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Identity - Difference, Selfhood - Otherness

Intercultural and global challenges

Philosophical approaches

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Subject:

The „Project of Globalization“ seems to inexorably be gaining ground. At the same time, the Janus face of this development is apparent almost every day, when the noble intentions of universal peace and an efficient global market are being counteracted by militant conflicts and disastrous market breaks. This process of globalization also goes along with an increasing global consciousness even though its patterns of thinking and its contents have not yet been clarified. This is, among other things, the concern of Intercultural Philosophy whose research has from the beginning been attempting to find additional non-western philosophical concepts to the comparatively prevalent discourses and philosophical traditions of the western hemisphere of thinking, in order to be able to carry on a dialog on equal terms regarding reasoning and self-reflexive criteria. For intercultural philosophy there still remains the concern of understanding of concept and content of culture, but nevertheless, the questions which have shifted in the foreground are concerning constitutive connections and alternatives of universalism and contextualism as well as globalization and particularism whose closer intra-, inter- and transcultural parameters cannot be called homogeneous.

Apart from the not only social and political timeliness of intercultural and global challenges the main focus of the congress therefore is the current position-fixing of the potential understanding of „Intercultural Philosophy“ in general as well as in particular. Therefore, this matter concerns some kind of self-understanding of intercultural thinking and awareness which is by no means simply an

additional sub-discipline within philosophy, but also and above all a veritable challenge of philosophy overall.

On the basis of the concepts „Identity - Difference“ and „Selfhood - Otherness“ philosophical criteria shall be found which can adequately live up to the intercultural and global challenges. Here, two connected levels of consideration are conducive which are important systematically as well as with regard to the development of thinking which is reflected by contrasting and mediating between world cultures and world philosophies:

1) The fundamental self-understanding and at the same time the basic metaphysical

dispositions between the topoi „Identity and Difference“ accompany every philosophical era and always find different answers which have been incorporated into further discourses. Their genuine tension has eventually led to openness to non-European cultures of thinking which can partly be understood as reflectances and mediating instances which partly evade sustainable analogy or identification.

2) In the philosophies of the close of the 19th and 20th century, the topoi „selfhood and otherness“ raise virulent questions concerning constitutive conditional structures of habitual categorial cognition whose universal application is being restricted. Conceptual main threads of „life-world“ („Lebenswelt“), „experience“, „existence“, „bodiliness“ („Leiblichkeit“) and others draw attention to the dimensional differences between subject, individual, ego and self as well as otherness appearing on different levels, such as unfamiliarity, difference, différence, evasion and such.

Both pairs of concepts effectively serve different fields which could more closely be described by the termini „Denkkultur(en)“ resp. „Denkerfahrung“ and „Erfahrungskultur(en)“ resp. „Erfahrungsdanken“. Both are fundamentally concerned with „Lebensbedeutsamkeit“ which elevates philosophical question above the hiatus between everyday life and science; without this concern neither meaning nor orientation would be possible for human beings. In view of intercultural and global challenges which are philosophically concerned with no less than mutual paths regarding the different world cultures as well as the experience and understanding of respective deep structures it seems that it is about time for intercultural philosophising in dialog form.

Both of the suggested fundamental hinges shall guarantee for differentiated approaches and a focussing line of vision in which the following problems and objectives are in the foreground: Methodical approaches, logical, dialectical and speculative patterns of thinking, aspects and critical aspects of metaphysics, epistemological and anthropological, hermeneutic and phenomenological questions, concepts of poststructuralism and deconstructivism, political and socio-philosophical coherences as well as correspondence between ethics and ethos and their connections with aesthetics and aisthesis.