

Global Ethics, *Tianxia*, and Moral Education
全球倫理、天下和道德教育

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Abstract: It is with little doubt that the continuation of modern civilization in the 21st century under the mentality of scientism brought by the immense progress of science and technology, the movement of globalization backing up by capitalistic economic systems, democratic and bureaucratized society, and postmodern vogue appeal to the general populace, have threatened moral education in China. In an anti-humanistic and anti-traditional era, what role can we expect moral education to play this century? What could be the civil function of moral education? This paper attempts to respond to these questions by fusing the concept of “global ethics” with the Chinese notion of “*tianxia*” or “Under-Heaven,” to find a way out of the predicament of moral education in the contemporary world.

Key words: Global Ethics, *Tianxia*, Moral Education.

摘要：二十一世紀的世界文明，在科技持續進步、國際經貿體系為骨幹的全球化運動、社會多元化，以及大眾思維與行動後現代化的主導下，給當前道德教育帶來嚴重的挑戰。科技以控制自然、征服自然為目的，以「功效」為成敗標準，導致歷史人文思維凋零，自然生態環境受到剝削與破壞。其次以傳播消費文化為主軸的全球化運動，造成各民族固有文化的式微。個人主義、拜金主義、享樂主義氾濫，衍生出各種個人和群體的心理病態。其三，現代社會強調多元、容忍，造成價值中立和道德混淆；而「解構的後現代」思潮正是否定一切觀念、理想、價值、意義的虛無主義。受到世界文明的負面影響，道德教育究竟如何突破困境？本文試圖從全球倫理與中國古代「天下」的觀點，思考可能的出路。

關鍵詞：全球倫理、天下、道德教育

So the sages see the whole world (*tianxia*) as one family and all people living in the Middle State/China as one person. It is not out of their mere speculation, but based on their true knowledge of all people's feelings, their thorough investigation into what is righteousness for the people, their clear understanding of people's welfare and advantages, and their full comprehension of people's worries and sufferings. It is in this way that they can make it.

—*Liji (The Book of Ritualism)*

Gods of gods whereof I am the maker and all works the father, who's which are my own handiwork indissoluble, save with my consent. Now, although whatsoever bond has been fastened may be on loosed, yet only an evil will could consent to dissolve what has been well fitted together and is in a good state; ...

—**Plato, *Timaeus* 41a-b**

If advocates of global democracy are going to have the courage and endurance to take on these oppositional forces, they will need to believe that the moral principles for which they are working reflect norms inherent in the very nature of reality—whether we express this belief by speaking of the will of God, the nature of God, the Tao, the Way of Heaven, the Buddha-nature, or in some other way.

— **David R. Griffin, “Creativity, Divine and a Global Ethics”**

I. The Predicament of Moral Education in the Contemporary World

It is with little doubt that the continuation of modern civilization in the 21st century under the mentality of scientism brought by the immense progress of science and technology, the movement of globalization backing up by capitalistic economic systems, democratic and bureaucratized society, and postmodern vogue appeal to the general populace, have threatened moral education in the contemporary world.

First, science and technology that define the modern world, though beginning as a theoretical pursuit of objective truth and a pure understanding of nature, gradually turned into an irreversible course to control, conquer, and eventually exploit nature. Pursuing power and efficiency, they leave little room for ethical or moral considerations. Neither “matters of fact” as the justification of scientific truth nor “efficiency” as the criterion of our judgments on technological applications has much to do with human values and humanity, exemplifying themselves in developing the history of ideas/ideals. Consequently, important human traditions, the ideals of humanity and morality, and high spiritual culture of all kinds languished with science and technology advancement. Today we are in an Information Age, with high-tech entering into every facet of our life; ranging from learning, working, producing, playing, consuming, connecting, to communicating, all are mediated by the virtual world or cyberspace fabricated by the Internet and mass/social media through 3C. It has provided us with enormous expediency, transformed our way of life drastically, and expanded our scope of knowledge immensely; nevertheless, it deepens human alienation crises on the familial and social scales. Moreover, the chaotic and unstable conditions environing our educational practices jeopardize its essential function of teaching students to be good, as the concept of goodness becomes increasingly confused and blurred.

Second, the globalization movement in international commerce and multi-national business has promoted a superficial and popular culture of secularism and consumerism. Along with it, individualism, fetishism, and hedonism prevail, contributing significantly to the mental disorder and corruption of the moderns and the collapse of ethical traditions worldwide. The capitalist mentality strengthened by globalization is perverse as it sets getting profit at any cost the only goal for human enterprise. It makes “job-training” of the students the primary purpose of educational institutions that have economic growth and social progress in view but pays little attention to traditional cultures and values.

Third, modern democracy advocating pluralism, tolerance, liberty, and even connivance dismisses values of all kinds as subjective preferences, utilities, pragmatic effects, and ideologies.¹ In such a case, no traditional values or cultural authorities can be respected without subjection to rebellious criticism. Justice is reduced to legality, while human and ethical relations are reduced to legal relations. Meanwhile, politics plays a major role in modern life, such that people are concerned with their political

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¹ The modern democratic concept of tolerance is founded on value pluralism, liberalism, and pragmatism, which is quite different from the traditional Chinese idea of tolerance or toleration, as we will discuss below (see p.8). The traditional Chinese idea of political tolerance has its foundation in morality and humanity. In contrast, the democratic concept of tolerance is rooted in amorality, i.e., the allowance of the greatest freedom to individuals and their choices with minor ethical considerations since morality comes after legality.

power and rights more than anything. However, in contrast to empowerment, our routinized daily life in a bureaucratic structure makes us a part of the societal mechanism described by Max Weber, an “iron cage” that encases “specialists without spirit” and “sensualists without heart.”² All of this makes our modern life more or less a purposeless and meaningless bagatelle and hardens school teachers’ work on practicing moral education.

Finally, by over-emphasizing the irrational part of human nature, post-modernists reject the traditional idea of natural reason and criticize the hegemony of scientific and instrumental reason. They promote deconstructionism, decentered pragmatism, moral relativism, cynical pluralism, and skepticism, veneering nihilism that overall negates ideals, meaning, and values enshrined in human traditions. It is argued that we are at the edge of human beings and are doomed to a life of being “Posthuman.” A Posthuman could be a synthetic artificial intelligence, a symbiosis of human and artificial intelligence, or an uploaded consciousness, a bio-technical human, i.e., a cyborg (cybernetic organism). With the advancements of neuroscience, genetic engineering, nanotechnology, psychopharmacology, physiological implants, and cognitive techniques, traditional definitions of being human can be completely transformed.³ Thus, the predominant influence of postmodernism plus reinforced scientism turns to be the last straw that crushes the camel of moral education.

Living in an anti-humanistic and anti-traditional era, what role can we expect moral education to play this century? What could be the civil function of moral education? What are the alternatives for the policy-making of moral education? To answer these questions, we must first clarify: what is moral education, and how is it related to our civilization? The essence of moral education should be recognized to guide students toward the end of

² See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 181.

³ Sherry Baker, “Rise of the Cyborgs,” *Discover* 29.10 (2008): 50, Science Reference Center, Web. 4 Nov. 2012.

good which has been fully illustrated in most traditional literature. What is good? What is the standard of value on which moral judgments depend? What should we do as human beings? The answers to all these questions are presupposed by the universal ideas of humanity and rationality, which are the true words of moral education deeply engraved in the long history of the Chinese and Western philosophies.

II. Global Ethics and the Traditional Chinese Idea of “Under-Heaven”

The concept of global ethics owes its origin to the Swiss Catholic theologian Professor Hans Küng of the University of Tübingen in his book *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*, published in English 1993.⁴ In the book, Küng maintains that world religions should contribute to humankind's peace by reflecting on some common ethical elements and a fundamental consensus on binding values, standards, and basic convictions. He suggests the fundamental consensus to be based on the investigation of the foundations of the religions. The first result of this investigation, the “Declaration towards a Global Ethic,” was endorsed by the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, and Küng wrote his first draft at the Institute for Ecumenical Research at the University of Tübingen. This further step made four commitments to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, solidarity and a just economic order, tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and equal rights and partnership between men and women as shared principles essential to a global ethic.⁵ So Küng recognizes that peace, mutual respect, justice, solidarity, economic order, tolerance, equality, and responsibility are essentials of global ethics, indispensable for humankind to subsist on this planet.

⁴ Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility In Search of a New World Ethic*, tr. John Bowden (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1993).

⁵ See <http://www.religioustolerance.org/parliame.htm>. The Declaration was signed by 143 leaders of world religions, including the leaders of Daoology.

As a Catholic theologian, Küng is familiar with human catastrophes caused by religious intolerance and confrontations in the world now and past, so he set for religious peace as the prerequisite to maintaining world peace.⁶ For him, (religious) peace is the cardinal virtue of global ethics, and all the rest follow it. This idea may be accessible to the people who have experienced numerous religious conflicts and wars, like the Europeans. However, for the Chinese, who are non-monotheists⁷ and rarely wage any war in the name of religion, the concept of world peace makes no special reference to religious peace. Indeed, it was due to this reason that the Chinese had been dubbed atheists and materialists as early as Nicholas Malebranche's (1638-1715) time.⁸ However, we never deny the divinity of nature that inspires people's religious sentiments and reverence to nature, nor did we ever conceive an idea of matter as a corporeal substance made of atomic particles as the Westerners did.

China has been a great and independent civilization in ancient times that can be characterized by family ethics and human fundamentalism (*ren-ben zhuyi* 人本主義). Before encountering Western civilization, it practiced an agricultural and self-sufficient way of life with refining culture in literature, history, philosophy, arts, ritualism, law, education, natural religion, and with many distinguished creations of architecture, medicine, governance, examination system, business, and commerce, as well as customs and mores. It is said that ancient China was of precocious rationality. With the handing down of *Six Classics* (*Shi, Shu, Yi, Li, Yue, Chunqiu* 詩書易禮

⁶ Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility In Search of a New World Ethic*, 75.

⁷ In ancient Chinese texts the position of "Shangdi" (the Supreme Ruler 上帝) was closer to that of Zeus in Greek mythology, instead of Jehovah in the *Bible*. See Yih-hsien Yu, "The Natural Religion and Moral Theology in the "Tian" of the Shujing: From Theocracy to Meritocracy," *Journal of Academic Perspectives*, Volume 2016 No. 1, 1-32.

⁸ See Nicholas Malebranche, *Nicholas Malebranche: Dialogue between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher on the Existence and Nature of God*, trans. and intro. Dominick A. Iorio (Washington D. C.: University Press of America, 1980).

樂春秋)⁹ and the intelligentsia tradition, it had shown high respect for humanity and nature without resorting to mythology and supernaturalism.¹⁰ All this, however, became shattered when it underwent the continuous waves of the movements of modernization, i.e., Westernization. In the past one hundred and eighty years, China changed from a unified empire ruled by the Manchurians (Qing Dynasty 清朝), to the first Republic in Asia, Republic of China, and then to the present separate state represented by Free China (Republic of China) and Communist China (People's Republic of China) with overlapping sovereignty claims.

China now enters into the 21st century, the Age of Information and Posthumanism, with low national confidence and the abovementioned problems. Like in the 20th century, science and technology, the movement of globalization, the democratic-capitalistic economic system, and the strong appeal for a secularized and postmodernized popular culture have never provided enough answers to the problems of moral education. So how can moral education in China and the rest parts of the world find its way out? In the early 18th century, the renowned German philosopher G. W. Leibniz (1646-1716) remarked in the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, "...the Chinese...surpass us in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of mortals. Indeed, it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are directed to the achievement of public tranquility and the establishment of social order..."¹¹ It is our conviction that the Chinese idea of

⁹ The "Six Classics" generally refers to *Shi* (*The Book of Odes*), *Shu* (*The Books of Ancient Documents*), *Yi* (*The Book of Changes*), *Li* (*The Book of Ritualism*), *Yue* (*Book of Music*) and *Chunqiu* (*The Annals of Spring and Autumn, History of Lugu*) which hold the similar position in China as the *Bible* in the West.

¹⁰ See Yih-hsien Yu, "The Natural Religion and Moral Theology in the "Tian" of the Shujing: From Theocracy to Meritocracy," *Journal of Academic Perspectives*, Volume 2016 No. 1, 1-32.

¹¹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the*

“Under-Heaven”(tianxia 天下) is at the core of the practical philosophy of China noticed by Leibniz. Therefore, it is worth our attention concerning doing moral education and solving global problems.

The idea of *tianxia*, along with the notion of peace, was rising from a geo-political (“international”) context that can be read in *The Books of Ancient Documents*, “harmonizing ten thousands of states” (*xie-ho-wan-bang* 協和萬邦), as well as in *The Book of Changes*, “When the Great Harmony reaches its zenith...ten thousands of states will stay in peace” (*baohe taihe, wanguo xianning* 保合太和，萬國咸寧). This ancient wish of Comprehensive Harmony¹² later developed into the idea of “*tianxia*” or “Under-Heaven” which was explained most fully in Confucius’ (551-479 B.C.) words as follows,

So the sages see the whole world (*tianxia*) as one family and all people living in the Middle State/China as one person. It is not out of their mere speculation, but based on their true knowledge of all people’s feelings, their thorough investigation into what is righteousness for the people, their clear understanding of people’s welfare and advantages, and their full comprehension of people’s worries and sufferings. It is in this way that they can make it.¹³

The quotation is the authentic Chinese familism: to take the whole world

Chinese (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977), 46-47.

¹² The term “comprehensive harmony” is coined by modern Chinese philosopher Thome Fang (方東美) to indicate the Chinese ideal of organic naturalism, which sees human beings and nature as an organic whole. A balance and harmony can be reached among diversities and varieties of all kinds by the principle of complementarity. See Thome Fang, *The Chinese View of Life The Philosophy of Comprehensive Harmony* (Taipei: Linking Publishing, 1980); *Creativity Man and Nature Collection of Philosophical Essays* (Taipei: Linking Publishing, 1980).

¹³ The English translations of the classical texts in this paper are all made by the author. See “The Chapter *Liyun*” 禮運 (“The Implementations of Ritualism”) of the *Liji* (*The Book of Ritualism*), in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文 (Taipei, Kaiming Bookstore, 1991), 45.

(*tianxia*) as one solidarity, i.e., a family, and to regard all people as oneself, to understand how he/she feels, to know what he/she needs, and to share with him/her all the happiness and miseries. Just like people of the same family bonded by blood relations and natural affections, care, concern, benevolence, love, empathy, sympathy, mutual understanding, mutual support, mutual trust, and fidelity are prominent. In other words, humanity is at work. At this juncture, moral and ethical relations come first, while social-political relations come next, and legal relations must be the last in view. With goodwill always to help is what a family is meant to be, and should be the basic requirement for being Chinese or all denominations of the world. This idea of “*tianxia*” pronounced by Confucius on the same Chapter of the *A Commentary of the Book of Ritual (Liji 禮記)*, is the well-known paragraph dedicated to the United Nations by the Republic of China---one of its founders---as follows,¹⁴

When the Great Way was abided, a public and common spirit ruled all under Heaven (*tianxia*). Men of merits, virtue, and ability were respected and chosen for public offices. Everyone kept one's words and kept in harmony with one another based on sincerity. Thus people loved their parents and brought up their children while taking care of others' parents and children as their own. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the grown-ups by giving them opportunities to use their talent, and upgrowth for children by giving them sufficient nourishment. A [social] system was established which supported widows, widowers, orphans, the childless, and those who were disabled by deformity or disease sufficiently. Men had their proper work, and women had their fair marriage. People disliked the goods or natural resources being disposed of on the ground, but they will not intend to keep them for

¹⁴ Ibid., see “The Chapter *Liyun*” 禮運 of the *Liji*, in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, 43.

their gratification. They labored with their strength, disliking that it should not be exerted but not exerting it only with a view to their interest. In this way, conspiracies were repressed and found no room to develop. Robbers, filchers, rebellious traitors, and villains did not show themselves. Hence the outer door of every house remained open and was not shut. So was the period of what we call the Grand Union.

This statement of Confucius two thousand and five hundred years ago depicts a picture of the Golden Age with publicity, meritocracy, mutual support, unselfishness, kindness, and goodwill all to all, theoretically existing before recorded history, could be regarded as the first appearance of “global consciousness” in the world.

The same term “*tianxia*” was used in a more sovereign-power oriented context, as it shows in the *Zuo-Zhuan* (*Zuo's Commentaries to the Spring and Autumn*), “All under Heaven (“*tianxia*”) are, but the territories of the King, and whoever lives in the territories are, but the subjects of the King.” [普天之下，莫非王土。率土之濱，莫非王臣。]¹⁵ Here the term “*tianxia*” evidently implicates a sense of absolute sovereignty, which consolidated as well as ruined China. It was told that the sovereigns being the “Sons of Heaven,” (*tianzi* 天子) received Heavenly Mandate (*tianming* 天命) to reign with absolute authority. It is a combined form of theocracy and monarchy; Chinese sovereigns assumed the position closest to divinity and justified their governance power. However, the Heavenly Mandate could only be received by the virtuous; whoever lost his virtue would be forsaken by Heaven and discharged from the Heavenly Mandate.¹⁶ So the absolute

¹⁵ “The Seventh Year of Duke Zhao,” *Zuo's Commentaries to the Spring and Autumn* [《左傳·昭公七年》], in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, 185.

¹⁶ Undeniably, Heaven's concept implies the idea of a personal God, but it has never been a supernatural God. Nevertheless, this humanistic spirit in religion became the fountains of all Chinese schools and characterized the main feature of Chinese culture. Also see Yih-Hsien Yu, “The Nat-

power brought on absolute corruption, which brought down the reign of tyranny--- the exact scenario reiterated throughout Chinese history and became a negative gene of Chinese culture. It will be too far to continue this discussion for our present purpose; here, we only need to know that virtue was at the core of ancient Chinese political discourse, and the primitive idea of theocracy gradually shifted to meritocracy, which became a positive gene of Chinese culture.

Based on the function of humanity, ancient Chinese maintained the Way of Kingship (*wangdao* 王道), as opposed to the Way of Imperialism (*badao* 霸道), to be the guideline for domestic and international politics. As it was recorded in the “*Hongfan*” 洪範 (“Great Canons”) of *Shujing* 書經 (*The Books of Ancient Documents*), the “Way of Kingship” in the form of the verse:¹⁷

Without partiality, without perversity;
Pursuing the Royal Way of Kingship;
Without preference or prejudice,
Pursuing the Royal Way of Kingship;
Without perversity or selfishness;
Pursuing the Royal path of Kingship;
Without deflection, without partisanship;
The Royal Way of Kingship is magnanimous and fair;

ural Religion and Moral Theology in the "Tian" of the *Shujing*: From Theocracy to Meritocracy,” *Journal of Academic Perspectives*, Volume 2016 No. 1, 1-32.

¹⁷ See, The Chapter “*Hongfan*” of *Shujing*, in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, p.20. Thome Fang has highly confirmed the philosophical and religious significance of “*Hongfan*”— a political/historical document supposedly written more than 3000 years ago. He gave his interpretation to what he calls the “Grand Matrix of Ninefold Categories” (*hongfan jiu-chou* 洪範九疇) extensively, and the “Way of King” was included as one of the nine categories. See Thome Fang, *Chinese Philosophy: Its Spirit and Its Development* (Taipei: Linking Publishing, 1981), 38-45, 53-55.

Without iniquity, without predilection;
The Royal Way of Kingship is righteous and just.

This paragraph indicates the ideals of unselfishness, toleration, egalitarianism, magnanimity, goodwill, righteousness, and justice, as the Way of Kinship should be the basic tenets of a government to rule domestically and deal with other nations internationally.¹⁸ Later on, the distinction of Kingship and Imperialism was received by Mencius (孟子) as “*wangba-zhibian*” (王霸之辨) or the “distinction between Kingship and Imperialism,” as he said,¹⁹

He who using forces makes a pretense to benevolence is following the Way of Imperialism. Such a sovereign requires a large territory [to extend his power]-- he who using virtue practices benevolence as the sovereign following the Way of Kingship. To be the sovereign of the kingdom, the King does not need a large territory. King Tang 湯 did it with only seventy square miles, and King Wen 文王 with only a hundred. When one uses forces to subdue others, they do not submit to him in the heart. They defer only because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one influences others by virtue, they are pleased by their heart to follow him and sincerely defer to him, as was the case with the seventy disciples in their deference to Confu-

¹⁸ In the paragraph of “Huangju” of the “Hongfan,” it is said that a King should tolerate his subjects who deviate from his highest principles yet does nothing wrong (不協于極，不罹于咎，皇則受之). It should be regarded as the first announcement of political tolerance in the world, which demands that the sovereign accept his subjects not following him so long as they commit no crime or evil-doings. The concept of toleration or tolerance can be easily found accompanied by the concepts of impartiality, selflessness, magnanimity, fairness, righteousness, and justice indicated in the quoted paragraph, which are the personal qualities of royal sovereigns *per se*. See, The Chapter “Hongfan” of *Shujing*, in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, 20.

¹⁹ Mencius, The Fourth Chapter, “Gongsunchou” (〈公孫丑篇〉《孟子》第四章) in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, 10..

cius.

All this can prove that as early as two thousand and five hundred years ago, the ethical belief that non-violence, fraternity, toleration, fairness, and justice might unite different peoples and nations together into a harmonious whole was already announced in China. Though without any religious consideration, it is, in essence, parallel to the contemporary thought of global ethics, which owes its origin to religion and theology.

III. Global Democracy and Griffin's Analysis

As global problems and global crises become more urgent and desperate, David R. Griffin, a process philosopher, a theologian, also one of the editors of the *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy*, proposes a solution.²⁰ In his paper "Creativity, God and Global Ethics" (2007), Griffin suggests that a type of global democracy, not plutocracy now practiced in the United States or broadly speaking in capitalist societies, constitutes an effective system of global governance that might cope with the mounting global crises. In such a global democratic system, representatives from all parts of the world make laws on all matters affecting the planet.²¹ By establishing a united international government, he optimistically estimates a chance to solve a series of global problems, such as imperialism, international crime, economic apartheid, climate change, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and European and American refugee issues added to the list. Idealistically speaking, so as Griffin suggests, an excellent global government that can safeguard the world must be immune from corruption by

²⁰ David Ray Griffin & John B. Cobb, Jr. & Marcus P. Ford & Pete A. Y. Gunter & Peter Ochs, *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy Peirce, James, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

²¹ David Ray Griffin, "Creativity, the Divine, and a Global Ethics," *Unversaitas, Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, 397, 27-42.

having power divided between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches to maintain checks and balances. A rigid monetary control and the independence of the press strongly protected by the laws, as he says, are also required. Besides, to prevent the global democracy from becoming a tyranny of the majority over the minority, Griffin argues, a constitution based on a worldwide bill of rights with a global judiciary that guarantees everyone in the world the most basic rights, such as the right to adequate food, water, and not to be tortured is necessary.²²

However, the agreement on a global ethic on which a global bill of rights could be based, Griffin reasons, must be achieved first of all. Griffin realizes that the most suitable candidate, the Western traditional moral realism, has been rejected by various scientific naturalism, materialism, skepticism, amorality, and relativism when examining the possibility of such a basis. Nonetheless, as he observes, traditional moral realists maintain that moral principles are *correct*, in the sense of being norms inherent in the nature of things, and moral norms exist in the essences of things--- that is to say to be the intrinsic value of things. The intrinsic value of things is just like what Plato proposed in his Doctrine of Forms: forms as the archetypes of things are the ground of being of all things. Later on, the Doctrine of Forms was improved by the medieval philosophers in their Doctrine of God's mind being the residence of Forms.²³ The idea, however, is rejected by the modern nontheistic and scientific worldview. Griffin numbers a few of the contemporary moral philosophers, such as Gilbert Harman, John Mackie, who assume the view and argue that the concept of God or the

²² Ibid., 27-28.

²³ Ibid. According to David O. Brink, moral realism takes moral claims literally as “claims that proposed to describe the moral properties of people, actions, and institutions -- properties that obtain independently of moral theorizing.” It roughly sketches that “there are moral facts and true moral claims whose existence and nature independent of our beliefs about what is right and wrong.” Brink’s view is by Griffin’s. See David O. Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.7.

mind of God is unintelligible and unacceptable for modern people. Moreover, in their view, values and moral norms are conventional and relative, which have no objective or absolute foundation.²⁴ Accordingly, we may say that traditional moral realists' attempt to give some objective reality to values and moral criteria by their substantiation and their registration in God's mind has deviated from ordinary people's natural experience and therefore failed to be the theoretical support of global ethics.

Further, Griffin sees that the modern scientific worldview is a materialistic one that takes matter as fundamental to the composition of the universe, in which the physical or mechanical laws govern every movement and change. Accordingly, nature itself is just a bare fact without any purpose, meaning, or value; only matter or energy is the ultimate reality of the universe. This materialistic and mechanistic worldview is a kind of nihilism that denies moral norms as the constitutive part of the universe, and at the same time, cuts off the strong bond between "what ought to be" and "what is" in the traditional culture and moral life.

Griffin's observations echo what we have said before -- the moderns only concern with factuality -- and indeed, it was the traditional conviction of divine reality that made people believe in "what ought to be" consisting in "what is." Just like the ancient Chinese believed that by following the perpetual movements of heavens, a gentleman must self-cultivate himself persistently (「天行健，君子以自強不息」), or deities are supervising what we had done three feet above our head (「舉頭三尺有神明」). However, in the West, ever since the Scottish skepticist David Hume took some scientific attitude, divided "what ought to be" and "what is," and asserted that one could not derive the latter from the former, ethic became disentangled with divine reality which no longer provides motives and reasons for moral life.²⁵ In this case, scientific naturalism and materialism that deprive

²⁴ David Ray Griffin, "Creativity, the Divine, and a Global Ethics," 31-32.

²⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Part I. Book III. *Of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 464-470.

factual matters' values cannot be the philosophical support for global ethics either.

Similarly, Griffin points out British moral philosopher Bernard Williams of Cambridge University, an analytic philosopher, has argued in his work *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* that morality "can[not] be justified by philosophy."²⁶ Indeed, by following the Humean tradition of moral skepticism, Williams maintained that moral norms are not "part of the fabric of the world,"²⁷ Moreover, we cannot say that being ethical is vital from the point of view of the universe because "to the universe . . . nothing is important."²⁸ So once the amoralist and the relativist raise the question "why should we be moral?", even if, according to Williams, we may provide some philosophical arguments from the standpoints of theism and teleology, but they will not be persuaded that people should adopt a moral, rather than a purely selfish, point of view.²⁹ Hence, one cannot seek support from analytic philosophy for global ethics---an idea must have been totally rejected.

A similar case happened to Jürgen Habermas, Griffin noted. However, differently: in his work *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, Habermas has argued the "disenchantment of the world" brought about by the decline of theism, which makes us demand "post-metaphysical" morality---one that has "detached itself from the religious, and metaphysical context from which it arose."³⁰ Although such a philosophy, Habermas says, and Griffin sees it, can explain what it would mean to

²⁶ Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 22.

²⁷ Ibid., 53, 128-29; Williams, "Ethics and the Fabric of the World," in *Morality and Objectivity: A Tribute to J. L. Mackie*, ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, pp. 203-205.

²⁸ Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2006), 182.

²⁹ Ibid., 32-34.

³⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), 39.

be moral, it cannot “provide a motivating response to the question of . . . why we should be moral.” We cannot “salvage an unconditional meaning without God,” so philosophy cannot say that “something incomparably important is involved” in our moral life.³¹ For these reasons, Habermas proposes the so-called discourse ethics to take Aristotelian ethics, utilitarian ethics, and Kantian ethics. In his view, discourse ethics emphasizes the communicative function of reason, the social and political structures that a dialogical individual with critical thinking and practice actions is related to, and the procedural justice guaranteed by all public forms of communication practices based on the rationally collective will, is the best alternative for modern ethics.³²

All this indicates, as Griffin conceives that the ethical theories prevalent fundamentally reject the idea of ultimate reality, which is indispensable to the all-embracing, universal appeal to global ethics. Griffin remarks,

Suppose advocates of global democracy will have the courage and

³¹ Ibid., 71, 146.

³² Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, pp. 1-16. Roughly speaking, Habermas’s discourse ethics aims at criticizing the common presuppositions of utilitarian ethics, Kantian deontological ethics, and contractualist ethics, i.e., individualism and instrumental reason. All ethical theories focus on seeking the foundations and principles for moral good. Based on the principle of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, utilitarian ethics places the good on the ground of utility on which individual or collective actions consequent maximized happiness of the community, so it is also called consequentialism. Contractualist ethics maintains that the most important social virtue, justice, from which all the good derive, must be rooted in the agreement or the consensus---the so-called social contract ---of participating individuals with equal rights. Kantian deontology ethics takes morality as a universal obligation of self-legislating, autonomous, moral agents who always have good motives and adhere to absolute and categorical prescriptions of what is right. Against them all, Habermas trusted more on the communicative actions of intersubjectivity-based ethical discourse.

endurance to take on these oppositional forces. In that case, they will need to believe that the moral principles for which they are working reflect norms inherent in the very nature of reality---whether we express this belief by speaking of the will of God, the nature of God, the Tao, the Way of Heaven, the Buddha-nature, or in some other way.³³

Nonetheless, Griffin also recognizes that if we follow the Christian theistic tradition to take God the Creator out of nothing to be the Ultimate Reality, there will be an insurmountable evil problem: where does evil come from? To solve the problem, Griffin suggests us to accept Alfred North Whitehead's process theism and the philosophy of organism, a non-traditional type of theism rejecting the "theology of a wholly transcendent God creating out of nothing an accidental universe,"³⁴ and the idea of "one supreme reality, omnipotently disposing of a wholly derivative world."³⁵ It also claims that the world's creation was "not the beginning of the [finite] matter of fact, but in the incoming of a certain type of order into what had been a state of chaotic disorder."³⁶ So in Whitehead's process theism, as Griffin understands, both God and all actualities in the world exist necessarily and eternally. Indeed, in Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, it is "creativity" rather than God having been regarded as the ultimate; as he said, "In all philosophic theory there is an ultimate which is actual in virtue of its accidents.... In the philosophy of organism this ultimate is termed 'creativity.'" ³⁷ So for Whitehead, Griffin explains, "God cannot unilaterally determine events in the world.... Each finite actuality, or event, is an embodiment of creativity, which is the process.... Creativity...

³³ David Ray Griffin, "Creativity, the Divine, and a Global Ethics," 30.

³⁴ Ibid., 36.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), 7.

involves a twofold process: a process of self-creation, in which an event exerts final causation or self-determination, and then a process of efficient causation or other-determination, in which it exerts influence on subsequent events. Because each event involves at least some iota of free self-determination, God cannot ultimately determine the nature of any event.”³⁸ In this way, Griffin believes there is a significant difference between traditional theism and process theism; the former claims that God is the only creator and transcendent ultimate, whereas the latter claims that the ultimate reality, i.e., creativity, embodied in all tangible things -- from God to a moment of human experience to the most elementary subatomic event.³⁹ Indeed, Whitehead was proposing a kind of what Lewis Ford called pan-experientialism⁴⁰ that maintains every existent is a drop of experience, from a speck of dust to God, and “There are experiences of ideals -- of ideals entertained, of ideals aimed at, of ideals achieved, of ideals defaced....This is the experience of the deity of the universe.”⁴¹

The Chinese should welcome Griffin’s suggestions since process theism confirms the universe of creativity, substituted for traditional supernatural theism and construes human experiences of ideals as religious experiences and construes human experiences of ideals as religious experiences. These views follow Chinese views of the self-creative universe and human fundamentalism. Furthermore, we should also appreciate Whitehead and Griffin’s efforts in finding an approach to the non-violation of natural experience and defense of teleology and divine reality. In this case, we may agree that process theism can be the philosophical foundation of global ethics, and if not too far, we may dub it “organic ethics.”⁴² However, it

³⁸ David Ray Griffin, “Creativity, the Divine, and a Global Ethics,” 37.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lewis S. Ford, *The Emergence of Whitehead’s Metaphysics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 38.

⁴¹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press 1968), 103.

⁴² Joseph Needham once said, “The *philosophia prennis* of Chinese culture was an organic naturalism which invariably accepted the reality and

should be noted, having been developed from Western theological tradition, process theism is still with solid religious implications, which might make non-believers feel unacceptable if the Westerners can learn more about the Chinese philosophy of the Way of Three Calibers (*sancal zhidao*三才之道).⁴³ Then they might find in it a much better philosophical support for Global Ethics.

IV. Global Ethics and Tianxia Perspective Providing Solutions

Griffin suggested we reorganize a global democratic government to take over the present United Nations with the trust from the representatives all over the world, which has the Western constitutional system of the separation of three powers (*trias politica*) and the global bill of rights based on a global ethic in view. Griffin's idea is laudable; however, it seems to be infeasible. First of all, the present democratic system practiced by the countries in the world already shows its defects in partisanship, popularism, plutocracy, extremism, and above all, having policy-making in favor of "quantity factors" to "quality factors." Second, even if we would accept this global government project, it will be tough to implement it to legitimize the governmental power by the majority vote worldwide. How can this kind of system be more effective than the present United

importance of time." This can be regarded as an endorsement of Chinese organicism. See Joseph Needham, "Time and Eastern Man," *The Grand Titration: Science and Society in East and West* (London: Routledge, 1967).

⁴³ According to *Yijing* or the *Book of Changes*, there is the Principle of Heaven, Man, and Earth which signifies humans' place in nature as central and inseparable. Yih-Hsien Yu, "Creativity in the *Book of Changes* and Process Thought: With Special Reference to Whitehead." *Zhouyi Studies* (English Version), Vol. 5, No.1 (December 2008) 131-151; also Yih-Hsien Yu, "Seeking Wisdom Yih-Hsien Yu compares Western Philosophy's Preoccupation with God and Matter to the Core Concern of Chinese philosophy," *The Philosophers' Magazine*, Issue 65, 2nd Quarter 2014, Chinese Thought, 104-109. www.bloomsbury.com.

Nations in solving the jeopardizing global problems? Third, where can the global government be founded without interference from the country sponsoring its operations? Fourth, how can the sovereign power of a global government be compatible with the autonomy and the sovereignty of individual countries? It is hard to believe the establishment of a global government can do better than what the League of Nations and the United Nations had done since the global problems come from inadequate global governance and are rooted in the darkness and weakness of human nature. So they cannot be solved solely by political approaches, and moral education must exercise its proper function.

From the *tianxia* perspective, educational practices encompass every individual, from ordinary people to the highest ruler--the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子). Everyone must first turn inward to oneself to cultivate their virtue. So it is recorded in the “Great Learning” (*Daxue*) 大學,⁴⁴

The Way of Great Learning is to manifest our bright virtues, bring new improvements to the people, and rest for the highest good.⁴⁵

The ancient sages who wished to manifest their bright virtue under the heavens (*tianxia*) must first have their states well-governed.

Wishing to have their states well governed, they must first keep their

⁴⁴ See “Daxue” (the “Great Learning”) of *Liji* in *Shisanjing Jingwen* 十三經經文, p.124. Here the idea of *Great Learning* is following the Chinese traditional political ideal of “virtue-ruling” in contrast to “law-ruling”, and can also be termed “meritocracy” in contrast to “democracy.” For its present form in mainland China, one may consult Daniel A Bell, *The China Model Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁴⁵ Here, the concept of the “highest good” proposed by the author of the *Great Learning* is very close to the Greek idea of *Eudaemonia* and the Medieval idea of *summum bonum* that shows the end for human existence is to pursue the best and the most valuable happiness, i.e., the fulfillment of humanity. The “highest good” in the *Great Learning* is the ultimate presupposition of ethics and can be regarded as one of the most important elements of moral realism.

households well-managed. Wishing to keep their households well-managed, they must first cultivate themselves as good persons. Wishing to cultivate themselves as good persons, they must first set their minds aright. Wishing to set their minds uprightly, they must first make their intentions sincere. Wishing to make their intentions sincere, they must first extend their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. What is meant by “Keeping the whole world (*tianxia*) peaceful depends on the well-governance of his state” is this: When the sovereign reveres to his aged, as the aged should be revered to, the people become filial; when the sovereign venerates to his elders, as the elders should be venerated to, the people learn to respect their elders; when the sovereign treats orphans compassionately, the people do the same. Thus a gentleman keeps *xieju zhidao* 絜矩之道 (the method of holding measurement rule), the principle of exchanging one's position: what one dislikes in his superiors, let him not display in the treatment of his inferiors; what one dislikes in inferiors, let him not display in the service of his superiors; what one hates in those who are before him, let him not in addition to that precede in those who are behind him; what one loathes in those who are behind him, let him not bestow on the left; what one detests to receive on the left, let him not bestow on the right:-this is what is called the “principle of a holding a measurement rule to regulate one's conduct.”

In this passage, “to bring new improvements to the people,” “to rest in the highest good,” and “to keep the whole world (*tianxia*) peaceful” are the macroscopic strategies of education, whereas “to manifest our bright virtues,” “to have states well-governed,” “to keep households well-managed,” “to cultivate oneself as a good person,” “to set one's mind uprightly,” “to make one's intention sincere,” “to extend one's knowledge,” and “to inves-

tigate all things” can all be regarded as the microscopic educational practices. This is to say moral education must start with a self-reflective, self-demanding, virtuous, rational, autonomous agent⁴⁶ who cares about himself and cares about everybody around him.⁴⁷ Furthermore, all these are founded on the value of the highest good, from individuals extending over to families, from families extending over to states, and from states extending over to all over the world. It was also taught by the *Great Learning* that if we want to keep the world peaceful, we must adopt the method of holding measurement rule, which is parallel to the golden rule “Do not do unto others what you do not want to be done unto you.”

Accordingly, from the perspective of *tianxia*, the chief mission of moral education today is to restore the traditional ideals of humanity, to cultivate the moral sense, moral consciousness, and the sense of responsi-

⁴⁶ Here, the idea of a “self-reflective, self-demanding, virtuous, rational, autonomous agent” is very close to the moral character described in modern virtue ethics and Kantian ethics. Modern virtue ethics retrieving Aristotelian ethics maintains that the virtuous acquire practical wisdom or *phronesis*, whereas Kantian ethics consider rationality and autonomy the features of a moral agent. However, their differences should be noted. The practical wisdom in virtue ethics is taking as a branch of intellectual virtue and is thereby intellectual-cognitive oriented, which is quite different from the Chinese concept of the virtuous that has reason and feeling balanced. Kantian ethics taking the stand of transcendental philosophy, denies any empirical elements in morality and maintains pure formalism in ethical constitutions, deviating from the Chinese concept of moral agent synthesizing experience and reason.

⁴⁷ Here, the term “care” is used very close to Nel Noddings’ care ethics, which is based ontologically on reciprocal relations, following Martin Buber’s idea of “I-Thou” relationships. Nonetheless, for the Chinese, we care must start from ourselves, our family, friends, acquaintances, our fellow men, then to others; it can never directly go to strangers. In this case, the Chinese care is closer to Hume’s idea of “benevolence” than Noddings’ idea of care. See Nel Noddings, “Moral Education in an Age of Globalization,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 42(4): 390 – 396; also David Hume, “Of Benevolence,” *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 176-182.

bility of the students, to guide the students to acquire personal ethical qualities, such as benevolence, charity, sincerity, honesty, bravery, sensibleness, thriftiness, perseverance, righteousness, industriousness, and so on, in order to consolidate the moral character of the students. Second, to restore the traditional family values, responsibility, parenthood, fidelity, and brotherhood are the cardinal family virtues a student should know and have. Third to extend and translate traditional virtues to their modern applications for ethics at schools, in professions, and society; friendship, justice, fairness, righteousness, respect for others, toleration, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, kindness, and so on, are the most vital personal qualities for members of a society to make contributions to the society and to keep it harmonious. In this way, with individual personality consolidated, family ethics, social ethics, and national ethics could be secured extensively; global ethics may become possible. So till then, moral educators can apply traditional international ideals of the Way of Kinship and Comprehensive Harmony to the global scale to teach their students how to be a member of the global family through solidarity, compassion, and fraternity.

The extension of loving relationships “from close to afar” (*yiujin jiyuan* 由近及遠) and the principle of “from oneself to referring to others” (*tuiji jiren* 推己及人) may be foreign to Western scholars when discussing global ethics. Perhaps they will doubt the reasoning from “self-cultivation,” “household-well-management,” and “state-well-governance” to “pacifying the whole world.” Perhaps, for them, the complicated issues of global ethics in the current situations cannot be reduced to the simple foundation of brightening one’s own virtue; and they may find some of the Chinese traditional values incompatible with their Western counterpart. We might ascribe this kind of skeptical attitude to the analytic mode of thinking of Western scholars. However, they are pretty aware of the rising global problems were due to the facts of the interrelatedness, interdependence, and interactions of every individual and community in the world,

but they still hesitate to take on an organic mode of thinking when dealing with those problems. So they consider global ethics a particular branch of applied ethics that is separate from other parts of ethics. However, concerning the feeble moral sense among the youth, the breakdown of the family system and family values, such as the rampages of mass shootings, drug addiction, social violence, sexual liberation, and the deterioration of democracy in the Western societies, they should think more about the organic connections of the personal character of every individual, family values, social and national ethics, and above all, global ethics. The apparent differences between Chinese and Western thinkings include hierarchism versus liberalism, familism versus individualism, human foundationalism versus materialism or theism, organicism versus analytics, meritocracy versus democracy, and many other contrasts not be exhausted. However, all conflicts might be mitigated by resorting to humanity. Our conviction that whatever stands eventually must pass the test of humanity, humanity in its broadest sense, cover oneself, one's family, clan, friends, fellowmen, humankind, and all living beings, nature, and cosmos.

V. Conclusion

Admittedly, the ancient Chinese conception of “*tianxia*” does not equal to “globe” nowadays; China used to be relatively isolated from the rest of the world, but not anymore. In the history of human civilization, people have never been so closely intertwined together as we are now today by information technology, mass media, telecommunications, and transportations in terms of education, economy, commerce, finance, politics, military, diplomacy, medication, health, arts, athletic, travel, knowledge, religion, in a word, culture. We are all living on one globe. At this juncture, multiple problems are arising, over-population, global economic apartheid, financial crisis, global warming, climate change, environmental pollutions, ecological breakdown, global epidemic, natural monopoly,

military competitions, international terrorism, superpower hegemony, global crime, religious conflicts, regional wars, international refugees, space campaign, nuclear proliferation, and so on. All unethical global problems and immoral phenomena are primarily grounded in human selfishness, indolence, ignorance, avarice, obstinacy, bigotry, vanity, perversity, envy, discrimination, hatred, ferocity, brutality, and all kinds of mental disorder, which pose a severe challenge to moral education for educators all over the world, including China.

As mentioned above, we want to argue that Chinese difficulty with moral education for both Free China and Communist China is threefold. First, by low national self-confidence China lost its traditional supports for moral education. In the case of Free China imitating democracy and capitalism from America and Western Europe, whereas in Communist China imitating communism from the Soviet Union, they both deserted the responsibility to resume Chinese traditions of human foundationalism, authentic familism, meritocracy, comprehensive harmonium, and Kingship. Now on the part of Free China---heading to a fictitious “Republic of Taiwan,” it has nearly lost its entire identity of being Chinese and constantly attempts to abjure Chinese history. This move only makes itself a bargaining chip for America on China. To promote a global strategy containing Communist China, America needs Taiwan in its geopolitical maneuver. While on the part of Communist China, it uses the banner of traditional culture to secure the Communist regime, making Marx press over Confucius a necessity. Second, when undergoing Westernization and modernization, traditional Chinese culture was devastated, and at the same time, China has been seriously contaminated by the “immorality” of modernization. It has been exposed to scientism, fetishism, secularism, consumerism, individualism, and nihilism. Under these impacts, the traditional family-oriented culture shattered, foreign ideologies triumphed, societal values collapsed, and an irrevocable Chinese history page had been written. Third, when stepping into the 21st century, China has to face the growing prob-

lems of globalization. It must offer the world an alternative to human sustainability rather than continuing to doomsday as the biblical *Apocalypse* prophesied. Now on the part of Free China, it already lost sight of its obligation to all Chinese people. A particular group of them even deny themselves as Chinese. In this way, it completely lost its privilege to help Communist China transform into authentic China (or the Republic of China based on the Three Principles of the People) and was disdained by most Chinese. Moreover, while Communist China has adhered to a kind of authoritarian capitalism in the past decades, its growing economic and political influences have long been regarded as unprecedented threats to the West, particularly to America. The tensions between the two most powerful countries of the world have constantly aroused the alerts of think tanks worldwide about how to mitigate their diplomatic, commercial, military, technological, and ideological clashes that unstable the world and make Communist China totter on its way to national resurrections.

The tensions between the two most powerful countries of the world have constantly aroused the alerts of think-tanks worldwide about how to mitigate their diplomatic, commercial, military, technological, and ideological clashes that unstable the world and make Communist China totter on its way to national resurrections. All the difficulties surrounding modern moral education seem to be highly complicated and hardly solvable. Nonetheless, they might be tempered by implementing global ethics based on Whitehead-Griffin's process theology and the Chinese ideal of *Tianxia* through education of the world. Whitehead-Griffin's process theology is communicable to the Chinese and closely associated with Western classical traditions, specifically Platonic and Medieval realism. Both Chinese and Westerners can restore their confidence in traditional ideals, overcome modern immorality, assume global responsibility, and above all, recover humanity. By going hand in hand like a family, they can meet the global challenges through moral education; only by restoring humanity can they solve all the problems rooted in humanity.

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