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History *vs.* the Eternal Present or
Liberal Individualism and the Morality of
Compassion and Trust

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Abstract

The author's theoretical position integrates trust and compassion as essential pillars of morality, while at the same time upholds the centrality of the liberal ideal of the individual self, the dignity of the individual person in the Kantian sense. Values like compassion and trust are essential for Globalization since they provide the background for several human groups interaction with different worldviews. Both compassion and trust are based on placing value on others—even distant and unknown others—and both are essential aspects of our moral life. Nevertheless, these two aspects of our morality have been systematically neglected by important works of contemporary political theory. Liberal tradition in contemporary debate (Will Kymlicka, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas) does not include this values as relevant part of theory that intends to construct a complete and humane picture of a well ordered and just society. This work also constitutes a critique of Modernity in how it relegates to the private realm the efforts to create an environment that allows people to grow up as compassionate adults.

Resumen

La posición teórica de la autora integra la compasión y confianza como pilares esenciales de la moralidad, y al mismo tiempo, sostiene la centralidad de la idea liberal del ser individual, en el sentido kantiano de la dignidad de la persona. Valores como la compasión y la confianza son esenciales para la Globalización ya que proveen el contexto indispensable para que muchos grupos humanos interactúen con diferentes visiones del mundo. Tanto la compasión como la confianza están basadas en los aspectos esenciales de la vida moral. No obstante, estos dos principios de nuestra moralidad han sido sistemáticamente omitidos por importantes obras de la teoría política contemporánea. La tradición liberal contemporánea (Will Kymlicka, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas) no incluye a estos valores como parte relevante de la teoría que busca construir un cuadro completo y humano de una sociedad bien ordenada y justa. Este trabajo también constituye una crítica de la Modernidad en como ésta relega al ámbito de lo privado, los esfuerzos para crear un entorno para que las personas puedan crecer como adultos compasivos.

Introduction

In modern life, we ‘move’ in time; we live the embodied experience of time passing, of the clock ‘ticking’ and of us humans progressing through history in a straight-line direction constantly and indefinitely; recording historical events sequentially. Modern consciousness legitimates the reality of this sequential order of events as objective history. Historical time is objective in the sense that we consider it real. However, simultaneity of events in time can be seen as another perspective on the time-phenomena. Simultaneity refers to knowing that much of what happens in the world today may become relevant to us at the same time as our immediate experience, which is one of the signs of globalization. In contemporary interaction and awareness, global infrastructure has made possible for us to consider in our daily life as well as in our ethical and emotional reactions relevant facts, political, economic, social, and even cultural concerns of faraway peoples almost at the time as they arise. An alternative perspective to time-as-history contemplates time as the “here and now” —the constant present— which our historical minds do not necessarily conceive of as time like. Simultaneity focuses on the fleeting present instant as the experiential basis to be able to disclose conceptually a realm of morality from which both compassion and trust may emerge. I argue that the modern mind does not have the conceptual tools to approach time as simultaneity; the present time is seen as a static unimportant moment, not enough ‘time’ to achieve anything, or an instant that unavoidably gives way to past and future: the march of history. In contrast to this, the idea of time as the constant present moment can encompass infinity, and is necessary to conceptualize compassion and trust for moral reflection under the contemporary conditions of globalization.

Here, compassion is defined as universal love, and trust refers to acting as if all strangers were trustworthy even when there is no evidence that they may be. In current literature we can find a wide variety of definitions for these two concepts —especially for ‘trust’ (see Hardin 2002, ch. 3). Such abundance of definitions has brought much confusion to the debate; but I propose that the simplicity of the definitions that I use helps clarify the debate and emphasize the need to consider these elusive concepts as central aspects of contemporary moral and political theory.¹ Both compassion and trust are based on placing value on others —even distant and unknown others— and both are essential aspects of our moral life. Nevertheless, these two aspects of our morality have been systematically neglected by important works of contemporary political theory. Globalization creates the need for a cosmopolitan outlook on the consequences of various human groups with

¹ The definitions are not mine, I propose them as a result of analyzing and complementing with each other, the work of Keiji Nishitani (1982), Martha Nussbaum (2001), and Eric Uslaner (2002).

different worldviews coming in constant contact and awareness of each other in contemporary world and local interaction. In this book I will review the positions that I consider are major axes of the individualist liberal tradition in contemporary debate (Will Kymlicka, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas) to illustrate how compassion and trust are lacking in order to produce a more complete and humane picture of a well ordered and just society. It also constitutes a critique of Modernity in how it relegates to the private realm the efforts to create peaceful environments for the children of the world to grow up as compassionate adults.

My theoretical position strives to integrate trust and compassion as essential pillars of morality while at the same time upholding the centrality of the liberal ideal of the individual self, the dignity of the individual person in the Kantian sense². Liberalism defines itself with respect to the value of the individual self, its preeminence, its inviolability. Individuality is a basic concept in liberal political theory and in modern culture because it is at the heart of the debate about the basis to organize a just public life under the conditions of contemporary modernity. In this context, the individual self is seen as having priority over the community that she belongs to in order to evade the imposition of arbitrariness from the group on the individual person. An example of how this view has been objected to is the communitarian position that criticizes abstract liberal individualism by saying that human beings are individuals only because their community gives them the cognitive and cultural basis to be able at all to think of themselves as individuals. The liberal idea of justice (the 'right') aims at protecting the individual person from what could be seen as oppressive practices of the group—in spite of the 'good' that the group might find in such practices. But communitarians contend that individuality is a type of good created by western culture, which is then shrouded in an abstract mantle of neutrality, and imposed on every human group as if it were the essence of human freedom instead of a cultural creation. Communitarians have a good point here; they show how the universality of individualism of abstract liberal thought can be regarded as an imposition and this is a similar critique raised against it from postmodern thought, feminism, and postcolonialism. My perspective in criticizing this typical liberal attitude though is different, for while I do object theoretically to the imposition of individualism as a universal human trait, I also propose that political theory needs individualism as an ideal. Nevertheless, I believe that it is important to show the cultural sources of individuality and its sacred and reflexive roots that lie in how the notion of fault has brought about moral conscience in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This will help to temper the

² Kant portrays human beings as transcendental subjects that are able to exercise their rationality and freedom by choosing their own moral principles through what he calls the 'categorical imperative': Principles or maxims that we come up with by testing them in universalizing their application to all circumstances and all people. This is, according to Kant, the sole source of categorical authority for moral decisions.

validity of individualism's universalistic pretensions and open up the possibility for liberal thought to go beyond the limitations of individual subjectivity towards an expanded self. A phenomenological methodology to think about the self is the basis to achieve this self-expansion and also the concept of simultaneous-synchronic time. Yet, as I have said before, the concept of individuality as an ideal universal principle cannot be disposed of; rather, it must be complemented. Individualistic and abstract liberalism that aspires to universality is not sufficient any longer to deal with contemporary political world predicaments. I argue that the Kantian moral position needs to be complemented with an equally universalistic one of compassion or universal love that will provide a more balanced perspective on the problems of political theory in global interaction –this, I argue, is a true cosmopolitan position. This perspective is based on the present realm of simultaneity that provides the individual self with expanded awareness about her moral life.

In considering the perspective of simultaneity in compassion and trust I propose what I call Cosmopolitan Liberalism that is aware of its own western and particular roots, and thus has no underlying intentions of domination or cultural superiority. This discloses the relativity of liberal universalisms and allows us to see them as mere order-producing myths: ideals that are sought for and that are realized only sporadically and even then only partially. By the same token, it is important to stress that this same limitation also applies to the universality of compassion and trust as moral sentiments. In this chapter, I will sketch my typology of views of reality in order to gain greater definition on the contrasting conceptions of time as simultaneity and as historical progress³ (I); I will then explain how the individual self and thus liberalism are tied to this latter conception of time (II). Having done this, I will explain how simultaneity can be seen as the source of compassion (III); and in what way the latter is linked to trust (IV). This will allow me in the following chapters of this book to critically review some important liberal positions that I believe have tried –and failed for their lack of compassion and trust– to provide answers to the complex predicaments for political theory in contemporary awareness of cultural diversity and clashing world cosmologies in current global politics.

³ For an in-depth explanation of this typology, see my *Political Philosophy for the Global Age* (2005).

I.

There is a popular myth that assumes that Modernity erases the traditional order of things progressively, a premise that produces naive projections of a better future as well as terrifying visions of a totally administrated and rationalized world. This view of things also simplistically opposes the West against the traditional world in a dichotomy that today is the source of more myth and ideology than of actual experience. Although we freely and continuously speak of the West and the non-West it is hard to define unequivocally who belongs to one or the other realms. In order to overcome such a dichotomy we must also overcome the dialectical relationship in which the non-West is seen as the 'other' and where tradition is seen as something that precedes Modernity in a sequential manner. In reality, and as Hans Gadamer has taught us, even Modernity depends on its own traditions. One way of leaving this mythological dichotomy behind is to bring it to the contemporary world scenario and to contemplate it from the perspective of time as simultaneity. To say it differently: even though Modernity as a concept and as a way of experiencing the world emanates from Europe (and can be said to come from a mixture of sources from all over the world) the non-West is also already part of it through global interaction; that is, the non-West is already western or modern at many levels of human experience. Another approach to this mixture of sources and products (that we so readily recognize as West and non-West) is Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993) which argues that the project of Modernity is suspended as well as sustained by its own inner contradictions. So we face the paradox that nobody has ever been modern, and yet; liberal Modernity is already the ideal basis of global culture and interaction. However, in this interaction many diverse views of reality intersect and overlap, feed each other, and even deny each other. This is the reason why I propose to identify ideal types of views of reality according to the sociological method inherited from Max Weber. It is important to stress that my ideal types—following Weber's teachings about them—are mere utopias or conceptual tools, that is; they cannot be found in lived experience in their theoretical purity, but they can guide research and our reflection about society (Weber 1949). These ideal types are all of them seen as possible human experience, relevant to the species without considering if they are preeminent in our own culture, tradition of knowledge or conception of reality; and due to the principle of simultaneity, they can all coexist in one person or culture at the same time—even within contradiction.

And so, I propose a theoretical construction that conceives of three ideal types of reality and the structure of this ideal difference is theoretically organized around the dialogical relationship between "world" and

“transcendence”.⁴ World refers to all the concrete aspects of our experience, our worldly reality. Transcendence refers to a superior type of reality above and beyond this world that people aspire to as a higher domain of reality. World is what our senses perceive and transcendence is only apprehended through our imagination and our emotions. This is an artificial conceptual difference for both are intricately entwined in a complex manner in any view of reality. Yet, I propose the two concepts in a dialogical relationship as the basis to create ideal types that will clarify notions of time at a theoretical level. In my typology, the structure of the relationship between world and transcendence defines notions of time and language that preeminently shape the principles of discipline that are practiced and observed in each culture and that perpetuate it⁵. It is important to clarify yet again that, although these views of reality may seem to lead to a classification of cultures, they stress empirically experienced aspects of human consciousness in all kinds of cultures all over the world. The three ideal types of reality that I propose may be regarded as three types of prevalent culture, but are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary in human experience: all cosmologies have recognizable organizational features of the three types.

I have called the three ideal types of reality historical, mystic, and primitive respectively. Only the historical type of reality considers both world and transcendence as simultaneously real, which organizes a tension between them that is solved through an imagined progress of humanity through time in history—even when there may be pessimism about such ideal of progress. The mystic type regards the world as illusory in essence and only transcendence as real. The primitive type regards reality as the world, and transcendence is not present as a concept. Thus, while the historical type is based on the dialectical tension of an eternal division, the mystic and the primitive types conceive of reality as essentially whole and couched in either of the two poles whose tension the historical view inhabits. In historical, modern time reality is divided into an opposition—however ideal—between world and transcendence. The other two typically-ideal conceptions of reality that I propose are holistic in that reality is fettered either wholly in world or wholly in transcendence, and the opposition between these two terms in these ideas of reality is either irrelevant in the primitive type, or an illusion in the mystic

⁴ A conceptual dialogical relationship corresponds to the idea of time in simultaneity in the same way as a dialectical relationship corresponds to the idea of time as sequence. This notion arises from the paradigm of complexity in scientific observation. “A paradigm of complexity would be a paradigm where thought would not be controlled by logic, but logic would be controlled by thought. More specifically it would be a dialogical principle. The word dialogical itself establishes the limitations and possibilities of knowledge. Why limitations? Dialogical means it is impossible to reach a sole principle, or master a word, whatever it is; there will always be something irreducible to a single principle, be it chance, uncertainty, contradiction, or organization. But at the same time, dialogics, while it contains an intrinsic limitation, also includes the possibility of bringing concepts into play among themselves.”(Morin 1984:65-6)

⁵ However, here I will only deal with time; for a thorough explanation of how language and legitimate linguistic structures that shape each ideal type of reality see Sánchez Flores (2005).

type. We are left with three typically-ideal conceptions of reality whose empirical reference is linked with the prevailing spiritual practice in diverse cultural settings that, despite their diversity, can nonetheless be generally classified as primitive (reality as the world only), historical (reality as world and transcendence at the same time), and mystic (reality as transcendence only). The transcendentalist views (historical and mystic) legitimize the symmetrical opposite at the basis of their belief systems: in the historical type the individual self has come to be regarded as a value in itself, while in mysticism, the collective mind is sacred and it is not anthropocentric. However, this 'clean' symmetrical differentiation is mediated by the idea of transcendence, which is clearly articulated both in the historical as well as in the mystic views of reality, but not in the primitive one. In the latter, oneness with the cosmos is a living experience of either collective or individual ritual, a sense of awe and veneration for the experienced mysterious characteristics of embodiment and the world. In the primitive ideal type these characteristics are articulated in archaic symbols and myths and induced by their cyclical mimetic enactment that bring about experienced awareness and renewal of the symbols of spiritual-organic union of life and death. These stories are legitimized in metaphorical verbal structures⁶.

At the theoretical level, there is a conceptual tension, with further dichotomous consequences, between the two views of reality that contemplate transcendence as real: while the historical conception of reality produces the practice of what Weber called 'rational domination' of the world (or experience), the mystic conception produces the practice of what I call 'intuitive submission' to experience. Rational domination creates material organization that is most successful in coordinating world interaction; intuitive submission produces peacefulness and clear mindedness as a substantive imperative and enabling awareness of mundane experience. This awareness, even as mysticism may consider worldly reality as illusory, is supposed to make the practitioner of any mystic discipline better able to deal with worldly experience. The holistic view of mystic reality is legitimized in the disciplined experience of the 'here and now', of the simultaneous union of all living consciousness (synchrony). In the historical view of reality the relevant experience of time that is legitimized is either the religious expectation of the end of times in Apocalypse, or the perpetual 'not yet' of Modernity.⁷ This type of time is sequential and lays emphasis in the concrete

⁶ In this respect, the ideal primitive type is never left behind in human life, as the modernizing myth would have it. On the contrary, metaphorical verbal structures can never be abandoned even in the transcendental views of reality due to the essential grip they have in our primitive construct (see Ricoeur 1967, Voegelin 1974, Lakoff 1980, Sánchez Flores 2005). The reader will notice that the primitive ideal type is left at the margins of the discussion in this exposition about the order of events in time. This is due to its being the only non-transcendentalist ideal type, and thus does not present a moral alternative for not providing a *transhistorical* perspective on time (I explain this concept farther below).

⁷ We owe Northrop Frye the notion of the historical 'not yet', that he develops in his *Anatomy of Criticism*. In this conception, Frye contemplates the 'apocalyptic vision' as a permanent possibility that inspires the secular

and inexorable passage of time, from past to future (diachrony). This way of looking at the world practices constant belief in the sequence of means and ends, in the coherence of rational disquisition and also promotes awareness of objective history as a realm of reality that is relevant for humanity in a universal manner. Both types of transcendental practice with universal pretensions are aimed at colonizing the primitive world bringing it awareness of the transcendental and moral order, *beyond* worldly reality. But the mystic ideal type of reality is legitimized in a synchronic conception of time (based in present awareness of simultaneity), while the historical type is legitimized in a diachronic notion of time (based on the experience of the constant passage of time, the sequential order of events).

The theoretical distinction between synchrony and diachrony is based on the structuralist analysis of language: synchrony refers to its axis of simultaneities (the syntactic relation among meanings) and diachrony to its sequential axis (the story or tale that is told) (Wilden 1972, Merquior 1986). Synchrony and diachrony can be thought of as two aspects of the same phenomenon. For the sake of illustration with a visualizing aid, think of a couple ballroom dancing tango or salsa; their synchronic aspect is the coordination of their hands and feet and their diachronic aspect is their flow and movement across the dance floor. However, rather than their movement being back and forth as in any regular dance floor, in an analogy with universal history, their diachronic movement would be linear and indefinite. Here, I borrow linguistic theory in order to clarify the difference between synchrony and diachrony as analogous to the difference between the embodied awareness of simultaneity and the experience of sequential events. The synchronic order of events in time can be conceived as a *continuum* of simultaneity or coordination comparable to space (yet not identical to it)⁸ and that connects everything with everything else; but the order of events in time can also be experienced as diachrony or a movement that is manifested in the constant and restless change that surrounds us. In order to understand the structure of the relationship between both orders of events in time, it is useful to put them in relationship of directionality of one with respect to the other. Synchrony is centripetal (moving towards the centre) and produces simultaneous awareness of relevant values, reasons, beliefs, affections, and/or emotions in human experience; diachrony is centrifugal (moving away from the centre) and determines the relevant differences between all these elements in our awareness and allows us to analyze and evaluate them critically. The synchronic order of events in time contains the possibilities of

imagination. According to Lawrence Coupe (1977:166), this apocalyptic vision does not mean to be constantly waiting for the literal catastrophe, it does not even refer to a religious doctrine, but to the imaginative anticipation of the 'not yet'.

⁸ This comparison is a metonymic recourse, because to assume that the constant present moment is the same as simultaneity in space is what Keiji Nishitani (1982) refers to as *bad infinity*, of the type that produces fear, rigidity, insecurity; that is, when the finite is perceived to go on infinitely.

establishing the links between what is related by that simultaneity, that convergence of factors. The diachronic order makes it possible for us to differentiate them and symbolize those differences.

As the reader may have already realized, synchrony and diachrony cannot be understood in isolation from each other, there is a relationship between both principles of the order of events in time that may help to find points of convergence between the diverse views of reality. Going back to the typology outlined above, the holistic views of reality (primitive and mystic) place great importance in the experience and symbolization of the synchronic aspect of time: either the cosmic-biological or the spiritual union of all things. Primitive and mystic realities are legitimized at the same time as they are experienced in synchrony which brings to the fore the necessary awareness of the essential interconnection and entanglement of all human experience. Historical reality finds legitimacy in the diachronic experience that the transcendental or moral principle unifies in the sense of universal history (for all peoples and all times). "This is the basis", says Frye, "for the common place that Biblical religions have a distinctive sense of history" (1982:83). This distinctive sense lies in the assumption of objectivity in historical happenings which is based on how such happenings can be said to be true in a universal manner, and are expressed in descriptive verbal structures, not in compact archaic symbols. This historical view of what is the real order of events in time—the one that prevails in the world today—is based on a sequential representation of events (diachrony).

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I have said that liberalism, the political position that considers the individual-self as the source of reason, freedom, and morality, is essentially bound to the historical type of reality. In mainstream political theory, individualist liberalism is conceived as the moral/political common basis on which the human species may converge universally. The critics of abstract liberalism contend from a diversity of political positions that this type of universality is a necessary imposition or an unrealizable ideal that is not even desirable for it denies and suppresses other important forms of ethical experience based on either culture, gender, social circumstance, or the relativity of the values therein. The problem with this type of criticism is that it stands on the pragmatic aspect of ethics and declares that there is no universal way of characterizing human interaction: There is a wide variety of documented human worldviews and to pretend that there is an actual universal measuring rod for morality is to go against such knowledge. This is a powerful argument because it is based on sociological facts and emphasizes relativism when contemplating human experience and behavior. Nevertheless, a way of looking for common principles of interaction may be found if we consider that

people's ethical life is based on ideals and that the global reality of today's complex world is already based on such ideals to sustain interaction across the world. Liberal individualism may be tied to the culture and history of Europe, and this is the reason why liberalism is often accused to espouse a sectarian type of universality. But individualism as a lived experience is also a cultural achievement and, as I propose here, a sociological principle of order that is very effective in organizing large modern populations functionally. Nevertheless, liberal individualist universalism emerges from a view of reality that is based on universal history and the Judeo-Christian kind of ethics. It is in the formation of distinctive types of *ethos* that the notion of fault becomes a relevant object of analysis. In what follows, I will discuss how human individual consciousness is linked to the Judeo-Christian notion of fault and how liberalism is related to what I have defined as the historical type of reality and the order of events in time as sequence or diachrony.

Following Paul Ricoeur's *Symbolism of Evil* (1967), a phenomenological study of the Judeo-Christian symbolism of evil, and Keiji Nishitani's *Religion and Nothingness* (1982)⁹ where he reflects on the Eastern-mystic notion of fault; I have distinguished three types of fault preeminent in each of my three types of views of reality. Paul Ricoeur's three stages of fault –defilement, sin, guilt– represent the symbolic evolution of the Judeo-Christian tradition towards deeper awareness about the responsible individual self in Modernity. According to my typology, the primitive type conceives of fault as defilement; the mystic view as "worldly suffering", or *karma* in Eastern disciplines, and the historical view as sin and guilt. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, worldly suffering is seen as a condition of sinful humanity. The notion of fault is constant in any cosmology and it clarifies how each view of reality tends towards an ideal individual self or to a collective self. Defilement and worldly suffering or *karma* highlight the importance of a collective self, either embodied in community or conceived as a sacred collective mind; while the historical, legal-rational notion of fault (especially in guilt) tends towards individuality as the locus of self conceived as the responsible agent either in the religious imputation of fault or in the secular one.

The most archaic or primitive type of fault, that of defilement, is generally expressed in language of disease and pestilence in order to exclude the transgressor from the human group. Defilement is incurred when the boundaries of permissiveness are violated. Here the person in fault is seen as impure due to her objective violation of a prohibition and not at all because the violator is seen as a responsible agent. The list of faults is thus vast while the intentions of the agent are not even considered. Evil and misfortune are

⁹ Nishitani is the most outstanding figure of the Philosophical School of Kyoto. He studied philosophy in Heidelberg with Heidegger, and had existentialist suicidal impulses facing the nothingness of nihilism. He then rediscovered his own religious tradition, Zen Buddhism, and with its help he reconciled with existentialism, opening up very suggestive philosophical possibilities.

still associated, defilement connects physical contingency with fault; “the ethical order of doing ill has not been distinguished from the cosmobiological order of faring ill” (Ricoeur 1967, 27). Taboos define primitive boundaries of permissiveness and they are basically punishments emotionally anticipated in transgress of cosmological interdicts. Defilement is typically symbolized as a form of impurity by contagion that infects from without, “but this infectious contact is experienced subjectively in a specific feeling which is of the order of Dread” (Ricoeur 1967, 28). According to Ricoeur, vengeance is the oldest and most primitive form of representation of fault and there is an archaic relationship between vengeance and defilement. The first human modes of expression of order emerged from a primitive need for vengeance in the language of retribution.

The notion of “worldly suffering” or *karma* in mystic Eastern disciplines, keeps the connection to the primitive language of vengeance and retribution, but transforms it into a cosmic burden of infinite embodied debt in the pain of attachment. This debt can only be paid through selflessness and spiritual practice that leads to Enlightenment. It keeps the archaic relationship between doing ill and faring ill, but gives it an ethical arrangement that uses fate as a learning device: Fate arises as the product of our own actions. Nishitani reminds us, “[*karma*] is a destiny that appears only in the shape of the acts we ourselves perform, only as one with our own actions” (Nishitani 1982, 104). This is why the realm of historicity that karma discloses is immediately related to factual consciousness of the personal story of the lifetime of the individual self (personally and ontogenetically); and not to a realm of universal human history. Mystic apprehension of the universal realm of being concentrates on the universe within, and therefore, every practitioner who strives for redemption from the sea of suffering does so, not only for her own benefit, but primarily for every other sentient being. To seek redemption for one-private-self is regarded as a form of slavery to the illusory nature of embodiment in *samsara*, when the universe within in identity with every conscious being has not yet been apprehended. In mystic reality, the symbol of karma is the representation of fault in worldly reality. Karma represents the transformation of the archaic relationship between doing ill and faring ill, into trust in contingency as fate. This mystic trust in contingency as fate is displaced from the critical discipline of factual historical analysis, it defines an intuitive attitude of submission to experience and contemplation of the cosmobiological links between all things in the particularity of the present situation.

The Judeo-Christian approach to fate may be said to lie in personal responsibility about acts (at times collective and individual) and the cosmological impossibility of the notion of *samsaric* “transmigration” (eternal birth and death), which is secularized as a “once and for all” unique individual life. Based on Ricoeur’s phenomenological study, it can be argued

that the most primitive roots of individualism are based in a personal relationship with the Hebrew monotheistic God that communicates to His chosen people through prophetic indignation; in whose spiritual tradition historical exegesis is seen as an expression of His Will. This is illustrated in the anthropological myth of the fall and the figure of the serpent, which is told as an event that took place “springing up from an unknown source, it furnishes anthropology with a key concept: The *contingency* of that radical evil which the penitent is always on the point of calling his evil nature. Thereby the myth proclaims the purely ‘historical’ character of that radical evil” (Ricoeur 1967, 252). In Christianity, radical evil is contingent in history, in the world, and even in the flesh. Yet it is not the sole nature of human beings, and humanity’s only mission is to overcome evil through their transcendental identity as children of God. Under this circumstances of reality, it would be irrational to trust in fate as contingency for radical evil may at any time spring out of nowhere in the course of historical time. This defines an attitude that must be intentionally active, dominating evil, controlling circumstances and finding proof of success in the world.

The emergence of Yahweh as the only God of the universe with a chosen people was originally symbolized as a collective relationship with a local sacred entity who would lead them to historical success. “What there is in the first place,” says Ricoeur, “is not essence but presence; and the commandment is a modality of the presence, namely, the expression of a holy will. Thus sin is a religious dimension before being ethical; it is not the transgression of an abstract rule —of a value— but the violation of a personal bond” (1967, 53). Revelation transformed this local relationship into the figure of the Covenant, and gave it its transcendental possibilities. It is with respect to the Covenant that the notion of sin is defined: Sin is an unavoidable human characteristic according to the myth of the fall, the awareness of which unites the chosen people before God’s judgment. But this judgment is expressed as an infinite distance between God and man, between His transcendental power and the deeply rooted human evil. The law teaches people how they are already sinners and this accusation deepens the experience of being oneself, but alienated from oneself: “Sin, as alienation from oneself, is an experience even more astonishing, disconcerting, scandalous, perhaps, than the spectacle of nature, and for this reason it is the richest source of interrogative thought” (Ricoeur 1967, 8). While alienation from oneself in defilement —the primary experience of the cosmos— is alienation from the community; in sin, this kind of alienation is related to exile from the transcendental realm symbolized in Paradise: It defines the worldly human condition that must struggle to defeat evil until the end of times. Sin is thus universalized as a condition that, as it were, unifies humankind and it is individual and communal at the same time, entwined with the “Day of Yahweh,” the historical events, and their penal interpretation by

the prophets. Prophecy joins the promise of salvation to the threat of calamity; there is a double imminence of catastrophe and deliverance. "This double oracle," says Ricoeur, "keeps up the temporal tension characteristic of the Covenant" (1967, p. 68).

The emergence of personal guilt occurs when sinful human being internalizes and personalizes the experience of fault, not only as responsibility in being the cause of a violation of interdiction, but now as being the author of ethically wrong deeds in the eyes of the divine gaze. According to Ricoeur,

That is why the consciousness of guilt constitutes a veritable revolution in the experience of evil: That which is primary is no longer the reality of defilement, the objective violation of the Interdict, or the Vengeance let loose by that violation, but the evil use of liberty, felt as an internal diminution of the value of the self. (1967, p. 102)

When interdiction is not only ritual but becomes ethical, human beings are radically called to a perfection that goes beyond their *objective* obligations, it becomes a *subjective* assumption of responsibility. It is in this internalization of fault and in this awareness of being seen by God that individuals face the alternative "God or Nothing" (Ricoeur 1967, p. 103). When all possibilities are reduced to this simple alternative, human beings must look at themselves as the authors of their acts together with the motives of their acts. It is in the subjective emergence of the experience and symbolization of fault, that the notion of *conscience* as individual and solitary conscience emerges. As a religious experience, and in an intimate relationship to sin, it is lived in the presence of a higher spiritual order beyond the world from where human beings are displaced, and which observes them. However, it is in the assumption of a transcendental identity that Judeo-Christian morality makes the ethical choice to take the side of this divine presence. Individual conscience is born from this choice, from this moral decision, and trains her to become cognitively able to judge her own deeds from this transcendental perspective. The experience of a complete cleavage between sin and guilt can be, then, formulated in the emergence of an individual conscience that judges the doings of the mundane self or person from the transcendental standpoint of the Law. This cognitive ability eventually allows for individuals to develop personal principles according to one's own judgment and critical mind; which in secular reality may no longer be transcendental *qua* God, but is still transcendental *qua* part of the human identity. Ricoeur shows phenomenologically that the experience of evil is subjective, emotional, and that 'conscience' is its *measure*: "It is not by accident that in many languages the same word designates moral consciousness (*conscience morale*), and psychological and reflective consciousness; guilt expresses above all the promotion of 'conscience' as supreme" (Ricoeur 1967, p. 104 author's

emphasis). In the historical type of reality, the basis for this conscience is individual due to the fragmentation of symbolism of the human self. Self is conceived as pre-eminently collective in primitive fault as defilement; in the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is alternatively collective and individual in consciousness of fault through original sin and the personal relationship with God; and ends up being constructed as pre-eminently individual in the hope for salvation and the reality of mundane evil as guilt. In secular modern reality and moral behavior it is conscience as guilt —either projected or assumed— that shapes morality, which becomes a supreme entity liable to be worshipped in the temple of personal individuality and the private realm. Individual conscience is an essential aspect for the construction of the moral self in Modernity, and as Ricoeur has shown, such conscience emerges from Judeo-Christian sacred cosmology, which has become the modern *responsible agent*. My argument is that Ricoeur's portrayal allows for such exploration of our modern conscious selves in a phenomenological depiction of the transformations of conscience, individually borne in practice. And so, ideal individuality is a socially constructed identity required to sustain modern organizations —however imperfectly it is reproduced in daily interaction. Individual human identity is the practical as well as the ideal basis for legitimating the primacy of individuality in liberalism.

Nevertheless an aim of this book is to find a common morality as an *ideal* basis for just interaction and political order in the world. While conceding that individuality as a transcendental value has cultural and particular roots — not universal—, liberal individualism is a major cultural achievement. The moral individual, even when produced by contrast to evil, is a gem of the Judeo-Christian tradition that eventually became secularized in its universalistic responsibility towards the rest of humanity, in its ideal clarity about intentionality, in its intellectual discipline, and in its formal organizational possibilities. The historical capability of internalizing the concept of universe, even if only as an abstract conception, creates awareness of a shared ideal as the basis of civilized interaction. This kind of refined interaction is produced by belief and practice of autonomous individuality as a universal ideal; but I argue that the synchronic order of events in time brings to the fore awareness about important aspects of modern interaction, which is now global. The new disciplinary chore for our tradition of knowledge is to suspend judgment upon the other, which according to mystic metaphysics, is only a constant judgment upon the "I." If the "I" and the other are not embraced as one, the moral individual remains trapped in ontological, albeit transcendental, individuality. Also, liberal individualism ought to be commensurable with views of reality that legitimize themselves on different basis of time and language. My argument is that the only time-basis through which this ethical exercise can be achieved is the synchronic order of events in present experience. In the historical type of

view of reality, we are always chasing after that which we want to become and the disciplined attention to what we already are or to where we sit in the 'here and now' is seen as less important. However, from the time-frame of present synchrony, we can observe that progress, evolution, and universal history or any other type of diachronic story is built from the present instant of relevant experience so that modern interaction is able to take place in the time-frame of that present instant (however fleeting and unimportant to our historical consciousnesses). This is what really ought to be the matter of contemporary political theory, which emanates from Europe, a particular culture and cultural context—the liberal humanist culture—a culture that is today already global and belongs to humanity as a whole.

III.

An essential premise of this work is that globalization makes it necessary to achieve a common cosmopolitan moral ground in contemporary political interaction among countries, nations, groups, and individuals. I argue that this ambitious program for political theory involves both compassion and trust; and both sentiments ought to be taken into account as central aspects of our morality. Although these two concepts are not linked to each other in the literature, I believe it necessary to focus on how they relate to one another to place them in their proper moral dimension. Compassion and trust constitute an emotional aspect of human morality and this is one of the reasons why they have been perceived as slippery and problematic. Social theories have limited themselves to outline the ample spectrum of benefits that compassion and trust provide to social interaction; yet they are not systematically defined or the definitions provided are so diverse that they confuse more often than clarify what is at stake. In order to give a definition of compassion and trust their appropriate depth of moral purpose, I propose that both be visualized as located in synchronic time—the eternal present—where they are experienced and acted out emotionally at the same time as we make our moral decisions. Compassion and trust are thus essentially synchronic phenomena, but the prevailing historical view of reality does not conceive of synchrony as a legitimate realm of time. However, compassion and trust have different qualities. The sentiment of compassion is one of the most intimate emotions that human beings can have for it is purely subjective, akin to spiritual Enlightenment. We can all imagine the ideal of compassion as universal love but very few people can actually say to have experienced such a sentiment. Every genuine feeling of compassion ought to be treasured and regarded as a small miracle when it effectively guides human action. Trust, on the other hand, defined as trust in strangers, is an essential element of contemporary social life—a necessary building block of modern social interaction.

The concept of trust has many connotations; the oldest one referring to faith or confidence in a supernatural power which the human being feels dependent on (Misztal 1996). Whoever trusts takes a risk and acts, even under conditions of uncertainty and in spite of them. This is why trust has moral foundations in the way people consider and value other people. Mutual obligations are learnt and built while people behave in certain ways as they interact with other people. Expectations in all kinds of social relations are the product of gradual learning that establishes shared references about the diverse types of mutual obligations, or of ethical principles. Nevertheless, it is not absolutely beyond human imagination to be able to grasp the importance of mutual obligations established in human groups other than one's own—and those obligations often include the dead, the unborn, and the All Mighty. This is where metaphysics or transcendence—an abstract concept of the *beyond*—may be helpful in establishing the bridges that will allow human groups to converge with each other. But metaphysics alone cannot do the job and has more often than not created obstacles for convergence in producing an array of merely abstract philosophical systems with universalizing pretensions that create supposedly “superior” forms of conceiving morality. While the liberal ideals of tolerance and mutual respect through rational conversation are essential principles for sharing our human differences in a meaningful way, I argue that the one ideal sentiment that may help us overcome such differences is universal love or compassion—the latter present in all religious belief systems of the world—which also abides in the synchronic realm of time.

The problem with compassion though, is the question of who or what ought to be the object of our care and if it is a specific object, person, group, or idea, then it is regarded as a particularistic emotion that cannot be trusted as a basis for political decisions, the kind that affect the public at large. This has generally been the argument to discard love as a plausible basis for our moral life in political theory, in spite of its being praised in the tradition as a proper vehicle for benevolence. The idea of universal love has generally belonged to the realm of religion, yet I believe that universal love and, more specifically, compassion, can be conceived as the one principle that may unite creeds and ideologies throughout the world and open the door to rational conversation for mutual acceptance towards a common goal. However, this can be done in conceiving compassion as an ideal that can be apprehended by reconsidering and revising the prevalent idea of historical time and the source of our principled morality in the modern world. This effort though, would not merely embrace compassion as the sole source for moral and political decisions: We ought to value the historical lessons taught by liberalism; but we also ought to learn from its limitations in order to expand its horizons towards what I call Cosmopolitan Liberalism, with compassion as its center and Kantian moral reason as its frame.

A moral philosophy that considers itself liberal cosmopolitan ought to recognize its universalistic calling. The concept of compassion that I propose is directed towards wholeness; primary harmony in the primitive view of reality, or the union of universal consciousness at the moment of mystic enlightenment. Mystic union conceives of itself as universal and aims at overcoming particularity. However, as I have said before, it is necessary to take this mystic principle as an ideal that can be aspired to, which also serves as a heuristic tool, and not as a concrete axis that may perfectly rule our functional and conscious experience. The concepts of trust, love, and compassion that I propose here are framed in a reflexive exercise that allows us to converse philosophically with views of reality and ethics that are different from the strictly liberal one and that may coexist with liberalism – even in the same person. This exercise entails to put the individual consciousness at the centre of perception considering everything perceived as mere appearance, including one’s own individuality. This philosophical position is justified in the tolerant will that aspires to understand diverse views of reality¹⁰. From this basis it will be possible to conceive of an awareness of self that “spills” beyond individuality, towards other conscious individuals and also to everything else that consciousness can perceive. At this point it will be useful to introduce the idea of an awareness of being in the present-synchronic time that emanates from the mystic type of reality, based on the work of Keiji Nishitani.

According to Nishitani, the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* –I know, therefore I exist– “expressed the mode of being of that ego as a self-centered assertion of its own realness” (Nishitani 1982:11); it is an ego conceived as real and that reflects itself on the other egos which it has to live with. This conception of the self –with respect to an individual ego– is not situated in a position where it can look beyond the fact that it considers its individuality as real. This has to do with the multiplicity of emotional interactions in which the self is involved qua individual ego. To Nishitani, it is essential to deepen awareness of an absence of ego, which allows individual awareness to contemplate its non-reality as impermanence and to experience nothingness –or nihility– as the actual basis of its existence:

Only when the self breaks through the field of consciousness, the field of *beings*, and stands on the ground of nihility is it able to achieve a subjectivity that can in no way be objectivized. (Nishitani 1982:16)

¹⁰ This perspective refers to a phenomenological position that carries out the eidetic exercise of seeing all that is perceived as mere appearance in order to question its validity as received knowledge. From that position a tolerant attitude can emerge paired with hermeneutic methodology —understanding others and one self through empathy. This attitude tries to interpret and comprehend the diverse conceptions of human reality that experience may bring. Now, this does not entail to abandon a critical perspective that may question the validity of certain human practices. It merely requires us to hold criticism until the exercise of understanding has been completed. And once this has been achieved, compassion may reinforce the critical perspective from an absolute point of view that may be understood by all liberal and non-liberal positions. These arguments will be expanded and fully explored in the conclusions of this book.

The grounds for the nothingness that Nishitani refers to, converge with the moment of mystical union that has been proposed here as a mere ideal and not as an objective state for the self to attain. These grounds refer to the absolute emptiness of self, which allows for letting go of the particular ties and bonds of the individual human being, the most important of which are the emotional ties to the reality of one's own self qua ego. The problem of excessively identifying our idealized individual self with the particular embodied person or ego that we are, is precisely the predicament in which modern culture finds itself: "If we grant that Cartesian philosophy is the prime illustration of the mode of being of modern man, we may also say that it represents the fundamental problem lurking within that mode" (Nishitani 1982:19). To put it in terms of the ideal types of views of reality that I have been handling, we can say that in the historical type of reality there is an unresolved tension between the transcendental identity of the self and the embodied individual personality to which that self is attached. The tension is never resolved because the historical transcendental identity is universal, infinite, and morally powerful; while the person that holds such an identity is limited, mortal, and finite.

However, historical awareness needs the element of infinity attached to its own sense of self to be able to conceive and represent at all the new and the irreversible aspects of historical time, which are the roots to existence in the world of diachrony. Nishitani calls "transhistorical perspective" this infinite aspect of the historical consciousness, necessary for history to be truly universal. This perspective on history is also present in the mystic view of reality, but Nishitani shows how in oriental mystic philosophies the transhistorical is radicalized as the experience of an Absolute emptiness of self as the basis of reality, which makes the factual aspect of time be contemplated as a mere illusion of impermanence. This is where I want to locate the reflexive exercise mentioned above for individual consciousness to "spill" beyond its own individuality, in order to try to conceive –if not experientially but only reflexively, as a mind experiment– of a synchronic realm of time that discloses simultaneity, where compassion, love, and trust in strangers are situated.

Here, it is necessary to contrast the philosophic origins of the legitimacy of diachronic time with those of synchronic time. In order to do this, it will be useful to use once again Nishitani's idea of "transhistorical perspective". He argues that in the western, Judeo-Christian tradition, the legitimate realm of transhistorical reality is positioned far away from ordinary consciousness "a personal God who is thought to reveal himself vertically from heaven down to earth, as commonly represented in Christianity, is considered to be seated beyond, on the far side" (Nishitani 1982:104). The distance laid down between God and the transcendental identity of human beings is significantly

represented in diachrony —it embodies the tension between ‘world’ and ‘transcendence’— and is reified as dialectic thought and as sequential historical time that passes and moves in search of the “not yet”.

In contrast to this, Nishitani poses the “near side” of oriental traditions — which can also be observed in all western mystic traditions (see Underhill 1995)— to refer to the closeness that there can be between individual awareness and her apprehension of the universe. The absolute near side of the mystic view of reality denotes an immanent kind of transcendence which means that consciousness can merge with the universe —and ultimately sees the universe itself as the actual essence of self. This is an absolute realm of identification of the self with the other in an impersonal manner, like the Buddhist creed in a “‘Great Compassionate Heart’ [*maha-karuna*], the essential equivalent of the biblical analogy that tells us there is no such thing as selfish or selective sunshine” (Nishitani 1982:60). Similar to Jesus’ exhortation to love enemies as much as friends and the Buddhist virtue of love that does not differentiate between enmity and friendship. This is the near and absolute transcendental realm that prevails in the mystic type of morality. Enlightened spiritual masters have taught about universal love, the kind that involves loving the other as one loves oneself. It goes beyond anthropocentrism by extending such love to all sentient beings and indeed the world and nature itself. Universal compassion is then an ideal that organizes an orientation to moral conduct which is lacking in the ideal of human individual autonomous will that is able to accept, internalize, and obey rational rules.

It is important to stress that this source of compassionate morality with transcendentalist origin is different from the ethics of caring and responsibility that arose from the Kohlberg-Gilligan debate on the theory of moral development in psychology (Kohlberg 1981, Gilligan 1982, 1988). The ethics of caring and responsibility objects to the dominance of Kohlberg’s universalistic morality of justice, based on Kantian conceptions of the self that feminists see as first world, male, white, upper-middle class professional... not really universal. Kohlberg’s morality of justice fails to represent the female experience of ethics that Gilligan observed to reflect on personal bonds and a reluctance to make others suffer. Kohlberg’s theoretical scheme represents this type of ethics as underdeveloped. From the perspective of the ethics of caring, the dominance of notions of neutral justice in moral philosophy is oppressive to manifestations of ethics in personal relationships with other people, that can see the particularity of each situation and criticizes the unavoidable legalism of acting on universalizable moral principles (see Benhabib 1992). However, precisely because of its being based on particularity, it is impossible to award complete philosophical recognition to the ethics of caring and responsibility. In spite of the benefits that it may bring in particular circumstances it does not provide

us with a convincing and genuine moral point of view because it is essentially partial and may lead to noxious biases in moral decisions. In contrast to this, the type of morality that emanates from the near side of transhistorical time overcomes the particularistic problems of the ethics of caring; its source is transcendentalist and universal and it could be used as a complement of the same stature to universalisms that are typically liberal, ethnocentric, principled, and thus, judgmental. The near side of transcendental time, the constant present that discloses simultaneity, also overcomes the modern problem of objectivizing the non-civilized (or partially civilized) 'other' in the postcolonial order of contemporary global politics—who is indeed a very elusive character, unless we identify her with a specific gender, skin color, geographical area, culture, or religion. It is in this sense that Luce Irigaray considers that only under the gaze of the Buddha—in a relationship that nurtures the world and is not based in the self-interested individual entity—can one escape the typical dialectics of domination (Jay 1993). The realm of synchronic time, the awareness of the constant present time of the 'here and now', discloses the realm of universal love or compassion as an ideal that could be used to guide our moral decisions.

There is another way of conceiving of compassion that is also relevant and useful in this discussion. In her *Upheavals of Thought*, Martha Nussbaum defines compassion as "a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune" (2001, 301). She follows Aristotle to postulate three cognitive elements of compassion: First, the belief that the suffering one witnesses is serious rather than trivial; second, the belief that the sufferer does not deserve her plight; and the third is the "eudaimonistic judgment," which comes in two steps: First, there is a belief that great undeserved suffering may happen to anyone, including me, which is the judgment of similar possibilities. This step is not yet compassion, but it is initially postulated as an epistemological principle that bridges the gap towards the second step where "others (even distant others) are important part of one's own scheme of goals and projects, important as ends in their own right" (2001, 320). This is the "eudaimonistic judgment", and is an essential cognitive element for the feeling of compassion. Based on this cognitive judgment in two steps, Nussbaum finds a relationship between compassion manifested in altruism and the moral point of view that John Rawls built in the 'original position', a hypothetical reflexive exercise in his *Theory of Justice* (1971). According to Rawls's theory, in the original position, where we ought to choose the principles that will organize public life in a well ordered and just society, there is a 'veil of ignorance' that prevents us from knowing our own particular situation in such a society so as to not want to choose any principle that would benefit any particular group. To Nussbaum, the original position is congenial with the judgment of similar possibilities: "Rawls himself invites the comparison, stating that he has attempted to

model benevolence in an artificial way, by combining prudential rationality with constraints on information" (Nussbaum 2001, 340). In other words, self-interest is the root-source of compassionate eudaimonistic judgment, much in the same way as it is the basis to want a just society in Rawls's terms.

However, Nussbaum poses no hypothetical reflective exercise, she considers self-interest as a developmental point of departure in the ethical life of a human being: Children will learn to be compassionate by recognizing that they have similar possibilities of suffering, identifying themselves with the sufferer, deploring the fact that anybody should suffer greatly and undeservedly, and thus elevating the other (even distant others) in their appreciation. Children learn to be compassionate by means of a qualitative jump from self-centered interests, to being able to imagine themselves in the situation of somebody else who suffers. This is the reason why education in arts and humanities —Nussbaum refers to the literary use of tragic predicaments— may help the imaginative efforts of people in this direction, especially when growing up. This initial judgment is couched in self interest and, according to Nussbaum, is not yet legitimate compassion. Yet, it allows for children's imagination and compassionate emotional concern to be extended until they grow up to be adults who genuinely regard the absence of suffering in other people's lives (even distant others) as an important part of their own "scheme of goals and ends". I would further add that this is not enough because, as Nussbaum points out, people may beget suffering for themselves should they deserve such suffering (as in the justice of punishment, which is an essential aspect of social order). Our compassionate emotional concern with distant others ought not to be merely that they should not suffer, but that their lives be joyful, abundant, and that they acquire some experience of relationships based on loving care. The initial self-interest that children display as the basis for their moral decisions —as in Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage of moral development (1981)— and the judgment of equal possibilities should help them visualize the well being of distant others as important to them and can eventually lead them to expand their concern emotionally. So becoming morally able should not be considered as a mere cognitive ability to elicit universalizable principles and to realize that distant others are ends in themselves —as in the Kohlberg's Kantian stage 6 of the post-conventional level of moral development, the highest possible. Becoming morally able ought to include this as well as the emotional concern that the life of distant others, of strangers, be a joyful life.

Compassion both in Gilligan's as well as in Nussbaum's terms is a type of love in which the self is seen as partly constituted of attachments to other things and persons. The idea of a wider self constituted by its attachments helps us conceive of the possibility to extend such self beyond individuality; "compassion pushes the boundaries of the self further outward than many types of love" (Nussbaum 2001, 300). The problem with an extension of self

into her own constitutive attachments is that compassion remains a particularistic emotion, a category that only allows for the self to be extended up to a limited amount of relationships and objects of concern. In contrast to this, if compassion is conceived as the ideal of universal love, it becomes a guide for our moral decisions that goes beyond mere particularity. It makes us bearers of moral sentiments that deplore that any person or any sentient being should suffer and raises the value and the quality of the life of others (even distant others) and of life in general in our appreciation. This type of compassion can become the grounds for much of our intuitive support to human rights, pacifism, positions against capital punishment, and even provide moral grounds for animal rights and environmentalism.

Conclusions

IV.

When seen as moral sentiments, both compassion as universal love and trust in strangers are based in appreciating others—even others whom we may not know, will not meet, and could not possibly come across. Trust is a dense concept that has stimulated a wealth of definitions both in philosophy and in research in the social sciences; however, here I will concentrate on exploring a conception of trust that views it as a moral sentiment. This position contrasts with the rational choice one that sees trust as a phenomenon based on strategic, individualistic, and self-interested considerations. While the latter are important in trying to explain our economic behavior, I argue that trust in strangers has moral qualities that are analogous to compassion as universal love. This is related to their synchronic aspect as well as with concern with how people develop the emotional capability of caring for distant others (together with the cognitive capability of producing universalizable principles for moral behavior) while growing up. Trust in strangers is necessary as a vehicle for mutual respect and conversation with people whom we do not know anything about; it evades domination because when one has the inclination to trust strangers one also has the inclination to appreciate them. In this conception of trust as a moral sentiment, the quality of life of others (even distant and different others) is regarded as being just as valuable as one's own.

In his *The Moral Foundations of Trust* (2002), Eric Uslaner unsuspectingly establishes a link between compassion and trust when he finds that people who tend to trust in strangers are also optimists. Uslaner analyzes a wide range of public opinion surveys in the U. S. and argues against the conventional wisdom that sustains that we establish trusting relationships only when we know a lot about the people with whom we establish them. Rather, he argues that people do trust strangers, place their faith in unknown others, and that this is a mechanism by which people interact with other people with whom they would not interact otherwise: “this is why [trust] helps us to solve larger problems, such as helping those who have less, both in the private and the public sphere, and in getting government to work better” (Uslaner 2002, p. 3). His position counters the classical economics or rational choice arguments about trust according to which people trust other people because they know them well and this trust can be easily broken when the relationship is betrayed. Uslaner challenges this by investigating the stability of generalized trust, because if it is a value, trust ought to be stable over time. He finds that this attitude is not something that others learn from us; rather,

it is something that we learn from our parents —such as our values. Uslaner shows that “your trust depends upon how much your parents trusted others and, more generally, how nurturing your home environment was” (2002, p. 77). He does concede that an adult faith in strangers also depends on experiences and ideas that people learn as adults, yet the most basic component to be able to trust strangers is based on values learned as children. This essentially means that our trusting capabilities are developed as we grow up. He finds impressive stability for most instances of trust, which “suggests that trust is an enduring value” (2002, p. 67). He thus challenges the rational choice definition of the concept of trust, which regards it as a mere strategy for social interaction based on self interest. Rather, trust is one of the most complex and multi-layered principles of social reality.

Russel Hardin champions the rational choice position with his concept of trust as “encapsulated interest” (Hardin 2002, 2006), which, according to him, regulates interaction in modern society, made up of complex networks:

Basically, we develop trust relations with those with whom we deal reciprocally. I do something for you because I trust you to reciprocate. And you do reciprocate—in large part because you want to maintain your relationship *with me*. Because you want to maintain that relationship, you have an interest in fulfilling my trust in you; you *encapsulate* my interest in your own. (Hardin 2006, p. 8 author’s emphasis)

Hardin also says that much discussion about trust is really dealing with perceived trustworthiness. While such perception is essential for modern social networks and interaction, as Hardin shows, it sidelines and ignores the more mysterious—and thus more interesting— aspects of trust when it is laid on perfect strangers. Uslaner tells us that there is a wide range of trusting behavior that simply does not fall under this type of definition. On the other hand, Hardin argues against the use of surveys to find out about trust because people don’t have a clear idea of what trust is and thus an answer to the question if “most people can be trusted” elicits answers that refer to different conceptions of what trust is.¹¹ However, this position basically means that if people cannot articulate a consistent definition for what they do (represent their deed), they don’t really know what they’re doing. Trust is such a dense complex concept that one would intuitively concede that Hardin has a point, yet people may be unable to provide an accurate definition of trust (after all the academic community has failed to do so thus far) but they *know* when they trust others or not. In other words, people do

¹¹ The survey question to which both Hardin and Uslaner refer to was developed by Morris Rosenberg (1956): “Generally speaking, do you believe most people can be trusted or can’t you be too careful in dealing with people?”. To Hardin, this question invites too many conceptions of trust “Unless we can show that responses in the vernacular correlate to responses in some more articulated account of trust, we generally cannot be sure what the survey responses mean” (2006, p. 61).

not need a definition of trust to know when they actually do it, when they place their faith in unknown others.

In order to evade these definitional problems Uslaner speaks of two types of trust; putting faith in strangers is moralistic trust. Having confidence in people you know is strategic trust. The latter depends on our experiences, the former does not. Trust in strangers is largely based upon an optimistic view of the world and a sense that we can make it better. (2002, p. 4)

Strategic trust leads to particularized trust, or trusting only those who one knows well and with whom one has established trusting reciprocal relationships. Moralistic trust leads to generalized trust, that is, to trusting people even when we have no sign or indication that they are trustworthy. This latter kind of trust signals more an attitude towards life, a worldview learnt from childhood than a strategy to deal with social (economic) interaction. As I have mentioned before, Uslaner found that the generalized trust attitude is stable over time, and also that it is based on an optimistic outlook on life. He describes optimism as consisting of four components: a sense of personal well-being, of a supportive community, the view that the future will be better than the past, and most importantly to our present discussion, the belief that we can act to make our environment better. People with an optimistic outlook on life are more likely to trust others as well as to participate in charitable activities that will result in making their environment better for themselves as well as for everyone else. These theoretical considerations about trust make it akin to compassion also as a value or moral sentiment.

In order to trust in strangers one must have a well developed appreciation of others (even distant others) and hold them as important in our own scheme of things. According to Nussbaum egotistic self-interest is the first step towards the emotion of compassion: the judgment of equal possibilities in suffering for all —including me. This is as far as the historical perspective on time allows the individualistic moral being to engage with the well being of the other. If individualistic self-interest were the sole source for moral compassionate behavior —as in the Smithsonian dictum of capitalism— the benevolence thus modeled would be tarnished by Mandeville’s warning about the relationship between “private vices and public goods”, our charity as a measure of our vanity. In this sense, Rawls’ individual under the veil of ignorance in his original position is cognitively displaced from carrying out Nussbaum’s second step towards genuine compassion. The eudemonistic judgment is needed in order to make (distant) others important in our own scheme of things; and I argue that this judgment is ruled by the ideal of compassion as universal love. This is analogous to an emotional self-interest, because if we assume that the principle of universal love rules, it is in our own emotional advantage that others should lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Yet this advantage is marked by the mystic moral awareness of perfect religious love: the 'I' and the 'other' are one and the same entity and thus what is in the advantage of the 'I' is also in the advantage of the 'other'. This is the synchronic basis for trust that is based in appreciating strangers.

Additionally, this value of trusting strangers also trusts in contingency. In the mystic type of morality, the loving appreciation of others is extended unto the cosmos; not only to other human beings, but also to everything else that there is: other sentient beings and also nature as a whole. As I have said before, the mystic type of morality is not anthropocentric. In the "near side" transcendental reality of the eternal present, the 'here and now', self and universe fuse in spiritual Enlightenment. Therefore, this type of view of reality trusts in contingency as fate. There is an awareness about evil-doing in the world, but trust in contingency arises from emptiness of self—individual, frail, and needy personal self; that is—and an identification of self with the universe. People who trust in strangers are empowered by such an attitude. To be sure, bad experiences arise from being able to trust others and they may betray such trust. But as Uslaner confirms in his analysis of data, people do not abandon their attitude of trusting behavior after a couple of bad experiences (2002). Their optimistic outlook on life involves the sense that one can make one's environment better with one's actions and also with one's thoughts and emotions (after all, they are the creative part of our subjective being). And so a moralistic trust in strangers is not a passive expectation of good things in naive, benighted anticipation. It is based in a disciplined and ethical involvement with cooperating in creating a personal and a world environment of peace and loving care. And this as a consequence creates such environment for us as well as for our children. Optimism and trust in fate involves cooperation to make one's environment better, a commitment to peace, and the present formation of compassionate adults. The focus on creating a peaceful environment for the children of the world is the most pragmatic aspect of Cosmopolitan Liberalism as a critique of modern liberal political thought.

This would be the basis for a morality that as well as considering the other as an end in herself, would love her absolute uniqueness, be at awe of her difference. According to Nishitani, the sharing of absolute difference is the basis for genuine acceptance, what he calls "true equality", a compassionate appreciation of each other between strangers, and it "comes about in what we might call the reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality, such that the self and the other stand simultaneously in the position of absolute master and absolute servant with regard to one another. It is an equality in love"¹² (Nishitani 1982, p. 285). As I have mentioned before, the closest thing to the

¹² Here, Nishitani refers indirectly to Hegel's famous 'dialectic of the master and the slave' that represents all conflicts borne from human difference and hierarchy. According to Hegel this dialectic ought to be resolved through the raising of consciousness in history.

union of oneself and another in daily interaction takes place through the synchronic practice of trust that discloses its benefits throughout the passage of time in diachrony. Here, I have tried to outline the time basis from where this slippery phenomenon emanates and have tried to show how trust comes from moral intuitions that take place at the order of events in time that happen in simultaneity. This is also the locus of compassion and both sentiments feed our moral imagination. I refer to moral imagination because (universal) morality can only be guided by ideals that may be fulfilled only imperfectly. But the need to postulate them in moral theory is patent in the search for our human potential to decide and act as ethical beings. I propose to consider our capacity for imagining an ability to feel universal love—even if only as a mind experiment—in order to establish an ideal that will complement the ideal of using the Kantian ‘categorical imperative’—being able to live according to universalizable maxims—as the basis for our moral decisions. It is important to say once again that moral reason, qua individual morality, cannot be left behind or substituted for compassionate morality: Both the freedom of creative imagination in pursuing universal principles and a synchronic openness of the heart in the simultaneity of compassion and trust are needed in order make rounded moral decisions. However, none of these two aspects of our moral cognition on their own ought to be considered as the true source of our moral life. And so, I consider Kantian moral reason and compassionate morality as the two ideal transcendental axes around which we can start to organize the moral space of Cosmopolitan Liberalism, both of which are abstract principles that we can imagine as possible sources of our ethical behavior. Moral reason is based on Nishitani’s “far side” transhistorical reality, based on the rationality of the critical mind, ready to use universalizable maxims to live a moral life; while compassionate morality is based on his “near side” transhistorical reality of religious love, ready to open the loving heart of selflessness that is able to see beyond enmity. “History symbolically ends,” says Frye, “at the point at which master and servant become the same person, and represent the same thing” (1982:91). Only within the realm of simultaneity in trust can the liberal principle of tolerance exist and be manifested as mutual acceptance, where the dialectics of the master and the slave could be solved through the ideal of selfless love.

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