



THE ANTHROPOCOSMIC VISION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: LEARNING TO BE HUMAN AS THE ULTIMATE CONCERN OF INTERCULTURALITY

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Abstract

About twenty years ago, intercultural communication study found itself standing at a cross-road. Intercultural scholars had to decide: either to choose to thread togetherness of the fragmented world or to continue the essentialist tradition that splits the world into binary oppositions. The era of the 21st century in the field of intercultural communication is in fact an era of de-centrism, reflecting upon and criticizing “center-periphery” paradigm that has been dominating the field of intercultural communication since it was founded. Quite a number of post-modern intercultural scholars have contributed different non-essentialist paradigms to reconstructing the theories of intercultural communication. In response to the call of the 20th anniversary symposium and the call for this special issue, we would like to propose a new paradigm, “anthropocosmic” paradigm on the basis of the contemporary Confucian ideas of “learning to be human” as the ultimate concern of interculturality in order to help reorient the trajectory of intercultural communication in the 21st century.

Keywords: anthropocosmic vision of intercultural communication; ‘仁’/Humanity; learning to be human;

This paper was supported by the Xianda College of Economics and Humanities Shanghai International Studies University Educational Reform Fund “Building a Teaching System Reform of ‘Global Citizenship Education’ under the Framework of a Community with a



Shared Future for Mankind” (Grant No. A3102.24.0702.042)

Introduction

The 21st century has ushered in a new era of intercultural communication especially in terms of theory and paradigm building, the validity and reliability of which are further reinforced in the days spelt by the Covid-19 pandemic which has been endangering the lives of all the people of the world and posed questions about how humans can live together to survive the challenges and thrive for centuries to come.

We intend to enrich, broaden and deepen the study of ‘learning to be human as intercultural communication’ advocated by Jia & Jia (2016) and by Jia et al (2019). We argue in this paper that intercultural communication is part and parcel of the dynamic process ‘learning to be human’, which is further regarded as a dynamic, ceaseless process of ‘know yourself/know thyself, critical, self-transformation, and become human’ to borrow from Tu Weiming (2001), and as well as, in modern terms, a ceaseless process of self-extension and integration with others: family, society, nation, world and cosmos. Central to our exploration of the new paradigm is the concept of ‘仁/Humanity’, which has been mistakenly translated as ‘benevolence’ in the literature and thus misleading to its unique yet universal value for humanity that is at the cross-road of peaceful co-development and a continuation of the game of dominance of one civilization over another. In particular we wish to argue for ‘仁/Humanity’ as a universal unifying thread that transcends all differences and conflicts in the community of a shared future for humankind and ensure harmony within diversity as envisioned in the proposed anthropocosmic paradigm to intercultural communication.

1. Understanding the Highest Moral Concept of “仁”, Humanity, as the Ultimate Concern of Human Beings

Of the most important aspects of Chinese Confucian culture and philosophy, the highest ones are: 1) ontologically, “what it is to be human”, which leads to person building and then to “learning to be human” as an imperative for all human beings, and 2) cosmologically, the concept of “humanity as one body with heaven, earth, and all things” or as “one body of humanity with heaven”, which is acknowledged as the contemporary Confucianist anthropocosmic vision in contrast to the anthropocentric cosmological view. However, these two interrelated concepts come together to define what it is to be human: naturally, what it is to be human; morally, what one ought to be to be human, and what one should do to realize what it is to be human in terms of social practice.

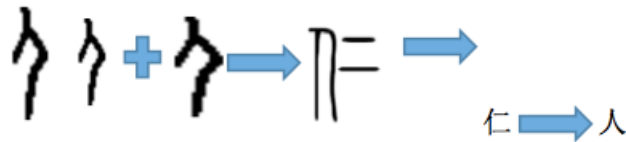
Being human, in the anthropocosmic vision, is naturally, morally and practically, embedded in terms of “仁”, humanity, that is, “humanity as person” (仁者人也). The concept of “仁”, humanity, is further explained as “humanity as one body with heaven, earth and all things” as stated by many ancient scholars (Zhang, 2002, pp. 303-305), which means that to embody “仁”, humanity, is to transcend one’s own little ego and to treat the whole

world as one’s body. The insightful import conveyed in this statement is considered to be the ultimate concern of human beings in their whole life, which we also consider to be the ultimate concern of intercultural communication both in theory and practice (Jia, et al, 2019).

1.1 “仁”, Humanity as Person Building and Nurturance of Interculturality

What it is to be human in Chinese cultural context is symbolized by the Chinese word “仁”, humanity, pronounced as ren, the same term as “人”/person. “人”/ Person is therefore defined in terms of “仁”, humanity.

The word “仁”, humanity, is graphically composed of two parts: on the left, is a person-figure like pictograph “人”, and on the right, is the ideograph, Chinese numeral “二”/ two. In this way the pictographic and ideographic compound “仁”, humanity in terms of person is rendered the significant meaning of person as the integration of two persons, which can be symbolized by the following figure:



The difference between the two words “仁”, humanity and “人”, person in the graphic form seems a simple yet significant addition of the Chinese numeral “二”, two. The symbolic amplification is most significant. It connotes that a person is the integration of two persons, who are not identical (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.115).

The concept of a person as the integration of two persons can be further explained in terms of self-extension into and integration with others (in Jia &Jia, 2016, Jia et al, 2019). It connotes what it naturally is to be human and what it morally ought to be human. And more than that, what one has to do in social practice to realize what one naturally is and what one morally ought to be so as to achieve whole personhood. The idea of a person as the integration of two persons accounts for the social and cultural character of person building,

It indicates that a single person alone does not make a whole person. As being in the world, humans are not an isolated, independent atomic entity, but interconnected and interdependent beings. The idea that two different persons make a whole person obviously runs counter to the instrumental rationalist advocacy of dualism between subject and object. Here, the notion of a person as “self-extension into and integration with others” implies that the forming of togetherness or communities with others is in a sense of human nature. One person as the integration of two persons connotes the idea of person building as a dynamic and ceaseless process of self-extension into and integration with others.

“仁”, humanity is not a static entity but dynamic becoming, always evolving and

transforming, a ceaseless process of self-extension and integration. This process connotes that one's humanity depends upon the humanity of others to make a whole person. This highlights the implications of Mead's concept of the self that "What an adult man or woman is, in all societies, is in large degree what other men and women have created through symbolic exchange. Each of us takes in other selves to build self" (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.118). The self is thus a field of selves that results from taking in other selves and making them a part of our communal self. A self, especially in the 21st century is always in flux, metaphorically, as a space of global flow rather than a fixed state of an enclosed container (Held, 2000). The person building process, however, entails a reciprocal process. One is both influenced by one's multiple environing others and at the same time, influences them (ibid.). As is stated by Mead:

The response of the 'I' involves adaptation, but an adaptation which affects not only the self but also the social environment which helps to constitute the self, that is, it implies a view of evolution in which the individual affects his own environment as well as being affected by it (Mead, 1934, pp. 214-215).

Self in the Mead's vision is a 'field of selves' (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.118) that results from taking in other selves and making them a part of our communal self. Self is thus increasingly becoming better, bigger, richer and more complex. It becomes a self of multi-collective selves. A person is not an absolute but relative being, always being defined and redefined, construed and reconstrued in relation to his/her multiple environing others.

A person as self-extension and integration is thus a vague, ambivalent, fluid and even "indivisible continuum between self and other, between I and we, between subject and object, between now and then" (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.119). The importance and influence of a person, according to Hall and Ames, becomes measurable in terms of the extension into and integration with the selves of others. That is, a person is meaningful and valuable as a function of his participation in the field of selves that constitutes his community, and the quality of his own person in turn is a function of both the richness and diversity of the contributing selves that he has brought into his particular focus, and the extent that he has been successful in maximizing their creative possibilities. Thus the extent and degree of one's extension and integration would be the basis for determining one's quality as a person towards a whole person.

The important point is that person building in terms of self-extension into and integration with others is in fact a process of symbolic exchange, or intercultural communication between self and other. And the achievement of the integration or unity between self and other that makes the high quality of a whole personhood is close in meaning to the concept of interculturality, one of the popular terms in modern intercultural communication today. The concept of "仁", humanity as the integration of two persons thus nurtures interculturality, which is a unity in diversity, in which the boundary between self and other is ambivalent, vague, fluid and even indivisible.

1.2 “仁”, Humanity as the One Unifying Thread (一以贯之之道) Binding Humanity and Heaven Together as One Body

Given that the concept of “仁”, humanity, entails person building and nurturance of interculturality, then questions arise: how can it be ensured for a person to take in others so as to enrich, define and redefine self? How can the realization of self-extension and integration be guaranteed so as to achieve interculturality? How is the realization of global togetherness possible? It is an ethical issue in the main. It is a matter not only of human nature but more important, a matter of human social practice.

Human beings, according to Confucius, are innately good but customs keep them apart. Humans are born to love others, as Confucius claimed that humanity is loving others (仁者爱人). More than that, one loves not only others, but also oneself, and all things as well. One is expected not only to love oneself and those close at hand but also to extend the love to those afar, who are not relatives and kins. Humans should extend their affection to all things. As we all probably know, “take care of one’s own children, but also take care of children of others; take care of one’s own elders but also elders of others” (Mengzi). This is why “仁”, humanity is defined in terms of the integration of two persons. Hall and Ames (1987) quote from Xun Zi to interpret Confucius on the meaning of a whole person:

The love originated by the whole person is a ground of mutual incorporation between the self and the other. The lowest level entails conducting oneself in such a manner as to occasion other people taking one’s concerns as their own. While this is praiseworthy conduct, there is a selfishness here. The next level is for one to take the concerns of others as one’s own. This is perhaps higher, but is self-effacing: one’s own legitimate concerns are not served. The highest level, then, is necessarily reflective, incorporating in one’s own person the entire field of self-other concerns (pp. 121-122).

In this way, a whole person is defined as process of self-extensive and integrative person building in which one takes the interests of others for one’s own and conducts oneself in a manner that concerns the general good. This kind of ‘taking in others is obviously reciprocal in nature. The love proposed by Confucius and his followers is in fact, according to Hall and Ames, “a bond that allows one’s own person to be defined by reference to those he loves” (1987, p.120).

More than a bond, entailed in “仁, humanity”, is the most general ethical principle which is considered to be the one unifying thread through which humanity and heaven, or self, communities, earth/nature and heaven are bound together into one body. This bound togetherness through the one unifying thread is the most important theme in Confucius’ thinking throughout his life (Jia Y.X, in progress) .

The highest ethical principle as the one unifying thread consists two ethics: The first is called “恕”, reciprocity, pronounced as *shu*, the interpretation of which is “altruism”, “reciprocity”, consideration. This ethic is taken from what Confucius said while answering

the question put to him by one of his disciples, “Is there one expression that one can act on to the end of his days?” Confucius replied, “There is ‘恕’, reciprocity: ‘do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire’ (Cited in Zhang, 2002, p.291). This ethic entailed in “仁”, humanity is thus considered to be “the one unifying thread to the end of the days of one’s life” (Cited in Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 283).

We prefer the interpretation “reciprocity” for “恕” because the practice of “恕” is bi-directional: it requires that one must first project self into the other and look at things from the perspective of the other and then move other to self. It is only once one moves from other to self that one can determine appropriate conduct in the opposite direction and extend self to other. In this light, the interests of other will be taken as a model for reference for the conduct of the self (Jia, et al., 2019, p. 34).

The second ethic that constitutes the one unifying thread is called “人道”, the human Way, which is also called social responsibility. This ethic is stated as “in order to establish ourselves, we must help others to establish themselves; in order to enlarge ourselves, we must help others to enlarge themselves” (Cited in Zhang 2002, p. 287). This ethic unites the concern for self and the concern for others, which indicates that we should become open and inclusive, be sensitive to and respect differences, tolerate ambiguity, and be responsible for others.

At the same time, we should value ourselves, be responsible for ourselves. We pursue incorporation and mutual benefit and celebrate pluralism and multiculturalism. We humans share social and moral responsibility and human right as well. We strongly propose that self and other should not be understood as the free play of binary opposites but as complementary forces that help form one unity between self and other, between humanity and nature, between humanity and all things, and between humanity and heaven.

According to Jia (forthcoming), “仁, humanity”, as the one unifying thread, binds self and other, different social communities including national, and global communities, earth/nature and heaven into one body, of which interculturality is an integral part. This is unity in diversity, with each different part performing its distinctive duties and doing its distinctive jobs.

1.3 Humanity, Intersubjectivity and Intersubjective Dialogue

1.3.1 “Humanity as One Body with Heaven” and as Intersubjectivity

The concept of “humanity as one body with heaven” entailed in “仁, humanity” is the highest moral concept in Chinese culture. Its realization is considered to be the ultimate concern of human beings throughout their life. The concept of “humanity as one body with heaven” inherently nurtures “intersubjectivity” and “intersubjective negotiation and dialogue” the concepts of which have emerged in the 21st century as key concepts in intercultural communication both for postmodern intercultural paradigms in West and the emergent anthropocosmic paradigms in China (Jia & Jia 2016; Jia et al, 2019).

It is crucial to understand the concept of ‘heaven’ before we come to understand the meaning of “humanity as one body with heaven” in the anthropocosmic vision. “Heaven” as



the most supreme concept in Chinese culture does not only refer to the physical sky. It is regarded as the source of humanity, earth/nature, and all things in the universe. It symbolizes the most comprehensive moral and virtuous principle, underlying all the transformations of humanity, nature, and all things. It also stands for the highest moral and spiritual quality of personhood. It gives birth to human beings. It transforms human beings into moral persons, guiding them onto the right way towards accomplishing the highest quality of personhood. And as a spiritual heaven, it motivates human beings to the realization of the “unity between self, communities, earth/nature and heaven”, which is considered to be the ultimate concern of human beings throughout their life.

The concept of “one body between humanity and heaven” does not merely refer to the unity between humanity and nature as scholars usually tend to think it does. The concept of “one body between humanity and heaven” according to contemporary Confucian scholars suggests that human being is an integral part of heaven and heaven is an integral part of human beings and as an integral part of heaven, human beings have creative power as heaven does, in the sense that human beings are also creators of the world. It suggests that the relationships between self and other are not subject-object oriented as they traditionally are in West, but are inherently subject-subject or intersubjectivity oriented.

1.3.2 “仁”, Humanity as Intersubjectivity and Intersubjective Dialogue

The intersubjective relationships between heaven and humanity, and self and other as well are most important. The whole universe, including culture, values, human spirit and ideals, etc., are structured either in terms of subject-object dichotomy or in terms of “humanity as one body with heaven”. And the structure of the former is characterized by what is called binary opposites or subjectivity centeredness while the structure of the latter is characterized by “humanity as one body with heaven, which inherently nurtures subject-subject relationship and intersubjective interaction or intersubjectivity” (Jia Y.X, in progress).

Traditionally, instrumental rationalism follows the subject-object dichotomous interaction, embodying transcendence: god, categorical imperative, things in themselves (Kant, 1997), nature, values and human ideals, are all regarded as transcendental substances, the ideas of which are universal, absolute, objective, and transcendental, resulting in subject-object dichotomy, with subject objectifying others, justifying, persuading, changing, and dominating others, besides controlling and conquering nature. Postmodernism criticizes and rejects instrumentalism in rationality, envisioning that the universe is structured in subject-subject relationship and intersubjective interaction or in terms of intersubjectivity rather than in the subject-object dichotomy.

Confucianism, for over two thousand years, have been upholding the view that the universe is structured in terms of “humanity as one body with heaven”, the principle of which is subject-subject relationship or intersubjectivity between humanity and heaven and among all the things in the universe.

The validity and reliability of intersubjectivity and intersubjective relationship and, then, interaction in terms of negotiation and dialogue is further enforced in Chinese culture by the



ethical principles as discussed earlier: “恕道”, the way of reciprocity and “人道”, the way of humanity and social responsibility. These ethical principles do serve as one unifying thread, binding self and other, self and communities, earth/nature and heaven together into an inseparable body through intersubjective negotiation and dialogue so as to achieve social, cultural, and natural and anthropocosmic order.

All of us, animate and inanimate, in and through intersubjective interaction, and with each performing and doing its own unique but complementary duty and job, are joining heaven, striving hard for the realization of the bound togetherness. We human beings and all things that as human as we are, ethically bound together, gradually forming larger and still larger togetherness towards the realization of spiritual and ecological anthropocosmic community, which is an all-encompassing community of shared future for humankind.

Intersubjectivity and intersubjective interaction, negotiation and dialogue in particular, based on differences and diversities, serve as threading mechanism between self-reflection and self-transformation. And it is in and through them, innovative ideas and views, new culture (third culture), hybridity, new identities, including global citizenship and global communities of shared future for humankind are created.

However, intersubjective negotiation and dialogue in the anthropocosmic vision differ from the intersubjective negotiation and dialogue, as proposed by Habermas, which seem to be instrumental he himself criticizes (Guilherme, 2002, p,70). Thus, reason or rationality inclined. He seems to base his theory on universalism: favoring agreement, consensus and unity, which can only be achieved in ideal situations, over difference, diversity, dissent and pluralism in actual complex life situations in his intersubjective interaction theory.

The intersubjective negotiation and dialogue in the anthropocosmic vision also differ from the intersubjective negotiation and dialogue proposed by some post-modern intercultural scholars, who favor difference, diversity, dissent, hybridity and plurality over agreement, consensus, unity in intersubjective interaction. The anthropocosmic vision pursues, on the one hand, agreement, consensus and unity and, on the other hand, it also pursues difference and diversity, dissent and plurality. Unity in diversity is the ultimate goal of intersubjective interaction, negotiation, and dialogue.

The highest virtuous and moral concept of “仁”, humanity as the integration of two persons who are not identical implies that intercultural communication, the ideal form of which is negotiation and dialogue. The idea that two persons make whole personhood suggests that the highest quality of personhood is realized through intercultural communication, the ideal form of which is negotiation and dialogue, which is intersubjective in nature.

The intersubjective negotiation and dialogue in the anthropocosmic vision goes beyond the idea that intercultural communication or dialogue aims merely at the discovery of others and of the self so as to achieve mutual understanding and rebuild self and others. More than creating new ideas, new concepts, new cultures, new identities, etc., as postmodernist intercultural scholars hope to achieve through them, the anthropocosmic vision regards intersubjective negotiation and dialogue as the ideal mechanism in person building and thus

learning to be human in the sense that it is in and through intersubjective interaction, an individual will critically and creatively transform self through self-extension into and integration with others: other selves, multiple communities, different nations and ethnic groups, earth/nature, heaven, and all things in the universe.

They are the ideal way towards the building of a community of shared future for humankind. The intersubjective negotiation and dialogue in the anthropocosmic vision are indeed the ideal way leading to the building of whole personhood and a community of shared future for humankind, which is the ultimate concern of intercultural communication.

2 Learning to be Human as the Ultimate Concern of Human Beings and of Intercultural Diversity

Learning to be human consists of two parts: 1) understanding self and 2) learning to be human as dynamic and critical self-transformation.

2.1 Understanding Self

In the ceaseless process of learning to be human, self-knowledge is considered to be the departure point for an individual in his/her life-long journey toward the realization of one's true self. Knowing self covers according to Tu Weiming (2001) two correlated parts: 1) the social nature of self: self as the center of relationships and 2) self as a dynamic, open, becoming process in which self plays the role of the motivator, creator and having all the potential for critical transforming self, other, and the world and in developing its spiritual humanism, manifesting the subjective and autonomous nature of the self (Tu, 2001, p.166).

2.1.1 The Social Nature of Self: Self as the Center of Relationships

Given that self as self-extension and integration or as the integration of two persons in terms of self and other in the anthropocosmic vision, self is rendered to be social in nature. True self is embedded in and even self itself contains society. Social values and social relationships constitute an integral part of self-knowledge and integral part of self. "To internalize social values and relationships constitute an innovative access to creative self-transformation from the present self to a true self" (Tu, 2001, p.171). To state the idea in a different way, the realization of true self lies in the establishment of social relationships and social togetherness and it is only in the establishment of social relationships and social togetherness can a person realize its true self. In this vision, in the globalizing age, true self lies in the establishment of social relationships and social togetherness not only at the national but also at the international or global level.

The anthropocosmic vision asserts that self is in the center of all kinds of relationships that surround it, such as family, neighbors, people of different social groups, different communities: religious, ethnic, gender, national, international, professional, occupational, educational, business, etc., as well as political, ideological, etc. True self grows out of and develops in these relationships both at internal and international levels through intercultural communication.

Then, the question arises: how does one establish relationships with all others?

2.1.2 Self as Subjective and Autonomous and as Open, Becoming Process

Human self in the anthropocosmic vision is not an isolated atomistic being. It is not merely a given, fixed, absolute, eternal entity. It is not merely a product of culture. The subjective, autonomous and creative self is an open, dynamic becoming process.

As pointed earlier, “each of us takes in other selves to build self”. The self is thus a “field of selves” that results from taking in other selves and making them a part of our communal self. Self is a becoming process in the sense that it is always being defined and redefined. A self, in the 21st century is always in flux, metaphorically, as a space of global flow rather than a state of a fixed and closed container, as mentioned earlier.

As subjective and autonomous, self creatively transforms self and others. It co-creates the world together with heaven. Self creates cultures, especially the third culture in terms of norms and values. It creates new ideas, concepts, identities and communities. It creatively extends self into and integrates with others and other communities so as to achieve not only national but also international citizenship and the establishment of communities at different levels with the global and anthropocosmic communities as the ultimate concern for human beings.

All of this demonstrates that human self has all the potential to construct and reconstruct self, others, the world, nature, and all things in the universe through dynamic interaction with them.

Unlike Christian belief, human self and the world are all created by God, which means God is the only ultimate source and end of human beings. In many religious traditions, soul or spirit is regarded as subjective, conscious experience, moral judgment. And for rationalists, it is reason, free will and, more important, one’s essence, which makes a person who he/ she is (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p.563)

In Chinese culture, however, due to the immanent and transcendent or ‘humanity as one body with heaven’ ontology, self itself can be regarded as god. Heaven is immanent, rather than distant and beyond. Heaven resides in our mind/heart, our earth rather than elsewhere beyond the world, transcending all things in the world.

Spirituality in fact requires an aesthetic outlook of the world that is central to self-nurturance, self-transformation, and the nurturance and transformation of self and others, and all the things, the whole world and the whole universe. In Chinese Confucian tradition, spirituality inside our body is more than spiritual experience. It forms ethical relationship with us and the worlds. And self in this anthropocosmic vision is always ready to creatively and critically project itself into others and all the things, animate and inanimate, in the universe, creatively and critically extend and integrate with them until an anthropocosmic togetherness is achieved.

Many foreign scholars regard the concept of heaven in Chinese culture as god and overlook the subjective, autonomous and creative nature of self. However, even in ancient China it is asserted that becoming human is more than simply following in the footprints of others. Human self has an active, creative role in continuing, broadening, and extending the

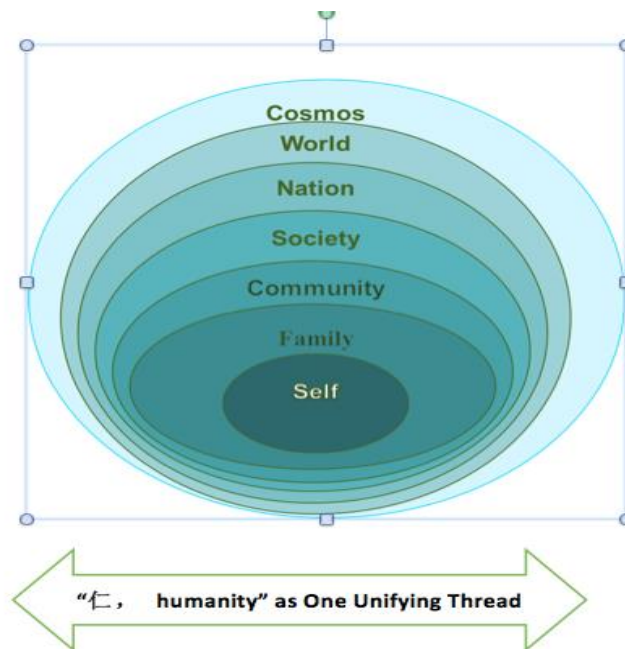
Way (the most general principle that govern the transformations of all the things). Confucian scholars assert that “it is the human self that is able to extend and further develop the Way, not the Way that is able to extend the human self” (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.129). In this vision, “the way is generated and nurtured out of the efforts of the accomplished person, and is ultimately dependent on the human action for its coming into being” (Hall & Ames, 1987, p.129).

These insightful ideas are significant in the globalization age of the 21st century. As subjective, autonomous, and creative being, self critically and continuously extend into and integrate with all others, all other communities, and all the things in the world, who are not an absolute other to us but as integral part of us.

2.2 Learning to Be Human as Critical Self-Transformation

Learning to be human is considered to be the ultimate concern for human beings, as well as the ultimate concern for intercultural communication. It is in fact a dynamic process of critical self-transformation. And self-transformation is envisioned here as a series of concentric circles with self as the center: self, family, community, society, nation, world and cosmos. Or stated differently, self-transformation is actualized in the ceaseless process of self-extension into and integration with, sequentially and continuously: family, community, society, nation, world and cosmos, with self as the center (Figure 1, also see Jia, et al, 2019, p. 25).

Figure 1 “仁, humanity” as One Unifying Thread



The process of self-extension and integration overlaps with the building of global citizenship and a community of shared future for humankind. The former is achieved in and through the process of the latter while the latter is achieved in and through the process of the former, without either, neither will survive.

Global citizenship, for example is part and parcel of the ceaseless process of critical self-extension into and integration with others, including the family, various social communities, the nation, the world and the cosmos. However, we must be aware that without the building of global citizenship, we will not be able to achieve whole personhood in the globalization age of the 21st century, and vice versa, without the building of global citizenship, the attainment of whole personhood will never be possible.

The self-transformation in terms of self-extension and integration is in essence intercultural communication, the ideal form of which is intercultural negotiation and dialogue at different levels, the intersubjective or equal relationship in interactions is ensured by the ethical principle or the one unifying thread as discussed earlier. However, the transformation process in which an individual is involved is a dynamic continuum, sequential and continuous. It is a continuum consisting sequential and continuous stages: *“transform self, regulate the family, order the state, and render peace to the whole world”* cited from *“The Book of Rites, Great Learning”* (Zengzi) in Pre Qin period and then realize the ultimate personhood of humanity as one body with heaven.

The whole process is sequential and continuous even though they may overlap, in the sense that the process of self-extension and integration with the world may very likely occur in the earlier stage of self-extension into and integration, with different social groups for example. And more than that, the individual involved in the ceaseless self-extension and integration process should never stop at any stage before he/she arrives at the ultimate end. This learning to be human process as self-transformation experiencing all these intercultural stages in Chinese culture may be of great significance for intercultural education worldwide for the ultimate end of global citizenship and a human life community. Efforts in intercultural learning in this line will support what David Coulby has said, *“human history is increasingly a race between intercultural education and disaster. If education is not intercultural, it is probably not education, but rather the inculcation of nationalist or religious fundamentalism”* (Coulby, 2006, pp. 245-257).

Conclusion

In the arduous life-long journey of learning to be human for an individual self, which we consider to be the process of intercultural communication and the ultimate concern of interculturality in the 21st century, we attempt to propose that we first be aware of what it is to be human: 1) understanding “仁”, humanity and 2) understanding self. The article strongly suggests that being aware that learning to be human is learning to ceaselessly, critically and creatively extend self into and integrate with: family, society, nation, world, cosmos, and heaven, we human beings should, as a departure point, unify all of us. the whole world and the whole cosmos into a bound togetherness through negotiation and dialogue undergirded by the one unifying ethical thread and then further co-create with all



the people of the world core ideologies, values and ethics for the forthcoming of a community of shared future for humankind.

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