipe out all differences since they are considered obstacles on the path to absolute uniformity. This does not mean that patternization never effects in handling conflict caused by cultural differences. When sustained by a strong power, it can help remove conflict such as that between cultures or civilizations in some cases. However, the conflict thus removed by force may be like burnt grass. When spring arrives, it will shoot out and flourish again. Besides, patternization by force may conduce to more problems. It may function as a sharp sword to kill a nine-headed monster. Whenever one head is chopped off, two or more would come out afterwards. Regarding the delicate situation today, it is not too difficult for us to predict that if such conflict in cultures is treated by means of radical patternization, it may keep rolling like a snowball, and therefore lead to either Crusade or *Jihad* of all conceivable kinds. None of them we need because of their destructive and tragic costs.

To conclude, the meeting of East and West upon the principle of harmonization without being patternized is proposed here just because the exchange of ideas and interaction between cultures have made groundless any fancy of pure east or pure west. It is no longer difficult to come across some Western elements in the Eastern culture or way of life, and vice versa. In fact, the exchange and interaction as such have inspired many new findings and transcultural creations. Take John Dewey for example. His philosophy of pragmatism is surely labeled as an American type. Yet, he claimed that he got much of his inspiration from his experience and observation during his stay in China from 1919 to 1921, where he learnt not only from Chinese books but also from local life, society and culture as a whole. Just as Jane Dewey, his daughter, proved that his experience in China is so crucial that it helps revive his intellectual and cognitive enthusiasm again. He therefore takes China as a country like his own that is closest to his soul. ^[14] This recollection is quoted not to justify what China matters to John Dewey and his philosophical development. Instead, it is intended to manifest the mutual benefits and fruitfulness of the contributions that all cultures can possibly make to human wisdom in one sense, and in the other, such wisdom is like a sponge always ready to take in various ingredients from all the sources available in order to get more enriched. Maybe we need a new *philosophos poiesis* modified with reference to both Kipling's and Northrop's conception of East and West. It could be expressed tentatively in these four lines:

*East is not all East, West is not all West,
And why not the twain shall meet.
Let the world be in order with diversity
Or be in harmony without uniformity.*

Notes:

[1] Cf. F. S. C. Northrop. *The Meeting of East and West*. (New York: MacMillan Company, 1960, 1st ed., 1946), p. 454.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 495-496.

[4] Cf., Nakamura Moto (中村元). *Bijiao Sixiang Lun* (A Comparative Study of Ideas). (tr. Wu Zhen, Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), p. 140.

[5] The argument is also shared by other Confucian scholars like Luo Chenglie. Cf., Luo Chenglie. “Kongzi de Sixiang Hexin—He” (He as the Kernel of Confucius’ Thought), in Fudan Daxue Lishixi (ed.). *Rujia Sixiang yu Weilai Shehui* (Confucianist Ideas and the Future Society). (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), pp. 315-326.

[6] Yu Dunkang. “The Concept of ‘Great harmony’ in the Book of Changes (Zhou Yi),” in Silke Krieger & Rolf Trauzettel (eds.). *Confucianism and the Modernization of China*. Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1991), p. 51.

[7] Yu Dunkang. “The Concept of ‘Great harmony’ in the Book of Changes (Zhou Yi),” p. 53.

[8] The Chinese original goes as follows: “礼之用，和为贵。先王之道，斯为美；大小由之。有所不行，知和而和，不以礼节之，亦不可行也。” The English translation is modified with a particular reference to these two versions: D. C. Lau (tr.). *Confucius: The Analects*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 61; James Legge (tr.). *The Confucian Analects*. In *The Four Books*. (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe, 1995), p. 69.

[9] The original statement is that “君子和而不同，小人同而不和”。 The English rendering is rephrased with reference to the above two versions apart from a bilingual one by Cai Xiqin and Lai Bo. *Analects of Confucius*. (Beijing: Sinolingua, 1994), p. 244.

[10] “乡愿，德之贼也。” Cf. *The Confucian Analects*. 17:13.

[11] The quotation is taken from the *Zuozhuan* (Zhaogong XX [522 B. C.]). The translation is mine. Here is the original statement—“和如羹焉，水火醯醢盐梅以烹鱼肉，燂之以薪。宰夫和之，齐之以味，济其不及，以泄其过。君子食之，以平其心。君臣亦然。君所谓可而有否焉，臣献其否以成其可。君所谓否而有可焉，臣献其可以去其否。是以政平而不干，民无争心。… 先王之济五味，和五声也，以平其心，成其政也。声亦如味，… 君所谓可，据亦曰可。君所谓否，据亦曰否。若以水济水，谁能食之？若琴瑟之专一，谁能听之？同之不可也是如。”

[12] Cf., Zhang Zai. “Tai he pian” (On Great Harmony), in Wang Fuzhi. *Zhangzi Zhengmeng Zhu* (Commentary on Zhang Zi’s Works). (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p. 25. “有象斯有对，对必反其为；有反斯有仇，仇必和而解。” The English rendering is slightly modified with a particular reference to Wing-tsit Chan’s translation. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan. *A Source Book in Chinese philosophy*. (New Jersey: Preiceton University Press, 1973), p. 506.

[13] *Ibid.* “以气化言之，阴阳各成其象，则相为对，刚柔、寒暑、生杀，必相反而相为仇；乃其究也，互以相成，无终相敌之理，而解散仍返于太虚。以在人之性情言之，以成形则无为对，而利于物者损于己，利于己者损于物，必相反而相仇，然终不能不取物以自益也，和而解矣。气化性情，其机一也。”

[14] Cf. Jane Dewey. “Biography of John Dewey,” in P. A. Schilpp (ed.). *The Philosophy of John Dewey*. (New York: Tudor, 1951), p. 42. Also see Richard Shusterman. “Preface to the Chinese version,” in his *Pragmatist Aesthetics*. (tr. Peng Feng, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2002), pp. 2-3. Note: The Chinese version is based on the English edition—Richard Shusterman. *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).