

# A Philosophical Prospect for a New World -An Essay on the Future of Mankind\*

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## I. Logic of Prediction

'World', 'future' and 'mankind' are quite ambiguous words. 'World' is used sometimes for *Lebenswelt* and sometimes for the entire universe; both the next moment and one year after are futures, and again both one hundred years after and ten million years after are futures; no one can experience entire mankind. Thus to talk about prospects for a new world or the future of mankind is apt to be a *flatus vocis*; predictions even by owners of extraordinary intelligence are very often wide of the mark.

Since the earliest times, mankind has cherished a desire to know of future affairs and ever since lived with some hopes for things to come. The desire to know future events seems to be an essential part of human nature. There have been a great number of soothsayers and fortunetellers; men today are making efforts to anticipate exactly what will come about in the future, employing computers and other scientific knowledge.

There have been opposing viewpoints towards the reliability of predictions. Confucius was affirmative on this matter. To the question of Tsze-chang whether events ten ages ahead can be predicted, Confucius replied, "The Yin Dynasty followed the regulations of the Hsiâ: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. The Chaû Dynasty has followed the regulations of the Yin: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. Some other may follow the Chaû, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages its affairs may be known."<sup>1)</sup> In Confucius, our foreknowledge of the future is grounded on our knowledge of the past. Also it is likely that he had a belief in the uniformity of human nature. Anyway, the knowledge of the past can serve as a key for the knowledge of the future. So historians could be called *einen rückwärts gekehrten Propheten*.

\*This paper was presented to the International Symposium of Philosophy, October, 1976, New York.

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1) *Confucian Analects*, Book II, Wei Chang.

John Stuart Mill also accepts, in his "System of Logic," the possibility of a historical science and of foretelling. The laws of causality are universal; both in nature and in human affairs or history, a definite effect follows a definite cause. ". . . men's actions are the joint result of the general laws and circumstances of human nature, and of their own particular characters, those characters again being the consequence of the natural and artificial circumstances that constituted their education, among which circumstances must be reckoned their own conscious efforts."<sup>2)</sup> Mill does not exclude human volitions, particularly of exceptional persons, which may cause unexpected changes in the course of history. But he holds that as a whole human history follows the general laws of causality.

Man is the only animal which possesses a historic sense. This sense covers both the past and the future. Man lives with memories of the past and with plans for the future. It is not entirely impossible for him to forecast future affairs. Although an absolute exactitude of foreknowledge is not allowed to him, he can have a probable expectation and prepare for future happenings. In so doing he is recommended to keep C. I. Lewis' teaching in his mind that "no objective statement is theoretically and completely certain"<sup>3)</sup> and we are entitled to make no judgement except for such a one as "It is likely that . . . . ."<sup>4)</sup>

In a prospect for the future intervene unavoidably human volitions, wishes and even some faith. Prophecies by the prophets of ancient Israel were proclaimed to be divine voices, but they can be looked upon as expressions of the intense will of those prophets to rebuild a sound morality.

## II. Various Possibilities

We can imagine two extreme cases of possible future state of human existence. One is the possibility of a perfectly peaceful world and another is the total destruction of mankind. Occasionally, men had visions of an absolute peace. Isaiah dreamed a world where "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. . . . and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . ."<sup>5)</sup> This vision, particularly that expressed in the last sentence, seems to have been influenced by the Buddhistic conception of a peaceful world, though the exact history of the transactions of thoughts between Hebrew and Indian people in ancient times is unknown to us. It gives us a picture of a peaceful world where the stronger never devours the weak, and there is a universal love even be-

2) John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic*, New Impression, 1961, p. 608.

3) C. I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, p. 182.

4) This is one of my impressions of Lewis' theory.

5) *Isaiah*, 11; 6-7.

tween human beings and beasts. At that time in all societies of human beings justice will prevail; no one will have grievances; and every human being will have enough food, clothes and houses and will enjoy a cultural life. There will be no hatred, no racial discrimination and no exploitation. Public nuisances which are now so painful will be taken away and the common span of human life will be prolonged through scientific progress and developments of new methods. Finally then all conflicts will be solved for an everlasting peace.

This vision of a peaceful world, however, is simply a dream. It is most unlikely that such a world will be realized. At the opposite pole of this possibility is the other one of total destruction and disappearance of the whole of mankind. Sudden natural disaster may extinguish mankind. The earth may eventually become a place unsuitable for mankind to live on. It is unlikely, however, that there will be such a disaster as this in the near future, and when the earth becomes too cold, mankind may invent some means for its survival.

The total destruction is more likely to come upon mankind through the wars among human beings than through natural disaster. Science and technology have greatly changed the surface of the earth and made human life more comfortable. At the same time they have made terrible weapons which can extinguish the human race. There will be, however, a small number of survivors at some corners of the earth even in case of total massacre employing all existing weapons, atomic bombs and chemicals, though their living condition must necessarily be miserable. The World Powers are making tremendous efforts to avoid a global war. But there is always its possibility. Mankind's reason and fear force people to find ways to escape the catastrophe. But from a pessimistic point of view, the war is merely postponed, for weapons to annihilate mankind are now sufficiently piled up. The tragedy is more likely to come than the everlasting peace and the happiness of all men. But it is also unlikely that it will happen to us within the next few years due to those efforts.

Between these two poles of perfect peace and total destruction there are a dozen of possible states of human civilization. There may be various degrees of peace and happiness. Provided that a global war does not take place, economic growth, generally speaking, will benefit mankind and make people manage a more comfortable life, but it is quite doubtful whether mankind will be able to secure a happy mental life. The most important task of mankind today is to secure a happy life—happy both physically and mentally—for most, it not all, members of mankind.

### III. Some Features of Civilization Today

Ours is generally an age in which God is replaced at the bottom of people's hearts by money and sex. In capitalist countries, money is exercising a superior power. In the

dialectical materialism matter or economic condition is in the place of God. Money and matter are in truth the same thing. In communist societies a Marxist ideology also have exercised an absolute authority. Though people today are fond of talking about abandoning ideologies, and ideological warfares are thought doomed to be out-moded due to the progress of technology and accordingly due to the big changes in the world situation, they are still going on in many places of the world where people are less enlightened and they will continue for several more decades.

The substitution of God by money and sex means that people today have abandoned the traditional religious beliefs and are seeking primarily a convenient and pleasurable life. A lot of inventions by scientists and a great deal of labours by technicians made an abundant life possible. Then as life becomes convenient, easy and soft, people consume their energies in sexual enjoyments. Of course, those who continue their constructive and creative works are not few. Yet today when science and technology have solved many problems of human miseries, a great number of poor women are selling their bodies for the sexual pleasure of males while rich and influential people are drowned in grotesque sexual enjoyments because of their mental corruption. Sexual life is not to be accused, for it belongs to a natural order. But it is blamable when privileges are abused for pleasure.

Is there no religion today? Of course there are. Then, where and how are they? Sakyamuni, Confucius and Jesus have opened each a new path of human history for about 2000 years and have set a new direction of civilization by their creative energies of spirit. In our age, Gandhi, Schweitzer and Martin Luter King, Jr. have shown each a new path for human salvation. At present, however, no religious man with such a creative power can be seen throughout the world. There was once a time when the lofty ideal of love of humanity was manifested and religious philosophy of *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben* was practised. At present, however, remarkable religious phenomena can hardly be seen.

Today, most religions are superficial and are unable to show truth and give life to mankind though there are some exceptional cases. Generally speaking, God as the Absolute Being is dead for a modern man. Ours is a very relativistic age. People do not believe in the paradise, nor they fear the hell. Actually neither heaven nor hell exists for people today. As Nietzsche pointed out, what the Afterworldly believes in and seeks for are things of flesh.<sup>6)</sup> Here lies a source of hypocrisies and the secret of corruption of most religions today. Gates of temples and churches are wide open for the rich and narrow for the poor.

Religion, however, must have *raison d'être*. Nowadays, science may be regarded as the highest attainment of human culture. But science alone cannot secure happiness for man and cannot solve many deep problems of mankind. Ends and ideals of human ac-

6) cf. Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Erster Teil, Von den Hinterweltlern.

tivities are expected to be presented by religion. But religions without life and vitality cannot afford them.

Certainly appearances of those great religious founders themselves were outstanding phenomena of *élan vital* on the line of evolution of organisms. Now and hereafter visions of a bright future of mankind might be given by dynamic persons who possess the personal attraction and spiritual energies, which would enable the peace and happiness of mankind.

Politics are closely connected with the future of mankind, for it has to plan for a better life of people in the future. The future of mankind is also to be influenced to a great extent by developments of the international politics. For about two decades after the World War II, the world had been, roughly speaking, divided into two domains. It had been maintained through *Pax Americana* and *Pax Russiana*. Today, EEC, Communist China, Japan and emerging African Nations are extending their influences and a multipolarized world has been formed. During some time after the War, idealistically oriented efforts had been made. Recently, however, realistic and much more calculating nationalistic tendencies are getting dominant. Every nation is only minding how to survive. Now no pure ideological warfare is found. To survive, a capitalist nation will fight against another capitalist nation, and a communist nation against another communist nation.

Under this situation majority of mankind has not given up yet a hope and faith in democracy. For mankind has experienced that neither dictatorship nor any form of totalitarianism brought happiness to mankind. Only a genuine democracy promises a happy future for mankind. Under the name of democracy, many false democracies have prevailed and are actually prevailing; and somewhere even in countries with the slogan of democracy, totalitarian ways are tacitly or openly adopted. These may turn to be factors of final destruction of democracies. A bright future of mankind would be realized through the genuine democracy which performs justice, which might be defined for the moment as a beautiful balance in human relations.

Modern civilization is, in a word, a mechanical civilization. It has made human life convenient, but at the same time it brought about a lot of evils. It brought about uniformity in institutions and way of thinking, and urbanizations seriously reduced the pleasantness of life which enjoys the beauty and vivification of nature. It also brought about serious problems of pollution. These problems are going to incur even international conflicts when factories of a nation producing pollutions are forced to be settled in a neighbouring underdeveloped country.

Embracing these matters and others, our civilization is going on. Will it make our life happier or more miserable? A favourable answer to this question will only come out of spiritual energies and wise decisions of intelligent and conscientious human beings.

#### IV. Of Human Nature

There have been opposite doctrines of human nature since old times. Mencius maintained that human nature is born good while Hsun-tze and opposite doctrine. Plato's story of the gold ring of Gyges suggests that he believed in evilness of human nature. To maintain, however, either goodness or evilness of human nature has difficulties. There are actually both good people and the wicked. Majority of people may be mediocre in this respect and those who are extremely good or extremely evil are very few.

Human history is a story of struggles between the good and the wicked, and this struggle seems to continue for ever. Cho, Kwang-Jo (1482-1519), a Korean philosopher, wrote, "Ever since olden times, whenever honest people prevail in the world a tremendous calamity necessarily follows. Therefore, one who plans for himself carefully and is good at transacting with the world does not dare to incur resentment and anger by uttering his opinions against his sovereign or superiors. He looks around and makes his acquaintances use their influence so that he preserves his body and protects his wife and children. He is not a man who is anxious for his country. To take care of state affairs and to ignore his own life in times of personal trial, these are the things of which an upright scholar employs his mind."<sup>7)</sup> Reading of this passage makes us sad as it reminds us of the bloodshed of the successive massacres of scholars during Yi Dynasty. This kind of course of events, however, seems universal throughout the world history. But the incessant appearances of those honest people and the struggles of upright scholars for justice threw always a ray of hope to mankind. If such people and scholars never existed, the world would have been one of mere beasts.

In human nature there are both good and wicked sides, and in the world there have been and are good and wicked people. Therefore, there will be conflicts and troubles so that regulations and laws will be obliged to exist and constrain conducts of people. Today, human intelligence has come to send exploring machines to Mars, but human morality is no better than it was two thousand years ago. As education has been popularized people have come to know what is right and what is wrong. But parallel practices are hardly to be seen.

Future mankind will praise those who contributed to the progress of technology but will respect and love as ever those who offered their lives for realization of justice. Man of justice will obtain sympathy of mankind as they are worthy of the name of human being and are

7) *Collections of Writings of Jung-Am* (i.e. Cho, Kwang-Jo) Book 3.

「自古正直之流盛行於世，則必有大禍隨其後。是故深於自謀，周於涉世者，不敢抗志直言。以召怨怒而低回俯仰周旋，彼此保其身全其妻子者蓋亦多矣。此非委質夏口之人也。夫不顧其身惟口是謀，當事敢為不計禍患正士之用心也。」

the glory of mankind.

It has been said that man is an animal rationale. Today, however, there are aspects which make us doubt whether man is a rational animal or a mere beast. Some even insist that man is the most cruel among beasts. But mankind has had men like Sakiyamuni and Jesus, who should be called miracles on the line of evolution of organisms, such a miraculous event is expected to occur again in the future. Mankind will be able to continue its mental progress through such miracles. Moral progress of mankind will be achieved through the admiration of such spiritual initiators. Mankind possesses potentially the capacity of admiring them. This capacity may be looked upon as the specific difference of man.

## V. Direction of History

Hegel described the world history as the self-realization of *Idee*. He talked about *göttlichen Idee* and says “*in der Vernunft ist das Göttliche.*”<sup>8)</sup> He meant that the world history would eventually arrive at the perfect state such as a heavenly world where perfect freedom and happiness would be overflowing. World history is the manifestation of the divine reason; evils, unhappiness, absurdities, contradictions are mere passing phenomena by *List der Vernunft*. In a word, reason rules world history. This is a thought of a romantic optimism. Though Marx claimed that his dialectical materialism turned Hegelian idealism upside-down, he also fell in an optimism as he expected an ideal society without exploitation at the end of human history. Neither Hegelian nor Marxist theory of history is verifiable; the arrival of a heavenly world with perfect happiness or of a perfect communist society where one works according to his capacity and takes as much as he needs is most unlikely to happen.

On the other hand, Spengler predicted *die Untergang des Abendlandes*, but the West has continued development. The developments are still going on and are expected to continue. We may imagine after Nietzsche's thesis of the eternal recurrence that the course of the universe would be, one day after so many million years, completely overthrown and a new creation of the entire universe would take place. Yet this is simply a fancy.

The possibility, however, of total extinction of mankind is always open. No one knows from where a skirmish which might lead to a global war would start. The Korean peninsula and the Middle East are commonly looked upon as most dangerous areas. In the Middle East there are seeds of abrupt strife and war due to the ancient malignity. Over there, wars are struggles for racial existence and are complicated by the scramble for resources. In the last war in Korea ideologies were involved, but fundamentally it had a strategic significance.

8) Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Der Endzweck.

ance. The geographical position of Korea is a very important factor for security of the United States, Russia, China and Japan. Along both sides of the armistice line tremendous amount of weapons including nuclear ones are stationed. Whether these weapons and other military equipment will be used for massacre or will be thrown away, God only knows. The existing tension in the Korean peninsula may be solved by peace treaties among concerned nations. Some fruitful thoughts for a peaceful future world may be born out of the Korean people as they have so much suffered, throughout their history, from conflicts between neighbouring nations and recently between the World Powers. Unified Korea with her people cultivated and having a firm will for independence will surely serve as a neutral zone for everlasting world peace. Some political wisdom may find out a way for this.

## VI. Human Respectability and Mutual Respect

Unless the war which would extinguish the whole of mankind does not break out, mankind will continue to improve its living conditions overcoming various difficulties. Human intelligence will extend its conquest of outer space, which will bring about a lot of benefit to mankind. There will, however, be also wars among nations at many places, which will cause a lot of sorrows and lamentations.

The impact of the world population, which is estimated to become 6.5 billion in 2000, shortage of resources, racial discrimination and hatred among peoples—these are to become the cause of the wars. Population adjustment by birth control, exploitation of sea resources, etc., would alleviate these causes, but the hatred among people does not seem to dissolve easily.

Men have fought each other to own land or water sources or other precious goods. They also have fought to live better than and rule over other people. In a word, they have fought not only for existence, but also for satisfaction of desire to rule other people. Thus, the problem of the world peace is intimately connected with human nature.

No omnipotent countermeasure against natural and artificial disasters and no decisive means to prevent wars for ever can be found. We are only to make melioristic efforts, meliorism being one of the fundamental trends of American philosophy as expressed by William James. For a better future of mankind I would like propose a humble principle of morality. It may be an old one. It is mutual respect.<sup>9)</sup> If people respect each other, conflicts and wars would not be so frequently provoked.

9) Lee Hwang, a Korean philosopher (1501–1570) established the principle of reverence (敬) as the consistent principle of his philosophy. It is corresponding to the principle of sincerity (誠) in *The Doctrine*

The principle of mutual respect is not a lofty ideal. Today, men are not likely to follow such a principle as love of humanity, and the practice of even mutual respect is not so easy. To practise it, every person is expected to be a human being worthy of the name of human being. Every person should be a respectable human being. Mutual respect presupposes human respectability in each person. What is human respectability? We may obtain a suggestion from Pascal. Pascal divided human beings into three orders:<sup>10)</sup> men of flesh, men of spirit and men of wisdom; kings, rich people and generals belong to the first order, scholars and geniuses to the second and saint to the third. The last are men of charity. We are naturally inclined to bow before and heartily respect them.

Mencius taught King Hwuy of Leang that one should seek not only profits but also benevolence and righteousness. As for the human condition or humanness Mencius said, “If one has no feeling of commiseration, he is not a human being; if one has no feeling of modesty and complaisance, he is not a human being; if one has no feeling of approving and disapproving, he is not a human being.”<sup>11)</sup> Charity and commiseration come out of the same spirit in Mencius and Pascal and they are essential to man.

Mindfulness of respecting and commiserating other human beings, i.e. mindfulness of universal mercy for fellow creatures would surely contribute a great deal to save human beings from a number of their miseries and a country from her inner unrest as well as to promote the world peace.

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*of the Mean* (『中庸』). What I mean by mutual respect is not same as the reverence, though no irrelevant.

10) cf. Pascal, *Pensées*, 793 (a l'édition Brunschvicg).

11) *Mencius*, Book II, Kung-Sun Ch'ow. Part I.