The Globalization Classroom: New Option for Becoming More Human?

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Within a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, exposed to the challenges of globalization, a traditional understanding of humanism offers insufficient frameworks for an adequate comprehension of human agency, its flourishing and search for meaning. The process of globalization continuously shakes the pedagogical assumptions and principles of education, acceptable for a mono-cultural or religious society. If education leads us to make the best of ourselves or our students, then we should first answer anew the question about what we mean by the best in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. This article offers some guidelines for further pedagogical and philosophical reflection on a humanism that is more suitable for our life in the process of globalization and modernity. The globalization process moves us toward a better and more complex comprehension of what "human" means within a universe of divergent cultures, religions, traditions, and races. I call this humanism universal humanism, based on the Greek word καθολου, comprising both universality and wholeness. Such humanism includes not only the main characteristics of humanism rooted in the Greek and Roman culture, in which our Western tradition is based; it integrates also the best about the human from non-Western traditions. As universal, this humanism helps us transcend singular cultures, nations, political systems, religions, and, by default, discover or explore anew the meaning of the human person on a global, i.e. universal level. The last part of this article suggests some pedagogical attitudes that will help us to embrace and remain in a dialogical relationship with all of humanity, in order to enrich our comprehension of the incomparable worth of the human person, this time from a universal perspective.

Whether teaching in a classroom with multi-race students, browsing for the latest news from around the world, engaging in a professional project with international members, or other activities that transcend the boundaries of our own language or culture, we are continuously exposed to the challenge of different points of views. Our success in any of these endeavors will depend on a shared vision of what constitutes the common good beneath the diversity of our globalizing community.

In this article I propose a reading of modernity in terms of new options for enrichment of our educational efforts, as well as of our own identity. Our exposure to a variety of cultures, races, religions, and moral-value system, demands that we continually re-evaluate our own belief systems. Our understanding of everything from politics to the economy, and the role of human

agency as we understand it in our Western tradition, can be not only challenged but fortified also by recognizing how non-Western cultures assess these same elements of their existence. Recognition of the other, and an exploration of the diversity and richness of what the other consider to be important, and consequently integration of these findings, are useful points of orientation for our being immersed in the process of globalization. By "the other" I refer to persons we have to deal with in our daily life on a global level. The same process of recognition, exploration and integration will help us transcend those attitudes which are not inclusive but exclusive of the others, such as ideologies of inequalities, such as those that emerged in the past century (e. g., Marxism, communism, capitalism, colonialism), as well as other cultural and moral trends (e.g., religious relativism, indifferentism, consumerism, materialism, technocracy and so on). Living within the globalization process, we need to reflect anew and in new ways about the meaning of the common good and human agency.

In a similar way, the globalization process requires a re-interpretation of some basic assumptions about our present educational system that should challenge our assessment of what constitutes *the best* of our shared human nature. How to discover and recognize *the best* of human nature in the others, and how to integrate *the best* of the others into our pedagogical efforts? If the word *education* means *to lead forth* or *to bring out* the best of human agency, then we need to answer anew the complex question about the direction of our *leading forth* and the content of our *bringing out* within the framework of a globalizing society.

I will formulate the answer to this question through what I call *universal humanism*, i.e. a framework that allows us to move continuously toward a better comprehension of what "human" means within a universe of different cultures, religions, traditions, and races. The globalization process allows us to discover unconsidered options for how to become more "human." In this exploration I justify the relevance and appropriateness of universal humanism from a philosophical-pedagogical point of view. Finally, I suggest some examples of how we can embrace and maintain a dialogical relationship with all of humanity, without losing our own identity.

First Words

The term *humanism* derives from the Latin *humanus* and *humanitas* and has a connection with the words *homo/hominis* (man), and cognates with *humus* (earth). *Humanism* covers many

different meanings whose common denominator is either affirmation and approval of some aspects of human nature, or rejection or condemnation of something other than humanity, such as nature or the universe, animality or barbarity, God or the state, science or society (Walter, 1998). *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* under the term *humanism* offers an overview of various historical periods in which the same term carries different connotations. At their core, all humanists support the genuinely human, directing us to the noble human life and thought, and toward that which can exalt human nature. In other words, *humanism* includes everything that "helps us to cultivate higher human nature" (Ritter, 1974, p. 1217).

There are two basic ideas underneath different types of humanism: that concerning our relationship with the world, and that concerning our relationship with one another (Walter, 1998). The father of the first idea is Protagoras with his claim that *man is the measure of all things: of the things which are, that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not.* Following this claim, Protagoras queries the nature of truth as something absolute on the one side, and on the other side that which relocates man as the center of the cosmos and the measure of everything in the universe. Man should not be stretched anymore between the worlds of *physis* and *metaphysis*, which is in this case the world of gods, pulling him in two opposite directions; rather, man should find his place in the forefront of these two worlds. In introducing man as the measure of everything, Protagoras does not have in mind subjectivism or individualism as some contemporary thinkers; he rather introduces a new awareness of what constitutes the essence of a human being. Later on, the Sophists and Socrates conceive this principle in terms of human lineaments, which become the measure for thinking and ethical acting. After critical examination, the ethical values find their place in a philosophical system, reinforcing man's feeling of autonomy in the face of the transcendental powers of gods.

The second idea – concerning our relationship with one another – was developed by the Stoic philosophers who introduced the concept of the universal brotherhood of all human beings, rooted in recognition of a basic equality in all humans. They also adopted the ancient Greek concept of *paideia* (education, cultivation), necessary to the developing to what the Greeks meant by *andreia* (manliness), later translated into Latin as *virtus* (manliness), and also as *humanitas* (humanity). The basic idea behind *paideia* is belief that the best of human nature is hidden but can be brought to light through education and cultivation of the human person. Equipped with proper education, man will recognize, control and transform his nature.

The ancient Greek ideal of *humanitas* takes on slightly different features in the Roman context (Buck, 1987). The primary Roman meaning of *humanitas* relates to the Greek *philantropia,* i.e. love of man in the sense of caring for, nourishing, and enhancing the quality of life. Unlike the Greeks who excluded foreigners and protected their cultural assets, the Romans included others in their new community. Love of mankind or humanity became a virtue, marking the virtuous. Cicero deepens the meaning of *humanitas* with a new spiritual dimension: *humanitas* is something that man acquires as a result of his education, which then challenges him to raise himself beyond human crudeness toward a higher level of existence. Man's humanness is enhanced by his education and spiritual position, rather than his social status or background.

Thus *humanitas in the* Greek-Roman context takes on two crucial functions: (1) it becomes a social virtue that teaches us how to relate to other people; (2) it is an individual and educational ideal which provides us with standards for a higher form of existence in which we can better realize ourselves. So humanism embraces moral and spiritual education, human magnanimity, dignity and respect, wit, gracefulness, sensitivity, inner balance, mildness, kindness, and generosity (Ritter, 1974). Following this line, education becomes the differentiation-principle not only between educated and non-educated people, between the knowing and the not-knowing, but also between Romans and "barbarians." Barbarian in this case means much more than being not-Roman. Barbarian refers to the one who does not experience or appreciate education and is unaware of who/what he can become and what differentiates him from the properly educated man.

Humanism assumes new shades of meaning in the time of Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and later periods of Western history. Of course this could be said of non-Western traditions as well, from Chinese tradition, or Indian cultures, or Islamic religion, to African aboriginal tribes; each of them has created a value system through which it could find a way to bring the individual human to his full humanness and perfection.

How shall we moderns understand humanness? This remains a crucial challenge in the search for a path to peaceful coexistence with the other cultures. However, I choose to concentrate on the Greek and Roman understanding of the question because their reflection provides us with the most familiar insights into our exploration of what *universal humanism* means.

Universal Humanism

I use the adjective *universal* here in the sense of the Greek καθολου, comprising both universality (*universal*, *general*, *altogether*) and wholeness (*entire*, *at all*, *whole*, *all inclusive*). Universal humanism allows us to take into a harmonious whole all individuals or societies, nations, cultures, traditions and religions, existing both in the present and in the past. No one is excluded or considered less important; every individual, society, nation, culture, religion, and tradition is an expression of humanness, and correspondingly an expression of the human search for meaning, happiness, fulfillment, flourishing, and freedom. On this level all humans are equal, internally experiencing a sense of incompletion, lack of some elements necessary to their higher existence. In every healthy culture, religion, or tradition, its members search for ways to satisfy that sense of something yet to be found, which will transcend immediate human state. Religions, tradition, and social structures, provide expressions of the human search for fulfillment, even though the focus that they take may appear to other cultures as strange, unusual, odd, or even distasteful. As expressions of humanness, they require our respect and thoughtful consideration, if we are to find the way toward peaceful coexistence in a globalizing community.

Universal humanism, then, takes the Protagorean idea of man as the center and measure of everything, not in the sense of modern subjectivism and individualism, but toward a new awareness of the essence of humanness as a universal. Despite the myriad of cultural, religious, linguistic, racial, social and other differences among people, our human nature unites us and makes us all equal. So our reflection about human nature cannot start from an abstract, content-less, transcendental concept about the human agent; the human is to be found only in an immersed existence -- intersubjective, historical, thoroughly corporeal (Simonsen, 2013). The variety of cultural, religious, social, linguistic and other expressions of his immersion calls us to recognize, explore, and integrate their richness. Universal humanism can promulgate a new world order of unity and equality amid diversity of cultures, nations, religions and languages. It requires, however, a radical mind-transformation, allowing us to accept the *other* in his uniqueness, originality, dignity, strangeness, and mysteriousness. Universal humanism has no hierarchies or boundaries; it lifts each individual's and collective awareness so that s/he may experience anew what it means to be human; and universal humanism sustains agent's development. In short, it leads him to self-actualization.

It is evident at this point how universal humanism comprises with the dimension of wholeness - the second meaning of Greek καθολου - in human nature all aspects of human existence (bodily, psychological, intellectual, religious, spiritual, ethical, social). Nothing is excluded; everything is indispensable to humanness, and only if all dimensions of human existence are considered will the mysterious complexity, beauty and aspiration to perfection of human agency will come to light. This is not something that all advocates of humanism in modernity take for granted. For example, secular humanism and exclusive humanism in many aspects struggles to integrate man's spirituality with its need to remain open to transcendence (Taylor, 2007). Advocates of this humanism claim that fulfillment and fullness of human life can be reached exclusively within the domain of human power, making no reference to something higher that humans can reverence, love, or even acknowledge. This kind of humanism appears to be attractive in a secularized milieu because it allows the discarding of narratives of humanism based on religious principles, while it reinforces the human agent's feeling of power to create a new order based on benevolence and sense of freedom. Despite its powerful attractiveness, such exclusive humanism narrows the human condition and limits new possibilities for its flourishing and fulfillment. Focused solely on the most basic human needs, it closes the window to the transcendent, i.e. religious and spiritual dimensions of human existence, and then to immense possibilities for human flourishing and fulfillment.

As opposed to exclusive humanism, universal humanism integrates all dimensions of human existence, and significantly those dimensions that humankind has to integrate into its reckoning: violence, sacrifice, suffering, death, human body, desires, sexuality, search for meaning, inequalities, and all those dimensions that reveal the limits, weaknesses, and fragility of human existence. Universal humanism refers us to the whole of human existence both on individual and social level, respects every dimension of life, and looks for meaning in even the most fraught aspects of human existence. The human agents living in modern Western societies can learn much more from other cultures and religions, and consequently re-discover their own tradition and spiritual/religious/cultural heritage.

Unheard Discovery of New Option to Become More Human

Why should a worldview based on universal humanism be more suitable than other similar accounts, and what are the advantages of such a worldview? I will answer by referring to

Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, in which he reflects about the place of religion in modernity (Taylor, 2007). Contrary to mainstream secularization theories, which discount the importance of a religious dimension for the human agent, Taylor provides an alternative view to secularization according religion a constituent place and combining other secularization theories into a new synthesis. I suggest his synthesis as a paradigm for our reflection about the potential for advancing a universal humanism.

Taylor begins with the recognition that religion occupies a different place in modernity than it did in the 16th century. Contemporary religious practices have changed and declined, and the modern human agent looks for less traditional ways of fulfillment. Unlike mainstream secularization theories, however, Taylor does not believe that religion has disappeared or lost its role, or that the human agent in modernity is less spiritual or religious than in the past. Secularization as the retreat of religion from public space or the decline and alteration of religious practices began even before onset of modernity. For this reason, Taylor's proposal for a different theory of secularization acknowledges that history has always experienced constant changes of religious forms and motivation. What is new in our time is that religion has to find and reestablish its respected place within the historical context of modernity, providing us new and meaningful horizons (Taylor, 2007).

Taylor defines modernity as "an unheard pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and anti-religious, in which the number of possible positions seems to be increasing without end" (Taylor, 2007, p. 437). Presently, we have completed the transition from a society in which belief in God was unchallenged and unproblematic to a society in which belief in God is once again understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest one to embrace. Taylor describes this transition in terms of the *nova effect*, i.e. "spawning an ever-widening variety of moral/spiritual options, across the span of the thinkable and perhaps even beyond" (Taylor 2007, 299). As a result, the believer, facing this steadily widening gamut of options, finds himself in an intriguing choice-making process, which is in modernity much more complex and challenging than it was in the past. Faith and religious life become one option among many others (e.g. unbelief, atheism, materialism, other alternate forms of exclusive humanism), and for many people ultimately a nonviable one. At this point Taylor poses questions about the firmness of our belief. Exposed to an ever-widening variety of options, we are challenged to examine and deepen our own beliefs and practices.

Taylor's theory of secularization offers us a paradigm of how to broaden and justify our reflection about universal humanism. In the process of globalization, we have to face many alternatives about how to better realize our humanness. These alternatives are often grounded on unfamiliar traditions, and brought to us from foreign cultures and religious teaching. Such encounters can weaken our hold on traditional values and principles, on which we have depended our understanding of how to reach and express the best of our nature. Despite this initial unsettling, however, these encounters with what is unknown and foreign to us create at the same time what Taylor calls "an ever-widening variety of moral/spiritual options," which are so numerous and extensive in our time of globalization that we can talk about a phenomenon without precedence in human history. As unsettling as it seems, this phenomenon provides us a new horizon of unexplored spiritual, religious, moral, and emotional potentials for our appreciation of what it means to be human, and consequently what can promote individual consciousness and empowerment to become even more human. Our encounter with new options might be accompanied by fear of losing our own identity, which can happen. However, the process of encountering and exploring the others will help us not only to rediscover what is genuinely human in our own tradition, culture and identity; it will also allow us to incorporate the genuinely human of other cultures and traditions into our own. "Whatever we understand and enjoy in human products instantly become ours, wherever they might have their origin" (Tagore, 2008, p. 1078).

Let us presuppose that we who live in the Western societies are in search for a meaningful and fulfilled life. Let us assume also that in the same way as we do, people of every nation, culture, religion, and tradition, and all the varied sub-groups within these cultures strive to find an environment in which their agents can reach what they consider fulfillment, satisfaction – what they mean by "fullness of life." If this is the case, Taylor claims, then we "owe equal respect to all cultures…" because "all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings" (Taylor, 1994, p. 6). Living in a society immersed in the process of globalization, we have an unprecedented opportunity to discover and explore the richness of human potential on the global level, which will help us to deepen our own understanding of humanness. Thus we are facing the *nova effect* not only in the sphere of religion as Taylor describes it with his secularization theory, but in every other sphere of our existence.

In other words, the humanism that includes all people, nations, cultures, religions, languages -- for this reason I am calling it a universal humanism -- allows us to discover in a new perspective what is universally human by transcending our spatial and temporal frames. Universal humanism permits us in modern Western societies to live at the deepest level of our existence in touch with ourselves and commonalities among other human agents living in the present and past times, belonging to Western and non-Western societies. This humanism commits us to respect all specific definitions of humanism (Greek, Roman, German, Italian, Romantic, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, exclusive, inclusive, and the like) on the one side, and on the other, challenges us to transcend them all and integrate them into something that can be even more meaningful, both for us and for them. In other words, universal humanism, by transcending a base limited to one specific culture or to one specific form of humanism or religion can avoid slipping into an anti-humanism that reduces human nature to one single principle (Simonsen, 2013). These and other such limited forms of humanism emphasize one aspect of human existence (material, bodily, ethical, spiritual, religious) and have difficulty in integrating other more problematic dimensions of human existence (suffering, sexuality, death).

Without any doubt and with all due respect, specific forms of humanism have played an extraordinary role in human history, and each form of humanism can provide us valuable insights into human nature. At the same time, specific forms of humanism are to a certain extent loaded with negative emotions and experiences from our past, especially as related to questions of power and struggles between different cultures. For this reason, they are subject, if taken too narrowly and without an intellectual openness, to hinder rather than help our search for what we have in common as humans.

Each form of humanism can contribute abundantly to our reflection, but none of them should be taken as the self-sufficient or exclusive source for the human striving to perfection of his humanness. All these forms of humanism together build an immense but incomplete heritage, which now has become closer to realization as we move into the globalized world. Universal humanism as a narrative or a philosophy requires us to broaden our awareness of self and "the other" and allows us to experience the vision of our being. Everyone can find his place, hold his identity, and at the same time welcome in the spirit of dialogical relation the *Other,* the unknown, the foreign. Universal humanism, therefore, has no denomination other than human

agent in his search for perfection and fulfillment. Such an attitude creates empathy and freedom from the dead hand of habit and ignorance.

Yet and Not-yet Realization

The realization of universal humanism in practice remains our next challenge. For further reflection, I propose two philosophical-pedagogical principles: (1) our willingness to be open to the others and (2) necessity of a new terminology. These two principles are based on *humanitas* as the Romans and *philantropia* as the Greeks understood them, i.e. love of man in the sense of caring for, nourishing, and enhancing the quality of human life, as well as believing in the continuous growth of individuals, regardless of whether or not they belong to our society. Such loving care-taking is a virtue that will not happen by itself; it can only be acquired through our self-transformation and education.

Having been presented the framework of universal humanism in outline and brief form, one can conclude that we in modernity are at the beginning of a future in which the human agent perceives himself breaking out from the past frames into a broader field, which challenges him to look for a new sense of religion, spirituality, culture, nationality, society, economy, politics, including the meaning of secularization, in an universal or global way in which everything is interwoven.

The context of interconnectedness and interdependency are not hypothetical; they are our reality. The crucial question at this point is not any longer a hermeneutical problem of how to talk in modernity about using of religion, spirituality, or culture, but whether or not we really want to be open to the broader horizons of globalization. If we hesitate to answer this question, we need to answer the second question: are we aware of how much we are shutting out if we do not try to be open to the others? Taylor formulates a similar question in a different way: are we willing to recognize the equal value of different cultures, which means that we not only let them survive but acknowledge their *worth*? (Taylor, 1994). Taylor continues that is primarily a moral question, requiring from us to take a position. "Our" recognition of "them" and our exposure to their position is not something that would happen automatically or where our passive observation from afar would be sufficient; our exposure requires from us an active participation in terms of

reflection, and then making decisions about specific practices that will challenge all of us to become more human.[1]

An affirmative answer to this dilemma does not necessarily mean that we are assured positive results and success. We cannot elaborate a strategy with fixed goals of what we will achieve. This essay does not propose a straightforward solution that will establish and perpetuate universal humanism. Nevertheless, what we can do is focus on our modes of being, studying, reflecting and living, using our experiences rather than modes from our history to come to know the others. Universal humanism as it is proposed here should not be taken as a normative plan, based on clearly defined ideals; it is rather a descriptive path, challenging and inviting us to look courageously to what universally human means. Our answers will most likely be different depending on the specific context. As an example of creativity, freshness, and originality we can look to Rabindranath Tagore's artistic performance. Chakravorty argues that Tagore's musical and dance creation is connected with his radical political and philosophical thought on universal humanism (Chakravorty, 2013). Through his intercultural synthesis of eclectic ideas taken from different songs and dances, Tagore promotes individual consciousness, empowerment and cosmopolitanism without rejecting their Indic cultural roots.

Despite all of this imprecision, universal humanism should not be taken as a utopian notion of a good that we know that we will never reach. Universal humanism is rather an encouragement to search for what we have in common as humans, what will reinforce and enrich better discussion and peaceful coexistence based on the hope and belief that all of us will be better. These acts of "hope" and "faith" are what all believers already share in common, even though we express it in different ways. Let me illustrate this with an example taken from the world religions. Christians and Muslims anticipate with hope an existence in Heaven, Jews believe that the best is yet to be, Buddhists believe in Nirvana or a great release from life's burden hereafter, and Confucianists emphasize the importance of the *Way* toward something

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[1] As a possible example of what to do, I refer to Kwame Anthony Appiah's book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, in which the author argues that in twenty years, at a cost of about $150 billion a year, the richest nations can eradicate extreme poverty - the poverty that kills people and empties lives of meaning. The richest nation can together salvage lives of the poorest human beings, by spending collectively less than a third of what the United States spends each year on defense all by itself. This is not an impossible demand, nor a monstrous or unreasonable obligation, nor heroism, but a matter of our clearheadedness. It is a demand of simple morality, or a response to what Adam Smith called "reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast". Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism, Ethics in a World of Strangers,* W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 2006, 173-174.

bigger; are these not all different expressions of the same human desire? Theologians of these religions may raise objections to any simplification in inter-religious theological debate for the reasons behind hope and faith. For example, Christians' hope cannot be simply equated with or identified with Muslims' or Buddhists' hope. Such recognition of differences calls for respect and plain intellectual honesty. But neither should these differences be emphasized to the point that they become an unbridgeable gap of understanding. Independent of what religious denomination we belong to, the act of believing and hoping in a better and peaceful future is something that all believers share. In agreement with the present Pope Frances, "…faith is not only presented as a journey, but also as a process of building, the preparing of a place in which human beings can dwell together with one another" (Pope Francis, 2013, p. 69).

When searching for the answer to what we have in common as humans, it is important to beware of proposing our strong convictions as universal solutions. For example, some people believe that "our" understanding of democracy can be imposed on other countries; that religious principles should be generally separated and isolated from politics, economy, and social life; or that the highest achievements in art, literature, and music belong exclusively to the cultures of the first world. One could list similar positions based on Europe- or America-centrism, the world economy and mass media as the form of modern colonialism, and other similar cases, in which those in power too easily impose their ways of thinking and lifestyles onto those who have less power.[2] This might have functioned in the past to some extent; certainly it will not be appropriate for our present and future coexistence in the context of globalization.

Instead of proposing or even imposing "our" solutions, universal humanism challenges us to look first for what we already have in common. For example, from Amartya Sen's article *Democracy and Its Global Roots* (Sen, 2003), we can learn that democracy, as we know it in the West, especially in the United States, does not originate exclusively in the ancient Greek civilization. Ancient cultures in the territory of the present India, China, Japan, Korea, Iran, Turkey, the Arab world, and many parts of Africa were familiar with a long tradition of encouraging and protecting public debates on political, social, and cultural matters. In addition,

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[2] A scholarly example of necessity and manifolds benefits of being more open and less prejudicial is a discussion provoked by Edward Said's book *Orientalism*. This highly influential and controversial book, published in 1978, changed in many ways the understanding of what we Westerns believe to be *Orient*, based on one-sided assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the Middle East. Even the recent military invasion of Iraq can be taken as an expression of subtle Western bias against Arab-Islamic cultures.

Amartya Sen notices, "there is a great reluctance to take note of the Greek intellectual links with ancient Egyptians, Iranians, and Indians, despite the greater interest that the ancient Greeks themselves showed… in talking to them" (Sen, 2003, p. 30). We can learn that "our Western" understanding of democracy can be easily enriched and enlarged with other non-Western interpretations. Before we propose or impose a solution to "them," universal humanism reminds us that we should rather look for what we have in common, and listen to what "they" would propose as an acceptable solution, based on their historical/cultural/religious backgrounds. With an attitude of recognition, exploration and integration, we could enrich our reflection about the essence of democracy.

Another useful pedagogical guideline for the creation of universal humanism is the matter of terminology. When Charles Taylor talks about the human agent's search for meaning and fullness of life, he does not use religious terminology. Such a language would remain in our time heavily loaded with emotions and historical experiences that aggravate comprehension, especially in those who do not share with us their religious convictions. Taylor rather imposes his narrative in terms of *human flourishing*, *fullness and richness of life*, *search for meaning*, and *freedom*, which are universally human. People of all times are looking for ways to make life fuller, richer, deeper, more worthy, and more admirable. Such terminology has an attractive and transformative power, grasping the attention of the modern agent, and simultaneously unsettling his sense of himself as ordinary norm in the world. In his search for *fullness*, *richness*, *meaning*, and *freedom*, the human agent faces the crucial question of whether in his search he recognizes something that might challenge his limited understanding and open his mind to new areas where he might find a satisfactory answer.

I find Taylor's terminology also suitable to our search for universal humanism. Every individual and society, culture, religion, and nation looks for what will bring something meaningful into life. *Human flourishing, fullness and richness of life, freedom,* can be assumed as a universal shared terminology, referring us to what is universally human, and what makes us who we are. It is true that our comprehension of these terms might vary according to our historical, cultural, and religious context; nonetheless, these terms allow us to construct some bonds with *others* before we begin talking about specific matters.

Conclusion

Universal humanism as presented in this essay might appear to be provoking new questions rather than providing satisfactory answers. In whatever position we take on modernity and globalization, in our reflection about humanness or how to lead us or bring forth *the best* of our nature, it is better that our position is more inclusive than exclusive. It is always more rewarding to focus on what makes our life more human and allows us to become what we are supposed to become. In this sense, our educational institutions with all our pedagogical efforts should courageously take into consideration the exigent dimensions of modernity and globalization, which are presented as classrooms of untold new possibilities. A sane curiosity and intellectual humility, simplicity of life, and willingness to open can surely be a good starting point.

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