

Interculturality – a potentially new wisdom? (0091)

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This paper wants to introduce an example of how scholarly use of knowledge can open to new dimensions of wisdom by employing interculturality focusing on philosophical and experiential sources of wisdom from different traditions in an exchanging and inspirational manner. As such interculturality can serve as agent in a cultural hermeneutic. For this purpose is required a forum of knowledge about wisdom, where qualified exchange and dialogue can take place – a forum as the university can provide, if it is allowed, maintained and developed in accordance with the present conditions and needs for new understandings of humanity, existence and life.

In this intention the paper will focus on interculturality as agency in education, and it is inspired by Professor F. Dallmayr's work on interculturality and especially Dallmayr's use of the Buddhist concept of Sunyata in relation to global democracy.

Before introducing Sunyata the topic is approached on the background of interculturality as agency in education. Here is especially focused on how intercultural dimensions are introduced in the European Educational Programs. There is, though, one obstacle regarding this intention: interculturality is not a term used in the EU-program. Instead there are intentions, goals, and strategies establishing a platform for the development of EU in the light of an international and globalised world.

EU operates with the three overall accords, which were all made in the period 1999 - 2004: the Bologna-process, the Lisbon-strategy, and the Copenhagen-process. The primary purpose is to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in order to create more jobs and environmental sustainability. It is pursued by introducing the concept of citizenship and competencies, and it is established as an innovative subject or agent without any defined context to act in.

This can be conceived as *either* a situation of ultimate liberty, being emancipated from any ties to a defined context and with all possibilities available, *or* a situation of emptiness, meaningless and nihilism. Operating with this opposition between liberation and nihilism defines a dual understanding, which is known in most of the theory of modernity, but it may not, however, be the most giving approach to the situation we are facing today. Rather, it seems that this borderland between emancipation and nihilism calls for a constructive concept of emptying out, that is: a concept which can provide existential meaning to the experience of emptiness, or perhaps even better: the presence of emptiness. Further, there may be a need for a concept, which can exceed the duality of the opposition between liberation and negation by emptying out the significance of the contents to a point of transforming the very understanding of existential meaning.

However, help may be found in the very same constellation of factors which contribute in creating the modern complexity of liberty and nihilism. One of the factors which have a huge impact on the

present situation is the **dynamics of interculturality** together with internationalization and globalization. Without ignoring the very complexity and the many different meanings and interests in this inter-situation this paper will focus on one particular factor herein, namely the abundance of existential philosophy and wisdom, which is revealed to us at the same time, as the tide of confusion, nihilism and emptiness overwhelms us.

Applied onto the field of education it brings us to the question of formation or Bildung. The German word is more easily related to the perspective of imagination, invoking the idea of ideals or images to imitate as constitutive models. Here again, though, we are faced with the important differences of the traditions of Bild or images for formative processes, based on either conceptually defined ideals to imitate, or the imagination used for conceptually emptying out and thus leading to the upheaval and dissolving of the ideal – and, thereby, the dissolution of the aim for conceptualising ideals by realising the dimension of Sunyata: existential emptiness or nothingness. This is meant as an example of how interculturality can help altering and transforming the approach we take to the challenges of our time.

The paper offers a brief exposition of how Sunyata can be employed in the process of negation and transformation, related to EU's education program.

The best way of approaching Sunyata is by invoking the significance of emptiness, as we know it.

Nothingness or emptiness is a constitutional principle, which is base of both freedom and nihilism. It is constitutional in both an individual and a common dimension, and thus it provides the ground for personhood as well as governmental organisation.

It can lead to an emptied understanding, where you are not occupied by identifying and differentiating, as it is usually the case in questions concerning culture. Instead, you can reach a point, not defined by an understanding, but rather founded in the presence of emptiness, -and so empty, too, of understanding. Culture, then, can become a **concept** of no-significance, and an **actualizing treasury** of sources of ontological experience and wisdom in an open field of intersubjectivity, which can serve and support an existential approach to the challenges of our time.

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