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Archives

Past Imaginations, Persisting Problems: Revisiting the United Nations University Project on Global Ethos

<div align="right">Ken Tsutsumibayashi</div>

Background

At the very beginning of this new millennium, various attempts by various people and organizations were made to tackle various problems of global significance. Some such attempts have led to meaningful results, but many others have proved ineffectual or simply relegated to the realm of obscurity. That there are so few success stories is no surprise given the complex nature of globally intertwined human activities and their often unpredictable consequences that affect both the human and natural worlds. We are all too often overwhelmed not only by the unfathomable forces of nature (the causes of which are not always natural), but also by the mysterious workings of human artifacts or by the unintended consequences of our intended actions. And yet we are left with no choice but to keep on trying as rationally as humanly possible to maintain a tolerably humane as well as environmentally sustainable world.

Now, to have any chance of success, we must at least try to adapt ourselves, our ideas and our aims, to the ever-changing environment. This would lead us to see not only the problems as they exist before our eyes in some blatantly obvious and threatening way, but also to consider how the problems have developed over the course of time, to see the causality of what seemed in the past like an insignificant and often irrational train of unexpected events. It is thus sometimes useful to try to understand in a reasonably rational manner how irrational events have come to pass, thereby allowing us to acknowledge not only the limits of rationality, but also what it is that we can reasonably hope for the future while not being oblivious to the concomitant risks and dangers. To this end, it seems also useful to reflect back on how we once saw the world, how we thought the world could be changed for the better, how our ideas have changed in the face of unexpected events, and how for better or for worse our ideas have affected or failed to affect the world.

But of course, all this is easier said than done, and the aim of this article is inevitably far more modest in scope. With the aforementioned perspective in mind, and in the hope that my humble contribution will serve to recapture a small forgotten link (or blip) in the

vastly complex streams of thought and actions that have come to shape the world as it presently exists, I wish to reproduce my paper which was presented at the International Conference on Global Ethos organized by the United Nations University in the year 2000.

The conference was held as part of a build-up event to commemorate the UN Year of the Dialogue Among Civilizations, but it was also a culmination of the Global Ethos Project of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies. The novelty of this and other UN projects that addressed the issue of values lay in the fact that it indeed addressed the issue of values in UN fora. This was a relatively new phenomenon in the UN context, since during the Cold War, such attempts were deliberately avoided to prevent the further aggravation of ideological strife. But the end of the Cold War meant the end of such a taboo, and increasingly projects and conferences dealing with the issue of values and governance became prominent. Furthermore, Samuel Huntington's famous or infamous theme "the clash of civilizations" provoked many responses from various quarters, and as is evident from the naming itself, the UN Assembly's decision in 1998 to designate the year 2001 as the "UN Year of the Dialogue Among Civilizations" was itself a direct response to such a provocative diagnosis or premonition of what the world may face in the foreseeable future. The irony was that September 11 also occurred in the year 2001, though many were emphatic about dissociating that event with the civilizational clash thesis (Huntington being one of them).

But the UNU Conference on Global Ethos predated September 11, and so the participants had put forward their ideas without the knowledge of how the world was to change a year later. And perhaps this had contributed in part to the fading out of the project itself, with the notion (at least for the participants who directly addressed the issues of global values and politics) that ideas expressed at the time were too naïve to deal with the problems that came to define the tone of the new century. And yet, it would be equally naïve to think that new problems have suddenly emerged after September 11, or that old problems have somehow resolved themselves or have become insignificant. On the contrary, many global issues remain the same, though perhaps with new overtones, and values as well as dialogue seem as important as ever for tackling them. And in so trying, it seems meaningful to argue that we can still learn something from past imaginations. At least, it would be a shame simply to ignore or forget wholesale the ideas which were expressed at the conference into which so much public money had been poured. But unfortunately, all or most of the papers presented at the Global Ethos Conference are not available either in print or in electronic form[1]. So the best I can do here is simply to reproduce the programme together with my own contribution, a paper entitled "A Framework for a Global Dialogue".

But before doing so, two caveats are in order. First, my view is not representative of the entire conference. As will be evident from the programme, and despite the somewhat extravagant title as well as the fact that I was partly responsible for organizing the conference, my paper was not one that served to define the agenda. Each participant presented his or her own ideas without being constrained to a rigid framework for discussion. Anoth-

er point worth stressing is that my ideas have changed somewhat over the course of recent years, and while I believe some of the underlying arguments to be still valid, there are important changes of tone. My more recent view is expressed in an article entitled "Fusion of Horizons or Confusion of Horizons" published in the journal *Global Governance*.[2] My most recent view is yet to appear in print.

The International Conference on Global Ethos was held in Tokyo on 24-26 October 2000, followed by the International Youth Symposium on Global Ethics and Values (27 October). The aim of the Youth Symposium was to provide a venue for those young participants (mainly students) who had followed the discussions of the Global Ethos Conference but were unable to voice their own views. I had the pleasure to take part in both events, but since I do not have any material related to the Youth Symposium, I simply reproduce below the programme of the Global Ethos Conference. (Where available, titles of papers presented by the participants are also mentioned.)

==============Programme==============

● 24 October 2000

■ Welcome Messages and Addresses
Chair: James Hester, President, The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation
Video message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan
Video message from Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States
Hans van Ginkel, UNU Rector

■ Keynote Speeches
Hans Küng, Director Emeritus, Institute for Ecumenical Research University of Tübingen, Germany
"A Global Ethos for the Age of Globalization – A realistic vision for the 21st century"
Thomas Axworthy, InterAction Council, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
Yersu Kim, former Director, Universal Values Project, Division of Philosophy and Ethics, UNESCO
"Ethics for the 21st Century"

■ Theme One – Global Capitalism and Sustainable Development
Chair: Sukehiro Hasegawa, Director, UNDP Tokyo Office

Panel One – Affluence and Poverty
Karim Benammar, Faculty of Cross Cultural Studies, Kobe University, Japan
"Affluence and Poverty in a Globalizing World"

Masoud Islami, Rector, School of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran
Derrick Swartz, Vice-Chancellor, University of Fort Hare, South Africa

Panel Two – Global Capitalism and Sustainable Development
Wylie Bradford, Division of Economic and Financial Studies, Macquarie University, Australia
"Global Capitalism and Sustainable Development"
Hazel Henderson, Author, economic analyst, sustainable development consultant, USA
"From Capitalism and Economism to Sustainable Systems and Earth Ethics"
Hirofumi Uzawa, Chair of Advanced Studies, UNU/IAS
"Capitalism, Socialism, and Sustainable Development"

● 25 October 2000

■ Theme Two – Science, Knowledge and Ethics
Chair: Yozo Yokota, Faculty of Law, University of Tokyo

Panel Three – Global Knowledge
Tileman-Dothias von Schoen-Angerer, Médecins Sans Frontières
Makina Kato, Institute of Biological Sciences, Tsukuba University, Japan
"Biotechnology, Patents, and Bioethics"
Gary Sampson, Visiting Academic, London School of Economics, UNU/IAS

Panel Four – Science and Ethics: Gene Research
José Luis Ramirez, Programme Coordinator, UNU Programme for Biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU/BIOLAC), Venezuela
Minakshi Bhadwaj, Institute of Biological Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Japan
"Ethical Issues of the Human Genome Project"
Yan-guang Wang, Centre for Applied Ethics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
"A Study of Chinese View on Carrier Information in Pharmacogenetics Genetics and Disorders"
Ryuichi Ida, Faculty of Law, Kyoto University, Japan
"Science, Knowledge and Ethics"

■ Theme Three – International Society, Justice and Equity
Chair: Ramesh Thakur, Vice-Rector, UNU

Panel Five – National Reconciliation and the Internationalization of Justice
Uwe Kaestner, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
Namhla Mniki, Desmond Tutu Leadership Academy, South Africa

"National Reconciliation and the Internationalization of Justice: The Burgeoning Role of the International Community as the Protector of Universal Human Rights"
Chris Ahrends, Executive-Director, Desmond Tutu Peace Centre, South Africa

Panel Six – International Institutions and the Formation of Global Norms
Nasila Rembe, Oliver Tambo Research Centre, South Africa
Esref Aksu, School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology, La Trobe University, Australia
"Normative Implications of Intra-State Peace Missions: The UN Response to the Angolan Conflict"
Majid Tehranian, University of Hawaii at Manoa
"Third Civilization: Pancapitalism and Peace"

● 26 October 2000

■ Theme Four – Religion, Gender and Culture
Chair: Hans van Ginkel, Rector, UNU

Panel Seven – Religion and Culture
Mojtaba Sadria, Professor of Cross-cultural/East Asian Studies, Chuo University
Neil Quilliam, UNU International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA), Jordan
"Religion, Gender, and Culture"
David Loy, Faculty of International Studies, Bunkyo University, Japan
"Globalization: A New Religion?"

Panel Eight – Gender and Women's Rights
Françoise Héritier-Augé, Director Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, Collège de France
"Gender and Women's Rights – Anthropological Reflections"
Mangala Subramaniam, University of Connecticut, United States
"Moving Women's 'Voices' to the Center by Organizing Local Challenges"
Uli Piest, Consultant for Development Cooperation, Germany
"Promoting Gender through Legal Change and Legal Policy Advice"
Rosi Braidotti, Director, Netherlands Research School of Women's Studies

■ Final Session – Global Human Values
Chair: Tarcisio Della Senta, Director, UNU/IAS

Keynote Speech
Vigdis Finnbogadottir, former President, Republic of Iceland; Founding Chair, Council of Women World Leaders; President of the World Commission on Ethics in Scientific Knowledge and Technology, UNESCO; UN Goodwill Ambassador Against Racism and Xeno-

phobia

Panel Nine – Global Human Values
Ken Tsutsumibayashi, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Keio University, Japan
"A Framework for a Global Dialogue"
Tomonobu Imamichi, Faculty of Arts, Sapientia University of Japan, Hyogo Pref., Japan
Justin Thorens, former President, International Association of Universities

Panel Ten – Youth/Eminent Peoples Discussion and Q&A
  Chair: Jean-Pierre Contzen, Special Advisor, European Commission; Member, Committee
               of Applied Sciences, Royal Belgian Academy, Belgium

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      Although his name does not appear in the programme, I should also mention Andries
van Agt, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, who had been one of the main forces
behind organizing the Global Ethos Conference. If it were not for his unfailing moral and
intellectual support, the Conference would not have been possible.
      As for my paper "A Framework for a Global Dialogue", it was delivered on the final
day in the panel dealing with the issue of global human values. I shall reproduce below the
paper in its original form.

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A Framework for a Global Dialogue

Ⅰ. Introduction

After the ephemeral euphoria of "the end of history" (an all too premature diagnosis of
where history has finally reached with regard to the economic and political arrangement of
collective human life), are we now heading for a catastrophic "clash of civilizations"?[3] It
would certainly be an exceedingly costly prediction if this prediction itself were to become,
by dint of some unpredictable workings of "double hermeneutic",[4] the cause of such a ca-
tastrophe—the prediction becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. In this respect, it would per-
haps be best not to deal with this subject matter at all, in the hope that by ignoring it, it will
soon simply wither away. This would be my preferred strategy, were it not the case that the
civilizational clash thesis has gained considerable currency in recent years.
      That the United Nations has designated the year 2001 as the UN Year of Dialogue
Among Civilizations attests to this fact (GA Resolution 53/22, 4 November 1998). Fur-

thermore, one of the motives for the InterAction Council (which comprises 26 former heads of state from around the world, headed by Helmut Schmidt and Malcolm Fraser) to draft a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities was precisely to prevent such a clash. As Helmut Schmidt proclaimed in his recent speech: "[I]n order to avoid any clash of civilizations, a number of elder statesmen, former presidents and heads of governments from all five continents, with outstanding religious and philosophical academics as advisors (…) got together in order to analyse the situation and options for action [i.e. drafting of the Declaration]".[5] Similarly, Malcolm Fraser stated that: "While we do not subscribe to Samuel Huntington's clash of civilisations as being inevitable, that clash is a real possibility if world leaders do not take positive steps to avert it".[6] Hans Küng, a Swiss theologian and professor emeritus at the University of Tübingen, who serves as one of the chief academic advisors to the InterAction Council (in fact, he is the main author of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, as well as of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic promulgated by the Parliament of the World's Regions in 1993), maintained that the Declaration "could be a help towards avoiding a 'clash of civilizations' which only the innocent can suppose to be 'long refuted'".[7]

Notwithstanding the abundant reference to the civilizational clash thesis, however, it would certainly be misleading to suppose that the aforementioned UN undertaking and the proposed declarations were solely intended as a reaction against such a thesis. Far from it being the case, they are first and foremost concerned with the greater and vastly more complex issue of how to understand and deal with the impact of globalization that is rapidly and perplexingly transforming the global economic, political and cultural landscape, with all its devastating negative externalities.

Of course, this is not to say that globalization is inherently calamitous. As with most worldly phenomena, it is double-edged. On the one hand, it can (if accompanied with a considerable degree of collective effort, wisdom, caution and luck) serve as a motor of progress; progress toward realizing a comparatively safe, just, humane and inhabitable environment for all the denizens of the globe. It may well be that the expansion and intensification of transnational economic activities will, if conducted in a restrained and responsible manner, contribute to creating a global environment wherein violent conflicts would seem economically and politically unfeasible (though it would require a great deal of optimism to believe that the spread of commerce will automatically guarantee peace or that free trade will invariably benefit the rich and poor alike, by some mysterious workings of the Invisible Hand). The globally integrated information networks (such as the Internet and CNN) may also help foster a feeling of shared fate (or a spirit of human solidarity) and facilitate globally concerted actions by various institutions, groups and individuals to tackle pressing global, regional and local problems. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to attempt to take advantage of the historical circumstances that arose with the ending of the Cold War: absence of an imminent threat of thermonuclear war, unparalleled opportunity for global disarmament and wide distribution of peace dividend, possibility of peace and development in the

developing world (one must be reminded of the fact that for the developing world the Cold War was never "cold" in that it resulted in some 40 million deaths), and proliferation of NGOs and INGOs (which according to some signify the emergence of a global civil society).

On the other hand, however, globalization could serve as a catalyst for the creation of a "global apartheid"[8] (characterized by prodigious disparities in wealth, power, information – the so-called "digital divide"—and security among nations and peoples), or even worse, the extinction of the human and other species (for instance, by the irreparable damage to the biosphere caused by extensive pollution, global warming or severe depletion of the ozone layer).[9] It is also becoming increasingly apparent that economic globalization, combined with globalization in areas of information and communication, is giving rise to various kinds of "backlash politics", such as religious fundamentalism and ultra-nationalism (which, incidentally, often attempt to seize state authority on the pretext of preserving religion or ethnic identity). Globalization seems to be transforming the nature of identity politics in such a way as to diversify and intensify political and cultural identities, thereby weakening the state's claim to be the exclusive or dominant source of political identity. And while this is not necessarily a bad thing (in fact, insofar as it fosters a certain kind of mutual respect for cultural difference, I think it is a good thing), it could, if dominated by "backlash politics", turn into a source of violent conflict, even civilizational war *à la* Huntington.[10]

As to how bad the situation actually is in the world today, perhaps little explanation is needed since most of us are all too painfully aware of it. However, just as a reminder, let me cite some figures from Hans Küng's recent book *Global Responsibility*:

- Every *minute*, the nations of the world spend 1.8 millions of US dollars on military armaments;
- Every *hour*, 1500 children die of hunger-related causes;
- Every *day*, a species becomes extinct;
- Every *week* during the 1980s, more people were detained, tortured, assassinated, made refugee, or in other ways violated by acts of repressive regimes than at any other time in history;
- Every *month*, the world's economic system adds over 7.5 billions of US dollars to the catastrophically unbearable debt burden of more than $1,500 billions now resting on the shoulders of Third World peoples;
- Every *year*, an area of tropical forest three-quarters the size of Korea is destroyed and lost;
- Every *decade*, if present global warming trends continue, the temperature of the earth's atmosphere could rise dramatically (between 1.5 and 4.5 degrees Celsius) with the resultant rise in sea levels that would have disastrous consequences, particularly for coastal areas of all earth's land masses.[11]

Needless to say, these are not new problems and not all are direct consequences of "negative globalism".[12] But it would be hard to deny that this situation will further deteriorate at an alarming pace and scale if, as Richard Falk points out, it were left solely to the forces of "globalization-from-above", driven mainly by transnational market forces beyond the effective reach of territorial authority.[13]

So, what is to be done? Hans Küng stresses the need for a "global ethic": "No survival without a world ethic", "There can be no better global order without a global ethic", he proclaims.[14] His approach involves identifying "a minimum of common values, norms and attitudes" through a global dialogue, firstly among the representatives of the world's major religions. He then seeks to share this "minimal basic consensus" with the rest of humanity, establishing, as it were, "a coalition of believers and non-believers".[15] Richard Falk takes a more secular approach, as well as takes into account the significance of cultural diversity, but is no less emphatic on the need for an inter-civilizational dialogue. As he states: "Human solidarity as a ground condition of global governance needs to be understood as fully consistent with civilizational diversity and the importance of inter-civilizational dialogue as the foundation for an acceptable normative (law and ethics) order. The appreciation of cultural differences is particularly appropriate in light of the earlier periods of Euro-centrism and Western normative hegemony."[16] In a similar vein, David Held attaches great importance to a global dialogue and to building consensus around common (democratic) values and norms, but he also proposes various kinds of specific institutional and legal reforms indispensable for the realization of his vision, "cosmopolitan democracy", a kind of federated global democracy.[17]

While there remain many other illuminating visions and ideas (such as Jürgen Habermas's notions of "world citizenship" and "constitutional patriotism"[18]), I shall limit my focus to the proposals made by Küng, Falk and Held, since I believe they provide the most useful hints as to how we ought to go about in the identification of a global ethos. And based on this observation, I wish to present my own ideas about how best to conduct a global dialogue necessary for articulating and generating a global ethos.

II.   Transformation of the Global Context—New Development and New Ideas

It is perfectly legitimate, I think, to ask whether it is really necessary to have a global ethos. It is equally legitimate, I think, to ask whether it is possible to have a global ethos. (I shall later explain why I prefer to use the term "ethos" rather than "ethic" or "ethics".) These are two related but distinguishable questions, and the answers will vary depending on what is meant by global ethos, and also what is meant by "possible" in the case of the latter question. If global ethos means (as I *do not* intend it to mean) a definitive set of universal human values or universal ethical principles that can be expressed unequivocally by the use of human language, then my answers to both questions would be "yes", with the proviso that

"possible" implies practical applicability, not metaphysical proof. Philosophers would be quick to point out that it would require something akin to a miracle to come up with a philosophical (or metaphysical) foundation for such values or principles (though not all philosophers have given up the search). However, I do not wish to get into this philosophical debate (at least, not in this paper). Instead, I pose the following question: Is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights necessary? And, is it practicable? I think many people will answer in the affirmative to the first question, even philosophers (and even proponents of non-Western values, as I shall try to demonstrate later). As for the second question, we all know that, in reality, human rights are hardly guaranteed to every one; and that even when they are guaranteed, they are so (for the most part) by a sovereign state for the members of that sovereign state. However, few will deny that practical guarantee of human rights for all humans *qua* humans is nonetheless the goal (the ideal) to which we all ought to aspire. (Of course, people may differ in their views as to the specific contents of human rights and as to the order of priorities with regard to these contents. This issue will be discussed later.)

Having said all that, however, I wish to underline that, by global ethos, I do not mean to imply "a set of moral principles" (which is the definition of "ethic" in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*) applicable at the global level, or "the science of morals as concerning human conduct, moral principles, rules of conduct" (definition of "ethics") of the global kind. Rather, true to its etymology (the original Greek meaning was nature or disposition), I wish to mean by global ethos "the characteristic spirit or attitudes of a community, people or system" (definition of "ethos") that can be extended to the global community; in other words, a shared moral sentiment or an "operative ideal" (A.D. Lindsay) rooted in the hearts and minds of the global denizens.[19]

This distinction is important since global ethos includes the motivational force that translates moral principles into (voluntary) action. Needless to say, moral principles (or laws or norms or declarations), however eloquently expressed or ceremoniously presented, will remain mere words if people fail to act upon them. And global ethos in the above sense of the term is, I believe, necessary and practicable at two distinct but related levels: (1) at the level of collective action (or globally concerted action) for tackling pressing global problems; and (2) at the level of identity politics (or politics of recognition), for preserving cultural diversity in an environment of mutual understanding, trust, and peaceful coexistence.

Let me deal with the first level first. While global ethos pertaining to globally concerted action aimed at problem-solving is not solely (nor even primarily) concerned with law, it can prove efficacious for inducing credible commitment with regard to the implementation of international law. This assertion recognizes in part the old familiar notion that, in the absence of a supranational entity like a world government, the international society essentially remains an aggregation of formally equal sovereign states, each jealously guarding its *de jure* sovereign entitlements. Of course, international relations theorists may disagree among themselves as to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of international re-

gimes and international organizations (neo-institutionalists and neo-realists comprising the opposite poles), and also it is not uncommon for dominant states to pressurize (through various political and economic means) smaller states into compliance. But the fact remains that, in the final analysis, the enforcement of international law relies on the voluntary compliance on the part of each state actor. And so long as this remains the persistent feature of international society, it is vitally important that there exists some degree of consensus as to the perceived legitimacy of the laws and treaties in question, if they are to be at all effective. This may call for some kind of global ethos.

But the matter is far more complex and uncertain. While it seems undeniable that the state remains (and will continue to remain in the foreseeable future) the principal political actor in the shaping of domestic and international politics, it seems equally undeniable that the forces of globalization are significantly eroding state power in many areas to the point of fundamentally transforming the logic and structure of the Westphalia model of sovereignty and states system (though, in what areas and to what extent, scholars remain divided).[20] It is perhaps not an exaggeration to assert, as does Falk, that the states system "is no longer consistently in control of the global policy process".[21]

Once again, this is proving to be a mixed blessing, or a mixed curse (depending on one's moral and political outlook). On the one hand, more and more non-state actors such as NGOs, INGOs, and epistemic communities are taking part (directly or indirectly) in the global policy formulation process, thereby facilitating the development of better informed policies, as well as awareness-building, implementation, monitoring and compliance. In this respect, it is quite significant that the numbers of international non-governmental organizations have increased drastically in recent years; according to one figure, 4,624 INGOs by 1989[22]. Moreover, in June 1992 in Rio, more than 1,400 NGOs (along with government representatives from 153 countries) took part in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or Earth Summit), a symbolic development which, some say, testifies to the emergence of a global civil society.[23] It is also noteworthy that many NGOs have created their own networks to facilitate cooperation, exchange of information and joint action; and improved means of communication (such as the Internet) is vastly contributing to their empowerment. This kind of change in the global power distribution is, I think, a change for the better, not only from a democratic perspective but also in terms of formulating informed policies and achieving effective concerted action aimed at resolving pressing global problems.

But, on the other hand, while the states system's diminishing control over the global policy process may provide opportunities for the realization of a thriving global civil society, it could also contribute to aggravating the already severe impact of negative globalism or globalization-from-above, thereby undermining any efforts to creating or maintaining a global civil society. And given this double-edged nature of the globalization process, a proposal for some kind of global ethos that could tilt the balance towards the brighter scenario seems justifiable.

Then how is a global ethos to be articulated or generated? As I mentioned earlier, I believe useful hints can be obtained from the proposals put forward by Richard Falk, David Held and Hans Küng.

As one of the chapter-titles (Chapter 8: "Resisting 'Globalization-from-Above' through 'Globalization-from-Below'") in his book *Predatory Globalization* indicates, Falk stresses the necessity to counter the negative effects of globalization-from-above by promoting globalization-from-below. This latter notion is inextricably linked to what he calls "normative democracy", and the relation between the two is summarized in the following passage: "To introduce the idea of 'normative democracy' is to offer a proposal for a unifying ideology capable of mobilizing and unifying the disparate social forces that constitute global civil society and of providing the political energy that is associated with globalization-from-below".[24] While a "unifying ideology" seems too strong a word to equate with a global ethos, its aim is not dissimilar; that is, strengthening global civil society. Global civil society can loosely be defined as the civic space wherein globalization-from-below operates and manifests itself. As for historic examples of globalization-from-below, Falk mentions the Earth Summit (1992), the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and Development (1993), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Social Summit in Copenhagen (1995), the Beijing Conference on Women and Development (1995), and the Istanbul Conference on Habitat and Development (1996). Incidentally, the central tenets of normative democracy are consent of the citizenry, rule of law, human rights, participation, accountability, public goods, transparency and non-violence.[25]

But what I find most interesting and illuminating about Falk's approach is his attempt to link the above idea with his argument about the necessity of an inter-civilizational dialogue. In other words, he takes very seriously the moral, social and political significance of cultural diversity, and argues that inter-civilizational dialogue is indispensable for the realization of normative democracy and global civil society; that many of the global, regional and local problems cannot be resolved without engaging in such a dialogue. It is also interesting that he does not believe that an inter-civilizational dialogue could or should take place in some imaginary, decontextualized space. Culture matters, and so too historical experience. As he states: "There are special obstacles [to inter-civilizational dialogue] that arise when the historical memory of inter-civilizational relations is one of abuse on the part of the subordinated civilization. The relations of the West with Islam, Africa, and indigenous peoples [I should add, Japan with the neighboring Asian countries] disclose different facets of this background, which casts a long shadow of suspicion across efforts at reconciliation."[26] Falk therefore puts forward various suggestions to smoothen the way for a meaningful inter-civilizational dialogue, one of which is to allow the dialogue initially to move from South to North, and from Islam to the West.[27] Whether or not one subscribes to his specific recommendations, I think it would be useful, as Falk maintains, "to identify overlapping and convergent ideas as regards advancing human rights through extensive inter-civilizational and inter-religious dialogue".[28] (I shall explore this issue in the ensuing

section.)

David Held's vision of a cosmopolitan democracy is unflinchingly idealistic and grand (perhaps too idealistic and grand for this imperfect world, though I see no reason not to sympathize with his Kantian orientation). But regardless of whether one finds his overall scheme and proposed time-frame feasible, what is distinctive and appealing (in my view) about his approach is that he articulates very clearly the goals as well as institutional and legal reforms necessary to attain these goals. For instance, he lays down the long-term objectives as thus: "Entrenchment of cosmopolitan democratic law: new Charter of Rights and Obligations locked into different domains of political, social and economic power"; "Global parliament (with limited revenue-raising capacity) connected to regions, nations and localities. Creation of a public issue Boundary Court"; "Establishment of the accountability of international and transnational economic agencies to parliaments and assemblies at regional and global levels"; "Permanent shift of a growing proportion of a nation-state's coercive capability to regional and global institutions, with the ultimate aim of demilitarization and the transcendence of the war system."[29] It is important, as Held constantly reminds us, to think concretely about what it would take to achieve a vision, and this undoubtedly applies to the case of global ethos.

As mentioned earlier, Hans Küng played a prominent role in drafting both the "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" and the "Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities".[30] This may explain why some of the underlying ideas in the two declarations are similar (if not identical) despite the fact that they were prepared for two very different occasions. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic was presented to the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago, which drew 6,500 participants from virtually all religions. It is essentially a product of inter-religious dialogue but its scope is not restricted to the religious realm. By stressing the need for a global ethic, which is "the minimum of what the religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere",[31] it seeks ultimately to mobilize and unite the wills ("a transformation of consciousness"[32]) of all believers and non-believers for the purpose of creating a "new global order" that maintains a just social and economic order and preserves freedom, justice, peace and an inhabitable environment for all human beings. It also emphasizes that a global ethic is not "a global ideology or a single unified religion" but rather "a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes" centered around the following four directives: (1) commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, (2) commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order, (3) commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and (4) commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.[33] Moreover, it maintains that there exists a "golden rule" which has been shared by many religious and ethical traditions for thousands of years: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others" or "What you wish done to yourself, do to others."[34]

Interestingly, virtually all of these points reappear (sometimes word for word) in the

Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, a document that was proposed by the InterAction Council in 1997 (the Council had been working on it since 1987). The Council's aim was to have the Declaration officially adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, though this was not to be realized in the end due to oppositions from various quarters. Ironically, one of the criticisms was that the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, owing to its emphasis on responsibilities, would weaken the moral force of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is rather ironic given that the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities explicitly states in the preamble that its aim is to complement and "reinforce commitments already proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: namely, the full acceptance of the dignity of all people; their inalienable freedom and equality, and their solidarity with one another".[35]

For the purposes of this paper, however, I wish to draw attention to the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities and the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic have a lot in common and that they both rest on the implied assumption that "a minimum basic consensus as regards binding values, immutable standards and basic moral attitudes" could emerge from inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic is thought to be the outcome of such inter-religious dialogue and the fundamental principles enshrined in it are "the minimum of what the religions of the world *already have in common now* in the ethical sphere" (my emphasis). If this is indeed true (and I am hardly in a position to judge), then it is certainly good news. But it would be enormously difficult, it seems to me, to claim the same kind of ontological status for the Declaration of Human Responsibilities, given that it is being challenged from various sides and also given the present state of affairs where some even doubt the universal validity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (for example, some ardent proponents of Asian values). What is more, while the authors of the Declaration of Human Responsibilities took great pains to make the declaration into an inter-civilizational document,[36] it nonetheless precedes an inter-civilizational dialogue. As I wish to argue in the ensuing section, I believe that an inter-civilizational or global dialogue, the kind that involves a large number of individuals and actors from both state and non-state institutions and groups, is indispensable for generating a kind of moral sentiment (a global ethos) that motivates people to act upon shared moral values and principles (which are themselves outcomes of such dialogue).

However, I still believe that the Declaration of Human Responsibilities is immensely valuable, for it can serve as a thematic basis from which to start a dialogue. Moreover, some of the principles enshrined in the declaration can and ought to serve as ground rules for conducting a meaningful dialogue; for instance, non-violence, respect for life, integrity, honesty, fairness, truthfulness, and tolerance. A meaningful dialogue, it seems to me, cannot take place in a totally value-free space where even procedural rules (even if tentative) are denied. It would seem rather ludicrous just to say "let's get together and talk" without as-

suming any rules or themes.

Then how might we go about in setting the stage? Let me now attempt to answer this question in the hope of providing a framework for conducting a global dialogue that could lead to the articulation and generation of a global ethos.

III.   A Framework for Initiating a Global Dialogue

I wish to begin by proposing a theoretical framework that I consider helpful for realizing a meaningful global dialogue. Then I will attempt to illustrate how this theoretical framework might be applied to a specific circumstance or issue; namely, the circumstance or issue concerning the alleged tension between human rights values and Asian values.

But first, a caveat is in order. I must warn readers that what I propose below is neither a definitive nor an exclusive theoretical framework for a global dialogue. Rather, it is a starting hypothesis and therefore should be constantly subject to review. Furthermore, even if the framework proves efficacious in one context, there is no guarantee that that will be the case in another. Further still, a changing context could lead to the diminished efficacy of the framework.[37]

Keeping the above in mind, let me now move on to my main discussion. The aim of the dialogue, as I repeatedly underlined, is to articulate and generate a global ethos. But some readers may find the latter part of this aim somewhat perplexing. It is one thing to "articulate" or "identify" a global ethos but surely quite another to "generate" or "create" it. What exactly is meant by "generating" or "creating" a global ethos? And how is this possible, if at all? I have explained that a global ethos is a globally shared moral sentiment (or an operative ideal) which includes the motivational force capable of translating moral principles into voluntary moral action. But how do you create a moral sentiment? This claim may sound rather extravagant, even preposterous. But let me try to explain.

I have argued earlier that it is necessary to consider the issue of global ethos at two distinct but related levels: (1) at the level of collective action for tackling pressing global problems, and (2) at the level of identity politics for preserving cultural diversity in an environment of mutual understanding, trust, and peaceful coexistence. And because the two levels are intricately and inextricably linked,[38] it was further argued that an inter-civilizational or global dialogue is indispensable for facilitating globally concerted action for problem-solving, and for preserving cultural diversity. Now, if it is solely a matter of "identifying" a global ethos (though in itself a terribly ambitious project), it becomes a matter of discovering and pinpointing the overlapping moral values or principles that are already shared by all cultures and civilizations. There is an assumption here that a minimum set of globally shared moral values and principles already exist, though perhaps in a dormant or inchoate state. This, I believe, was the approach adopted by Küng in drafting the two declarations. We may recall the definition of global ethic: "the minimum of what the

religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere". I have already said that these declarations are of immense value. But one should not be surprised to find skeptics or relativists arguing against such claims, maintaining that such wide-ranging or "thick" conceptions of morality are not, as a matter of fact, shared across cultures and civilizations.[39] Skeptics or relativists might also argue that taking the "lowest common denominator" approach can only, at best, lead to the discovery of an extremely "thin" conception of morality, such as one predicated on the notion of self-preservation. (Think, for instance, of Montaigne, Charron, Lipsius, Hobbes, or even Grotius.) Of course, the right of self-preservation is vitally important, but it would be quite naïve to think that this is adequate for dealing with the kind of problems adumbrated above.

So, are we to create a globally sharable "thick" morality that does not yet exist? May be, but certainly not from scratch, and not from above. In order to dissociate myself from some sinister totalitarian project, let me once again underline the following points. The whole aim of identifying or creating a global ethos, in my view, is to tackle various problems that are currently contributing to the infringement of human rights. And by human rights, I mean basic civil and political rights, as well as certain social, economic and cultural rights. Thus, it rests on a strong commitment to democracy, as will become increasingly clear in the ensuing discussion. Furthermore, a global ethos for tackling global problems, and a global ethos for respecting cultural diversity are not identical, though related. The former is thicker in that it is a kind of new global identity, an identity of global citizenship, which (I hasten to add) only forms one layer of each individual's multifaceted identity. This identity should therefore not contradict with other various layers of identity constituting a person. For instance, I can think of myself as a Japanese citizen, male, heterosexual, feminist, supporter of Amnesty International, classical music lover, and a global citizen with a set of responsibilities toward other global citizens, future generations, animals and the natural environment. A global ethos for respecting cultural diversity is, however, comparatively thinner in that it primarily signifies a shared consciousness to respect or tolerate other cultures and traditions. To put it somewhat rhetorically, while the former is an attempt to create a new "we", the latter aims to transform the "dangerous others" into "significant others".

But the difficult question still remains: how do you create a moral sentiment that can be shared among people from different cultures? We all know that moral sentiment is not something that can be created overnight by some collective human decision. It is largely shaped by, and is thus often inseparable from, culture, tradition and historical experience. Furthermore, all these factors, in one way or another, impact on the formation of identity (both at individual and communal levels). And to this complexity is added the fact that culture, tradition and identity transform over time, often in unintended and unpredictable ways. This is especially true in an era of globalization, in which levels of human interaction increase drastically while areas subject to effective human control diminish at an alarming pace.

However, not everything is dictated by the goddess of fortuna, and there does seem to

be some room for human maneuver. (Thank God for small mercies.) For instance, taking part in a collective decision-making process often allows the participants to feel that they are the rightful authors of the decisions reached, and this may foster a sense of collective responsibility and mutual (moral) obligation. But while the importance of such psychological and moral effects arising from the act of consent must be fully acknowledged, if the objective is to create a global ethos, then it is simply not enough just to extend this model to include more people from various cultures. Moreover, it would often prove counter-productive, it seems to me, to place too much emphasis on decision-making, for this entails majority-rule (under a democratic procedure), which is never completely free from the danger of "the tyranny of the majority" (Tocqueville, J.S. Mill) and which also risks introducing an element of power struggle into the whole process. This belongs to the realm of democratic politics, and while I think democratic politics is indispensable for managing a humane collective human life, it does not positively serve to create a global ethos. I believe a global ethos (or any other ethics or morality for that matter) should not (and could not) be a direct outcome of a political decision-making process, democratic or otherwise.

What seems more important and effective for creating a global ethos (though success is never guaranteed) is to conduct a continuous and open-ended dialogue aimed at problem-defining and problem-solving, and involving as many people as possible from as many cultures and traditions as possible. Such a dialogue must not be a one-off event aimed at reaching a decision; the process is as important as the outcome, which cannot be captured in a definitive form (since it is constantly changing), nor measured by a single immutable criterion (since peoples' value criteria are diverse and variable). Since it is a continuous and open-ended dialogue, tensions between various viewpoints will always remain, and while it is important to aim for a consensus, one must not assume that all tensions can be eradicated. It is not an attempt to come up with a coherent and universal system of ethics.

In addition to all this, each participant must make serious and sincere efforts to study and understand the views and cultures and circumstances of other participants. But this must be done in a particular way, since we are dealing also with the issue of identity, which in turn is closely linked to the issue of recognition. To explain this, I shall borrow from Charles Taylor a notion which I use somewhat arbitrarily to suit my own argument, a notion which Taylor borrowed from Hans Gadamar and used it somewhat arbitrarily to suit his (i.e. his argument on multiculturalism and the politics of recognition); namely, the notion of "the fusion of horizons".[40]

Taylor begins with the assumption that identity (both at individual and communal levels) are partly shaped by recognition or misrecognition or nonrecognition of others. He thus argues that "a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves".[41] This could take many different forms, but is most intractable when, as a result of extensive suffering, such depreciatory images projected by others become internalized. (Examples of women in patriarchal societies, blacks in white societies,

and colonized people are mentioned.)[42] Taylor also explains that the politics of nationalism is often in part a reaction to such treatment from others, often fueled by a need for due recognition.[43] One of his aims is to show how the "fusion of horizons" could help rectify some of these problems in a multicultural society. But since my aim is rather different, let me present a highly simplified version of "the fusion of horizons" tailored for my own use.

For the sake of simplicity, I shall begin with the assumption that two individuals (call them A and B) from two very different cultures have developed two different types of value criteria ("backgrounds") for perceiving, understanding and judging human thought and action. At the moment of their first contact, it is unlikely that communication and mutual understanding will go smoothly due to the difference of value criteria. Now, for A and B to be able to understand or appreciate each other's viewpoints (or values or culture) it is necessary for them to engage in a dialogue that would trigger a "fusion of horizons", a process by which the value criteria of both A and B become transformed and expanded to incorporate (though not in its original form) a part of each other's value criteria.[44] This, however, does not mean that the two will become identical or that they will lose their distinctive viewpoints or identities. It merely implies that A and B will each develop in his/her own way an extended value criteria that will enable A to *understand* where B is coming from, and vice versa. (It is emphatically not a process that seeks conformity of value criteria.) But for this to occur, A and B must be able to relativize to some extent his/her own value criteria, to be open-minded and be willing to listen to each other, to try to place oneself in the other's position, and study the other person's culture. Moreover, efforts must be made to avoid the following situation. If A says to B that he/she understands and recognizes B's viewpoint (or values or culture) prior to engaging in a dialogue, and if A is just saying that without really attempting to understand or study B's viewpoint, and if the power relationship is vastly unequal in favor of A, then B is likely to find A's attitude unbearably patronizing and offensive. As Taylor explains, people who seek recognition "want respect, not condescension".[45] Thus true mutual understanding and recognition could only arise from a dialogue engaged in a sincere and mutually respecting manner.

If, however, all this is achieved with some degree of success, there will emerge opportunities for A and B to create and share a common ethos (or a new moral vocabulary) that is comprehensible by and attributable to both. This becomes possible when both A and B feel that they are joint authors and hence rightful possessors of such an ethos. Furthermore, by creating together and sharing a common ethos, A and B may come to internalize some jointly articulated moral values, recognizing them as "ours", neither belonging exclusively to A nor to B, but to both.

All this may sound very abstract and elusive. So let me now try to illustrate how this theoretical framework might be applied to a more specific context, by considering the issue of the alleged tension between human rights values and Asian values.

In dealing with this topic, I must begin by expressing my reservations about the use of the categories "Western" and "Asian". Given the profound diversity of cultures, religions

and traditions both in the West and in Asia (though diversity is far more pronounced in Asia), I believe the two categories are hopelessly broad and that they conceal more than what they reveal about the issues in question. Moreover, it is almost unfortunate, in my view, for many Asians to be caught up in this West-Asia dichotomy, since it hinders a more genuine and spontaneous expression of the rich and diverse cultures of Asia. In other words, taking this dichotomy too seriously amounts to accepting, though in the reversed form, the paradigmatic distinction between the West and East, a distinction originally invented by the West to support their own cultural identity and political legitimacy;[46] and this could hinder a more authentic expression of the "Asian" identities from various Asian perspectives. It seems therefore almost nonsensical to talk about Asian values in general terms, let alone attempt to justify certain political means and ends (or sometimes even authoritarian rule) by resorting to such values.

Another problem related to this topic arises from the obvious fact that proponents of Asian values rarely speak with one voice or with the same kind of intentions. While not a distinctively Asian phenomenon, it is often the case that the voices of the ruling elite do not adequately represent the voices of the majority of the population.[47] Chandra Muzaffar, a Malaysian academic (director of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue at the University of Malaya) and NGO activist (president of the International Movement for a Just World) defends and promotes the "high moral principles embodied in the religious and cultural philosophies of the [Asian] region". But at the same time, he states that, on the whole, most Asian societies have failed to live up to such principles. He mentions "ten forms of ethical transgressions which have occurred in various Asian countries", one of which is "the concentration of power within the elite stratum of society, the restriction of public participation in political decision-making and the suppression of dissent".[48]

Given the above, it is possible to call into question the extent to which the so-called "Asian challenge" to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights expressed in the Bangkok Declaration (adopted at the World Human Rights Conference Regional Preparatory meeting in 1993) is representative of the views of the majority of Asian people.[49] However, it might be somewhat presumptuous to dismiss off hand this Asian challenge as driven solely by the vested interest of the ruling elite. Farish Noor, a lecturer at the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue of the University of Malaya, explains that: "the dominant perception in Malaysia is that the UDHR [Universal Declaration of Human Rights] has been reduced to a mere formality and ideological instrument serving the interests of certain dominant Western powers (most notably the United States) in the UN and the global arena".[50] Interestingly, he makes this point while maintaining that human rights values are perfectly congruent with Asian (particularly Malaysian) values. The accusation that the West is sometimes guilty of double standards in its advocacy of human rights policies is not one that comes solely from the East but also from the West. Helmut Schmidt, for instance, made the following remarks: "Today, nearly half a century after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these rights, which are necessary ethical imperatives, are being endangered. They are being endangered,

because some Western leaders, particularly some Americans, are misusing the concept and the term 'human rights' as a kind of verbal weapon, as an aggressive instrument for pressure in the field of foreign affairs."[51]

However, in this paper, I do not wish to touch upon any of the highly politicized debates regarding the kinds of issues mentioned above, which are in any case debates that chiefly concern political leaders. Since my primary concern is to seek ways to create a common ethos from below—through intercivilizational dialogue—I shall instead focus on how human rights issues can be meaningfully debated at the citizenry or civil society level. And to this end, I think it is helpful, first to try to understand why, in many Asian countries, much resentment has been generated (even among the ordinary citizens) against the West's advocacy of human rights policies.

The resentment seems to arise partly from the perception that an alien concept has been imposed from outside. For many Asian people, internalizing the notion of human rights (or integrating the notion of human rights into their existing moral idioms) does not occur naturally and without any feeling of uneasiness. But one of the main reasons for this, it seems to me, is not because they find the values underlying human rights objectionable but rather because they feel offended by the lack of recognition or understanding toward the moral idioms rooted in Asian cultures, religions and traditions. Moreover, this becomes aggravated when they feel they are being patronized. As mentioned earlier, recognition and identity are often two sides of the same coin; and to quote Charles Taylor once again, people seeking recognition "want respect, not condescension".[52] Therefore, even if human rights values are advocated with perfectly good intentions by the West, and even if many Asian people are likely to benefit from the practical guarantee of human rights, if they feel that their own moral values are not adequately recognized or respected, they are likely to become repulsed by what they consider as patronizing attitudes of the foreign preachers.[53]

Another plausible explanation as to why the notion of human rights sometimes seems alien to many Asian people is that their moral idioms (which are equally concerned with respect for life, human dignity, freedom of thought, freedom from poverty and suffering, to mention just a few) do not always rest comfortably with the underlying legalistic (or contractarian) tone that resonates in the notion of human rights. One ought not to forget that in the West, the language of human rights evolved from the uniquely European natural law and natural rights traditions. Hence, whereas in the West, the concept of right (which suggests implicitly or explicitly the existence of corresponding laws and obligations) serves as the centripetal force that brings together and binds the various moral principles and norms, in Asia, moral principles and norms are often expressed in the form of multinuclear but overlapping moral idioms.[54]

To illustrate this point further, let us turn to the example of how the notion of rights was first introduced to Japan. It is interesting that when some Japanese scholars tried to translate the word "right" into Japanese in the mid-nineteenth century they immediately discovered that they literally had to invent a new term, since unlike "justice", "compassion"

and "moral obligation", there was no existing Japanese word that corresponded to the word "right". It is still more interesting that it was translated as "Ken-ri" (権利), with the use of two Chinese characters that denote "power" and "interest".[55] This is indicative of the translators' understanding of the term; it was conceived as a notion that had little association with moral obligations and ethical principles. Whereas in many European languages, the word "right" (Recht, droit, diritto, derecho) also implies "law" and thus connotes obligation and justice, in Japanese, "right" is not always perceived as closely linked with law, obligation and justice. Hence, it is observed that, while in the West claiming one's right is considered as a moral entitlement (that it is right to stress one's right), in Japan, it is often considered as a self-centered act that neglects moral responsibilities towards others. (Though it is worth mentioning Yukichi Fukuzawa's attempt to incorporate the moral dimensions by translating "right" as 権理 (Ken-ri), where the Chinese character for "ri" (理) implies in the neo-Confucian tradition the fundamental principle that governs the moral and natural universe.)

If it is true that while the Western notion of rights is inseparably linked to various moral and legal concepts, in the non-Western tradition the notion of rights is not necessarily closely woven into the existing constellation of overlapping moral idioms, then perhaps it is not unreasonable to assume the following. The fundamental human values expressed by (or associated with) the Western notion of human rights are no less cherished in the Asian traditions,[56] though expressed differently and often without reference to rights. Then perhaps the alleged tensions between human rights values and Asian values are not so much caused by the incompatibility of value systems as to the lack of mutual recognition and understanding of how the various moral idioms are differently organized and expressed in different cultures. (Of course, there are also political reasons, which are not considered in this paper.) What could potentially qualify as universally accepted and acceptable values are expressed in a great variety of ways (according to different cultures) that it would seem almost pointless to try simply to look for similarities at the conceptual or linguistic level. Furthermore, there is inherent difficulty in trying to agree on the universality of moral concepts taken individually and in isolation from the vastly complex constellations of interrelated moral concepts and sentiments that make up the unique moral vocabularies. Thus, it seems to me that any attempt to agree on a set of universal moral values must be preceded by a dialogue that aims to foster mutual recognition, understanding and trust; and such dialogue, as I tried to demonstrate earlier, must achieve to some degree the "fusion of horizons".

Such dialogue may then produce the following outcomes. On the Asian side, people may learn to appreciate and respect how some of the fundamental human values that they uphold can be expressed in terms of (human) rights. It is fair to say that this has already occurred to some degree in many Asian countries. In Japan, for instance, more and more people have become accustomed to resorting to the language of human rights – the guarantee of which is enshrined in the Constitution – when criticizing unjust actions that deprive a

person's freedom or dignity. As for the people of the Western nations, they may in turn learn to appreciate how it is possible for many of the values underlying the notion of human rights to be expressed in a variety of ways and often without reference to rights. Furthermore, people from both the West and East may jointly seek to expand and enrich the notion of human rights, to incorporate the kinds of values that are of particular concern to people from the developing countries. For instance, an increased emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights within the language of human rights (while not compromising the centrality of civil and political rights) might contribute to a wider acceptance of the notion of human rights.[57] Indeed, it may even lead to the emergence of a new language of human rights, one that is perceived by all as belonging neither exclusively to the West nor to the East, but to both.

I have attempted above to provide just one plausible scenario that I think is relevant to creating a global ethos. Now, while it is not my intention to end this paper on a low note, I think it is important to mention some of the difficulties that must be tackled in order to achieve a meaningful global dialogue. First, we must provide a concrete and realistic answer to the question: how can we create a forum in which such dialogue could take place? One could certainly point out the significance of the emerging global civil society, a spontaneously created civic space where NGOs and concerned groups and individuals come together to address common issues. However, due to its radically decentralized nature, it is not always easy to locate and grasp what is going on in that vast civic space. Thus, in order to bridge, coordinate and make more visible the numerous discourses and actions that are taking place in various civil societies around the world, I believe it is necessary to create an institutionalized global forum. I do not have a comprehensive proposal for institutional reform, but I agree with Falk on the importance of creating a Global Peoples' Assembly within the United Nations system. According to Falk, "the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, has given his endorsement to democratizing moves and has even suggested at one point holding a millennial peoples' assembly in the year 2000".[58]

However, the above institutional reform is not enough, since the number of people who can actually participate in such assembly will always remain quite limited, due to spatial and financial constraints. Thus, it may be worth exploring the possibility of creating a kind of virtual global peoples' assembly in cyberspace (i.e. Internet). The Virtual University established by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies may serve as one such virtual global forum. But even these proposals face various obstacles such as insufficient IT infrastructure and low literacy rate in many developing countries, language barrier, and extreme poverty that renders any such attempt secondary to the concerns of basic human survival.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that there are groups and individuals who simply do not wish to participate in a global dialogue. And it goes without saying that, whatever their motives or reasons, such people cannot be forced to participate. A global ethos cannot be an outcome of coercive measures.

Finally, the framework that I propose may be criticized for assuming too much; that it rests on a thick morality.[59] However, I have already stated that it is a starting hypothesis. In this respect, I urge readers to judge its merits on the basis of what can and must be done here and now in order to tackle the kinds of pressing global, regional and local problems adumbrated in this paper. Regardless of all the obstacles, I for one believe that a global dialogue is our best bet.

Notes

[1] Newsletter (*Advanced Perspectives*, 6 [2000-2001]) article on the conference is, however, available on line at the following site. http://www.ias.unu.edu/binaries/AP%20newsletter6.pdf

[2] "Fusion of Horizons or Confusion of Horizons? Intercultural Dialogue and Its Risks," *Global Governance*, 11-1 (2005), pp. 103-114.

[3] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, 16 (1989), pp. 3-18; Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992); Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993), pp. 22-49; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

[4] Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, second edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

[5] Helmut Schmidt, "It is Time to Talk about Responsibility," speech delivered at Hansung University, Seoul, Korea, October 17, 1999 (cited from the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/speeches/schmidthansung.htm). Similar remarks were made in the same speech: "Quite a few people tend to think that in the next century, clashes of civilizations might become unavoidable. There are several examples for this concern. Let me, for instance, point to the possible clash between the Islamic part of mankind and the Western civilisation. Or, secondly, let me point to a thinkable clash between Jewish/Israeli nationalism, on the one side, and, on the other, the Moslem/Palestinian nationalism, with violent fundamentalists on both sides. Or a third example is the danger of a deep clash between Pakistani and Indian nationalisms, propelled by religious fundamentalists on either side, Moslems and Hindus. In my personal view, the most dangerous possible civilisational clash is thinkable between American/Western Civil Rights-fundamentalism, and on the opposite side, Confucianist, or the so-called socialist Chinese approach to modernity." See also Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities: Two Declarations* (London: SMC Press, 1998), pp. 77-78.

[6] Malcolm Fraser, "A Declaration on Human Responsibilities?," Address given at the UNESCO Conference, Carlton Crest Hotel, March 30, 1998 (cited from the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/speeches/FraserUNESCO.htm). In the same address, Fraser also stated the following: "We are conscious too, that with rapid growth of population, especially in Muslim countries, Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' could become a reality."

[7] Hans Küng, "Don't Be Afraid of Ethics! Why We Need to Talk of Responsibilities as well as of Rights," in Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, pp. 104-122 (p. 116). The same text can be found in the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/speeches/KungWhyAfrEth.htm. For similar remarks, see Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 92, 115-119.

[8] Richard Falk, *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 13; A. Makhijani, *From Global Capitalism to Economic Justice: An Inquiry into the Elimination of*

Systemic Poverty, Violence and Environmental Destruction in the World Economy (New York: Apex Press, 1992); A. Makhijani, "Global Apartheid and the Political Economy of War," in Grace Boggs et al. (ed.), *Conditions of Peace: An Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Expo Press, 1991), pp. 178-222.

[9] Whilst it seems unlikely that an alternative viable economic paradigm will appear in the near future, there is growing concern that, in its present form, the market economy will eventually end up in self-destruction. Ironically, many of its defenders are now pointing out some of the calamitous features of economic liberalism and are warning how an unfettered market economy could cause greater disparity of wealth (both domestically and internationally), degradation of the global environment, destruction of communal values, and so forth. This irony is epitomized in the remark recently made by one of the greatest beneficiaries of economic globalization, George Soros: "The doctrine of laissez-faire capitalism holds that the common good is best served by the uninhibited pursuit of self-interest. Unless it is tempered by the recognition of a common interest that ought to take precedence over particular interests, our present system … is liable to break down" (Soros, "The Capitalist Threat," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 279-2, pp. 45-58).

[10] On the impact of globalization on identity politics, see Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, pp. 133, 142, 154-160; David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 94, 125.

[11] Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 2. For more such alarming but informative data, see the annual reports by Lester Brown et al., *State of the World* and *Vital Signs*.

[12] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 71.

[13] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 130.

[14] Küng, *Global Responsibility*, p. xv; Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1993), p. 7; Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, p. 9; Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, p. 92.

[15] Küng, *Global Responsibility*, pp. 36-40.

[16] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 4.

[17] Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*; Held, "Democracy and the New World Order," in Held and Archibugi (ed.) *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for the New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[18] Interestingly, in his recent work *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 514-515, Habermas proclaimed (perhaps a shade too optimistically) the following: "Only a democratic citizenship that does not close itself off in a particularistic fashion can pave the way for a *world citizenship*, which is already taking shape today in worldwide political communications. The Vietnam War, the revolutionary changes in eastern and central Europe, as well as the Gulf War, are the first *world-political* events in the strict sense. Through the electronic mass media, these events were brought instantaneously before a ubiquitous public sphere. In the context of the French Revolution, Kant made reference to the reactions of a participating public. At that time, he identified the phenomenon of a world public sphere, which today is becoming political reality for the first time in a cosmopolitan matrix of communication. Even the superpowers cannot ignore the reality of worldwide protests. The ongoing state of nature between bellicose states that have already forfeited their sovereignty has at least begun to appear obsolescent. Even if we still have along way to go before fully achieving it, the cosmopolitan condition is no longer merely a mirage. State citizenship and world citizenship form a continuum whose contours, at least, are already becoming visible." Also worth mentioning is a report prepared by the Commission on Global Governance entitled *Our Global Neighbourhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[19] I ought to mention, however, that Küng's intended meaning of the term "ethic" is closer to "ethos", as is clear from the following citation. "The declaration should have the name 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic', not 'Global Ethics'. 'Ethic' means a basic human moral attitude, whereas 'ethics' denotes the philosophical or theological theory of moral attitudes, values and norms" (Küng and Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic*, pp. 59-60). See also Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, p. 93, 104. Moreover, in his original German texts, Küng uses the term "Weltethos". Despite this qualification, I prefer to use the word "global ethos", since Küng's "global ethic" has relatively strong religious overtones.

[20] See for instance, Gene M. Lyons and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *Beyond Westphalia?: State sovereignty and international intervention* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); John Dunn (ed.), *Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State?* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995); John Dunn, *The Cunning of Unreason: Making Sense of Politics* (London: Harper Collins, 2000).

[21] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 35.

[22] Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*, p. 108.

[23] While there are numerous definitions of global civil society, I shall, for the purposes of this paper, rely on the following definition provided by Falk: "'global civil society' refers to the field of action and thought occupied by individual and collective citizen initiatives of a voluntary, nonprofit character, both within states and transnationally. These initiatives proceed from a global orientation and are responses, in part at least, to certain globalizing tendencies that are perceived to be partially or totally adverse" (*Predatory Globalization*, p. 138). See also Michael Walzer (ed.), *Toward a Global Civil Society* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995); Miguel Darcy de Oliveira and Rajesh Tandon (ed.), *Citizens: Strengthening Global Civil Society* (Washington D.C.: CIVICUS, 1994).

[24] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 146.

[25] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 148-149. For related ideas, see also Falk, *On Humane Governance: Toward a New Global Politics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

[26] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 206 fn. 37.

[27] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 107. He also suggests that: "Acknowledgement and apology seem important steps for the dominant side to take, not to erase the memory, but to move it beyond a preoccupation with past grievance" (Ibid., p. 206 fn. 37).

[28] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 176.

[29] Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*, p. 279.

[30] For the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, see Küng and Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic*, pp. 11-39; Küng (ed.), *Yes to a Global Ethic* (New York: Continuum, 1996), pp. 7-26. For the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, see the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac. Both declarations are included in Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, pp. 2-36.

[31] Küng and Kuschel (eds), *A Global Ethic*, p. 8; Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, p. 42.

[32] Küng and Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic*, pp. 34-36.

[33] Küng and Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic*, pp. 21-36; Küng and Schmidt (eds), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, p. 41; Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, p. 92, 105, 111.

[34] Küng and Kuschel (ed.), *A Global Ethic*, pp. 23-24, 54; Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, p. 112; Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, pp. 98-99. See also Küng, *Global Responsibility*, p. 59, where he mentions this golden rule and states that Kant's categorical imperative is the secularized version of it.

[35] See also article 19 of the Declaration: "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the responsibilities, rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948." For Küng and others' responses to criticisms, see Küng, "It is Time to Talk about Responsibility"; Küng, "Don't Be Afraid of Ethics!," in Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, pp. 104-122; Küng, "Human Responsibilities Reinforce Human Rights"; Schmidt, "It is Time to Talk about Responsibility"; Kalevi Sorsa, "Rights and Responsibilities"; Arthur H. Westing, "Towards a Universal Recognition of Environmental Responsibilities"; "Summary Report of the Steering Committee Meeting on the Dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities". The above articles can be found in the InterAction Council homepage. See also Küng and Schmidt (ed.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities*, pp. 104-122.

[36] For instance, mention is made of Mahatma Gandhi's preaching on the seven social sins: (1) politics without principles; (2) commerce without morality; (3) wealth without work; (4) education without character; (5) science without humanity; (6) pleasure without conscience; (7) worship without sacrifice. See the InterAction Council homepage.

[37] For an illuminating discussion on how political theory ought to take seriously into account the significance of context, see Joseph Carens, *Culture, Citizenship, and Community: A Contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[38] While he is dealing with a different issue in a very specific context, I find Joseph Carens' following remark highly instructive: "It would be highly desirable for Canada (or perhaps any political community) to have a mutuality of understanding, trust, and concern among the citizenry. But I want to argue that this kind of civic integration is more likely to result from differentiated citizenship. Paradoxically, greater respect for difference is more likely to generate more genuine unity than any attempt to manufacture that unity directly" (Carens, *Culture, Citizenship, and Community*, p. 194).

[39] For an interesting discussion on this topic, see Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1994).

[40] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1975).

[41] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25-73 (p. 25).

[42] Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," pp. 25-26.

[43] Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," p. 25, 64. Similar observation was made by Isaiah Berlin. See Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 118-172 (pp. 154-162); Berlin, "Two Concepts of Nationalism: An Interview with Isaiah Berlin," New York Review of Books, November, 21, 1991.

[44] Perhaps Taylor would find the expression "incorporate" too strong. According to him, "the 'fusion of horizons' operates through our developing new vocabularies of comparison, by means of which we can articulate these contrasts" (Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," p. 67). While I wish more or less to stick to Taylor's intended meaning of the term, I think the degree of "fusion" varies depending on the issue and the context.

[45] Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," p. 70.

[46] Jürgen Habermas, *Hou to seigi no disukurusu* [*Discourse on Law and Justice: Habermas's Kyoto Lecture Series*] (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1999), pp. 3-4.

[47] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, p. 106. See also Aung San Suu Kyi, "Freedom, Development, and Human Worth," *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (1995), pp. 11-19: "But when it [culture] is bent to serve narrow interests it becomes static and rigid, its exclusive aspects come to the fore, and it assumes coercive overtones. The "national culture" can become a bizarre graft of carefully se-

lected historical incidents and distorted social values intended to justify the policies and actions of those in power" (p. 14).

[48] Chandra Muzaffar, "Ethics in Asian Governance," conference paper from Regional Workshop on Values and Governance in Asia (22-25 February, 1998, Melaka, Malaysia, organized by JUST and UNDP), pp. 1-2. He further adds: "If there have been violations of ethical norms, it is because of elite interests – the desire to perpetuate power or wealth or both – have taken precedence over moral values. Sometimes these interests express themselves in the form of authoritarian political structures or well entrenched oligarchies of wealth". It ought to be noted, however, that he is equally harsh towards the industrialized nations of the North: "The present unjust, iniquitous international system is one of the major obstacles in the way of a holistic, universal realization of Human Rights. For it is a system which concentrates effective power in the hands of the dominant elites in handful of countries in the North … while (in 1990) over one billion people lived in absolute poverty, about a billion adults could not read or write, one and a half billion people libed without primary health care" (Muzaffar, *Human Rights, the United Nations and the New World Order*, pp. 162-163, cited from Farish A. Noor, "Assessing the 50 years of the United Nations' Declaration on Human Rights: A Malaysian Perspective," paper for the conference "ASEAN Perspectives on Human Rights: Assessing the 50 years of the UN Declaration on Human Rights" (January 1998, organized by ISDS and ASEAN-ISIS), p. 14.

[49] The Bangkok Declaration and the "Asian challenge" is mentioned in Blair Gibb, "Global Aspirations, Local Gospels," *Whole Earth*, 97 (1999), pp. 20-23 (p. 20). Note also the following: "The Asian demurrals were quashed at the Vienna World Conference later that year with this insertion into the Vienna Declaration: 'The universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question'" (p. 21).

[50] Noor, "Assessing the 50 years of the United Nations' Declaration on Human Rights," p. 11.

[51] Schmidt, "It is Time to Talk about Responsibility," speech given at Hansung University, Seoul, Korea, October 17, 1999 (cited from the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/speeches/schmidthansung.htm). Malcolm Fraser made a similar remark: "Human rights activists and countries which argue publicly for a better human rights record have been selective in their targets. We should not be surprised. The declaration of human rights is too often used as a political tool to advance the self-interest of, for example, America against China" (Fraser, "A Declaration on Human Responsibilities?," Address given at the UNESCO Conference, Carlton Crest Hotel, March 30, 1998 (cited from the InterAction Council homepage: http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/speeches/FraserUNESCO.htm). See also Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, pp. 104-105, 176.

[52] See footnote 44. We may also recall Taylor's remark about how colonized people sometimes suffer from distorted image of themselves. Chandra Muzaffar's following comment may substantiate such a remark: "It can be argued that colonial rule with its devastating impact upon the minds and soul of Asia was perhaps an even greater obstacle to the development of the moral personality of the Asians. For it created in the Asian a deep sense of inferiority – it continues to manifest itself to this day – which led to the repudiation of one's own moral and spiritual heritage" ("Ethics in Asian Governance," pp. 2-3). Needless to say, Japan also played a major part in the colonization of Asia.

[53] Isaiah Berlin's following remark is perhaps illuminating in this regard: "It is this desire for reciprocal recognition that leads the most authoritarian democracies to be, at times, consciously preferred by its members to the most enlightened oligarchies, or sometimes causes a member of some newly liberated Asian or African state to complain less today, when he is rudely treated by members of his own race or nation, than when he was governed by some cautious, just, gentle, well-meaning administrator from outside. Unless this phenomenon is grasped, the ideals and behaviour of entire peoples who, in Mill's sense of the word, suffer deprivation of elementary

human rights, and who, with every appearance of sincerity, speak of enjoying more freedom than when they possessed a wider measure of these rights, becomes an unintelligible paradox" ("Two Concepts of Liberty," pp. 157-158). See also Berlin, "The Bent Twig: On the Rise of Nationalism," in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 238-261 (p. 251).

[54] Some would no doubt argue that, even in the West, there is an increasing tendency towards the divergence of rights from moral obligations. Those who find this tendency alarming (such as scholars associated with the communitarian school of thought) talk of the detrimental effects of "atomism" caused by excessive attachment to individual rights. See for instance Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1985), pp. 187-210.

[55] I may be criticized for oversimplifying the argument since there are various interpretations surrounding this issue. But for the purposes of this paper, I believe my simplified account suffices. For more detailed explanations, see Takeyoshi Kawashima, *Nihonjin no houishiki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishers, 1967); Takeshi Ishida, *Nihonkindaishisoushi niokeru hou to seiji* (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishers, 1976); Akira Yanabu, *Honyaku towa nanika* (Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1976); Akira Yanabu, *Honyakugoseiritsujijo* (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishers, 1982).

[56] Aung San Suu Kyi, "Freedom, Development, and Human Worth," p. 15.

[57] To this end, the recent effort by UNDP warrants attention. The 1998 UNDP policy document (entitled "Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Human Development") states the following: "Increasingly, however, this traditional view [a view that limits human rights to civil and political rights] is being challenged. Some say that it is too limited in scope and that a more multidimensional and holistic approach must be taken. Thus to basic civil and political rights are added crucial social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to education; the right to work and to equal pay for equal work; and the right of minorities to enjoy their own culture, religion and language" (pp. 1-2).

[58] Falk, *Predatory Globalization*, pp. 181-182.

[59] If, as Walzer states, Habermas's critical theory rests on a thick morality, then so too (it seems reasonable assert) does my framework. See Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 11-12.