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Christoph Antweiler

# **Inclusive Humanism**

Anthropological Basics for a Realistic  
Cosmopolitanism

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## Foreword

Though answers to the question of what it is to a be human being are dangerous, we cannot escape them.

Ulrich Bröckling

The world is becoming increasingly unified, despite all cultural dislocations and blatant inequality. In light of planetary interconnectedness, human beings need a cultural dialogue more than ever. Both cultural diversity and unity occur in humankind, forming a polarity, which is neither an antithesis nor an antinomy. Commonalities exist both between cultures as well as among all people. It is of critical importance that human beings become capable of adopting new perspectives as a means of advancing an enduring discussion between cultures on what human unity means, and could mean.

This book examines ideas arising from humanism and cosmopolitanism and ties them together with anthropology. As a broad human science, anthropology is the study of the human being, of human beings, in the plural, and human cultures. The focus of my study will be on the possibilities of a planetary orientation and of shared human ways of life or common human patterns. I will combine the findings of comparative anthropology with cosmopolitanism. In contrast to global and traditional universalistic approaches, cosmopolitanism emphasizes human unity as well as cultural particularities. This book addresses global humanism or, as Habermas put it, “anthropological cosmopolitanism”. Questions covering global politics, international law and the world economy, areas, that is, which are more institutional in character, will be touched upon but will not be the core substance of the work presented below.

I would like to thank Jörn Rüsen for sparking my interest in the project of an inclusive humanism, which transcends the limitations of a Eurocentric humanism, giving serious consideration to cultural differences. His orientation is more in line with an intercultural dialogue and with the recognition of difference, though not to the point of endorsing an unbounded relativism. The respect for other cultures must be complemented by a respect for the individual human being. The search for common orientations among human beings who live on an intensely interconnected and simultaneously finite planet is the object here. I am

especially grateful to Jörn for inspiring me to write this book while one day sitting together under the scorching sun of Calcutta.

The Mercator Foundation made possible the Humanism Project, entitled *Der Humanismus in der Epoche der Globalisierung. Ein interkultureller Dialog über Kultur, Menschheit und Werte* (Humanism in the era of globalization: An intercultural dialogue on culture, humanity and values), at the Institute of Advanced Study in the Humanities (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen, KWI). Angelika Wulff deserves thanks for the meticulous copyediting. I thank my student helpers at the Institute for Oriental and Asian Studies (IOA) at the University of Bonn for both helping me locate and borrow quite a few books, which for them must have seemed somewhat unusual, and for the job, which at times seemed unending, of copying articles from academic journals in fields other our own. I also thank colleagues from different cultures and academic backgrounds who critically responded to the arguments presented here that were relayed in lectures in Germany and elsewhere.

I dedicate this book to the people I hold dearest, who have travelled with me through many cultures in this interconnected world of ours: To Maria, Craig and Dario.

Cologne, Germany, Spring 2012

Christoph Antweiler



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## Introduction: Beyond the “Global Village” and a “World in Fragments”

While recognizing the need for pursuing some common orientation in our interconnected world, we end up finding more questions than answers. Does a world community that is becoming ever closely related in fact need a basic measure of universal consensus? What does humanism look like that does not move too rapidly to universalize the views and historical experiences of the European or Atlantic world? How can we conceive of globality as a new entity without playing unity and diversity off one another? How can we succeed at civilizing an ever-present ethnocentrism? How do we keep the terms “culture” and “humanity” from being misused as verbal weapons? Is a cosmopolitanism conceivable that proceeds from an understanding of humankind as one entity but does not then requires us to re-design cultures to fit some sort of global template or to perceive global citizens as being mainly elite consumers of cultural diversity? These are the pertinent and yet unresolved questions in today’s current setting of intercultural contact. With this book I would like to offer the architectural framework for addressing these questions. I might not be producing the final structure, but a stable foundation nonetheless.

I conceive humanism essentially through the idea that cultural and societal interaction and interchange can only occur in clear regard for human beings. Every cultural orientation needs anthropology. As a cultural anthropologist myself, I understand that humanism must consider the entire human being, or the human being in his or her entirety, and humankind as an entirety. Humanism must rely on biological anthropology just as much as cultural anthropology. We need the dialogue between cultures, although we often end up with parallel monologues occurring instead. Cultures fight with each other for regard or attention, a situation that hampers the possibility of dialogue. And cultures are clearly different, with the members or leaders of cultures explicitly wanting this to be the case. The word “intercultural” itself suggests problems yet to be resolved.

When dialogue does in fact occur, it is rarely symmetrical, and rarely if ever non-coercive. But despite this, we do not live in what Geertz called a “world in

fragments" (Geertz 2007: 87). Such a patchwork concept depicts the world as one without commonalities or connections, one that we could only extrapolate "piece by piece" in anecdotes. This would represent a world that has literally fallen into many isolated fragments, not signifying a world, or one world, but many worlds. This does not correspond well to today's highly interconnected structures now existing on the planet. The all important question in the current world setting is one asking how far away are we from a world culture or a world society? Human beings are increasingly interconnected through networks that go beyond national borders, socio-cultural communities or functional roles. Many of these networks are not transmitted on a worldwide level, but are within everyday reach. Humankind, though, does not form a homogenous entity that represents a socially integrated unit providing solidarity and collective interaction and interchange. The common or shared consciousness that is missing on so many levels will not be replaced through global integration based on mass media. We live in a kind of worldwide society that is not, contrary to Luhmann (1975), fully free of shared norms and communal orientations, and is neither understood simply from a local or supra-local level. The world community is not a community, though it offers space for many communities.

As individuals we have various kinds of social relationships. People live in groups that spatially neighbour one another and that interact through face-to-face contact. Place still plays a role in these relationships, either in a concrete form or conceptually. Site and location are relevant, both on a macro and micro level. The world has topography, which is not reducible to a chessboard of unlimited communication, global corporate strategies, and cultural diffusion (Therborn 2006: 275). A truly ubiquitous form of existence, shared by everyone, is not possible among human beings, as non-local embodiments of place do not exist; that is, "we can't live in the global" (Safranski 2004: 24; similarly, Nathan 2001: 355; Mayer 2010: 3). The deeper reason for this lies in the fact that we are organisms. Human beings from all cultures have searched toward the cosmic horizon for space and freedom. And yet since we live in our bodies, we face the universal need to keep within a local scale of things. Only specific places can offer us the feeling of security, comfort and warmth. Both ends of the spectrum are important: the cosmos can be threatening while the familiar becomes limiting and restricting. Culture as world beyond and culture as house and home are two sides to the same coin. The great wide world and the home or native land belong together, are inseparable as "Cosmos and Hearth" (Tuan 1996: 2, 141, 183pp.; similarly, see Latour 2004). This reference to place shapes the way we think, even in the world of globalization. Network studies have been able to demonstrate that intermediate contacts in the cognitive map of the social world are localized, above all, according to geographical place and occupation or profession (Bernard et al. 1988).

But at the same time humans increasingly have very different kinds of contacts, as in relationships with multiple affiliations within "communities without propinquity" (Calhoun 1998). These are contacts or encounters we have without the need for us to be physically present. They are produced through technology and therefore less arbitrary, making active networks necessary. Personal networks have then become increasingly individualized. The world is more complicated than our common models for globalization, hybridity, de-territorialisation, and fundamentalism would have us believe. As cultural scientists we tend to project our life experiences as mobile members of an elite, moving freely in culturally mixed settings, on the rest of world. Hybridity has been postulated in a politically correct manner, and mobility presented as normative, without either being properly documented (see Friedman's critique, 1997: 72, 75). Human beings do not live in closed monads; but everything on this planet is not tied or related with everything else. Instead of a community or a "world society without community" we observe rather a structuralized network of diversity. Cohesion is produced through heterogeneous communities arising from contact networks that are loosely coupled with locally compressed clusters (Holzer 2005: 324pp.). Lesser distances and interdependence are producing a kind of imposed closeness (Tomlinson 1999: 181). A fitting metaphor, more appropriate than the "village," would therefore be a fragmented city neighbourhood in which human beings live basically near one another and to some extent know each other but where not everyone is available and reachable to everybody else. We do not choose our neighbours, and are more or less estranged from them, but we live together, in the world as city.

The global village does not exist. We do not need it. Everyone does not have to be in direct contact with everybody else. A world or global government is not foreseeable. This we probably do not need as well. For many of us, central authority is anything but ideal. Humankind does not have to form an integrated collective unit in order to produce a lasting environment to benefit our ways of life and to maintain a peaceful co-existence between cultures. We could develop forms for worldwide social cohesion and cultural inclusion that carry fewer preconditions. Globally, social movements and diverse forms of civil society offer examples to us that are encouraging. If we want to attain a feasible form of justice that can be applied worldwide, along with globally valid rules and regulations, it is then reasonable to develop through dialogue a more global orientation when it comes to norms and values (Bartelson 2009). Attitudes that are cosmopolitan and universalistic allow both cultural separation and connectedness to be plausible. This book attempts to demonstrate, with arguments and empirical findings, that cultures are different but commensurable. Human beings from different cultures do not live in different worlds. They live differently in one and the same world.

## Inclusive Humanism: A Modern Project

Western humanism, or any type of humanism, does not have it easy these days. Within the context of the current political climate, in which cultural difference, culturalisation and ethnicisation are used for political purposes, intercultural dialogue is notoriously difficult. The need for unity is juxtaposed against the willingness to differentiate or separate. All are alike, all are different and above all: everyone wants to distinguish him or herself from the other. This is true on a personal as well as a cultural level. Since the 1980s, culture has become a global currency for collective identity. The disappointments with humanism sprang up during this period in light of the traumatic events that occurred in the 20th century. The concept of humanism subsequently suffered a shocking blow. Foucault's utterances on the “end of the human” became so popular that we now in fact live in a “post-humanistic era.”

European humanism has not only been for the most part intellectually Eurocentric and politically hegemonic, as has been justifiably pointed out in criticisms of it. Opposition to humanism has come from those who find it to be anthropocentric as well, criticizing the attitude among humanists that the human being must save the world (Gray 2010: 11p., 166pp.; for a critical perspective, see Kettner 2005: 88–95). New bio- and nanotechnologies add to this argument to the extent that the traditional humanistic image of human beings has become outdated, ushering in a new era of “post-humanism” (Herbrechter 2009). The 20<sup>th</sup> century carries the insignia of an era in which the human being was seen as a being that could be optimized. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the possibilities of optimizing the human being through bio-politics and especially anthropolitics have become increasingly more realistic. The civilizing process has intensified the debate on questions of defining the human being due to new possibilities and new global dangers: “What a human being is and above all who a human being is becomes open to interpretation in light of cloning, cyborgs, and supposedly intelligent computers” (Bröckling 2004: 174). New human technological possibilities revive questions on what the category “human” might mean. Fernández-Armesto has come to the shattering conclusion that “[...] we do not know what humankind means; we do not know what it is that makes us human; so naturally, we will not be aware losing it” (Fernández-Armesto 2005: 155).

In light of the interconnectedness now existing between cultures, and current ambiguities as to how this plays out on an international or world scale, it is not surprising that mainstream Western political as well as scientific debate tends toward unrestrained relativism (see Rüsen's critique, 2009a: 13). Diversity is placed in polarized juxtaposition to universality. Instead of offering a realistic criticism of positivism, idealistic viewpoints simply dismiss it. Post-modern

academics are especially prone to grant “locality” precedence as a way of off-setting the dangers of “totality,” although by doing this they are in fact creating an exaggerated uniform picture of modernism. The result is as follows: an increasingly globalized world is being observed by increasingly localized cultural and social scientists (Archer 1991: 132, 137; Nathan 2001). Diversity appears then as a concept conforming to the ways of the world, and relativism appears tolerant and easily acceptable. As a result of this, though justifiable, self-criticism of Eurocentric perspectives, and of an exaggerated anthropo-centric Atlantic humanism, universalistic scientific principles and humanistic values are being tossed aside all too quickly, leading to a degree of disorientation and solipsism that has produced the concept of a world in fragments.

A fundamental barrier in cultural dialogue occurs in facing an unbridgeable gap between cultural differences and particularistic perspectives, on the one hand, and universalistic orientations, on the other. Within this framework, any clarification of today’s universal commonalities could well contribute to a non-Eurocentric humanism in the era of globalization (Bielefeldt 1998; Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen 2006: 83). An essential precondition for such an undertaking is for us to accept globalization as a worldwide amalgamating, circulating and structuring *mélange* instead of equating it simply with westernization and simplification (Nederveen Pieterse 1998: 88pp.; Tsing 2001: 113p.). Universals, or pan-cultural phenomena, which are uncovered through methodical cultural comparison, may not offer a basis for all values but could restrain us from latching onto any kind of humanistic utopia. Complementing the search for today’s commonalities is the search for historical continuities and historical universals in human practice (e.g., Koselleck 1987). Robbie Robertson, in light of the third and most intensive wave of global interconnectedness occurring today, has recommended an “inclusive reading of history” so that our universal endeavours may prove worthwhile (Robertson 2003; Thapar 2009: 37).

Humanism is difficult work. Taking up the task of developing a cross-cultural humanism is a worthy endeavour for us all. But it is a task burdened with difficulties. We find ourselves confronted with values at the centre of any discussion on cultures. Values are something that we want other people to want. And in terms of culture, values are something that people of one culture would want people from other or all other cultures to follow as well. Values are then from their very nature imperialistic (Appiah 2006: 24). From an historical vantage point, a relatively new circumstance could be considered encouraging, and that is nowadays probably the majority of people from every culture on the planet consider many of their values and assumptions to be specific to a certain culture, that is, local and not a natural given, or unalterable.

## World Society and "One World"?

For a discussion on a global form of humanism to take place, it is important for us to clarify the relation between worldwide relationships in societies and cultures and humankind as an entity in and of itself. There is consensus that the world is becoming increasingly unified. There is a lack of consensus when the discussion turns to which aspects of the world are becoming unified and how far along has this unifying process already gone. The concepts and terminology used in this discussion are of course disparate. Theorists from the Bielefeld School of Social Systems Theory assume that we live in a *world society* (Stichweh 2000; 2007; 2010; Heintz et al. 2005; Tyrell 2005; Therborn 2006; Schwinn 2005; 2009; Bornschier 2008). It is manifested mostly through worldwide communication and cooperation. This world society, according to the argument, does only exist in the singular form. It is rather the comprehensive connectedness of human living, including all the important social processes involved in how humans live. There can only be one society if we understand society to be the greatest common denominator in relevant human interaction and interchange. As such, world society does not have an external form in the sense of an alien society. Ulrich Beck's notion of cosmopolitanism has a similar bend to it. Beck wants to overcome, or transcend, methodological nationalism through a methodological cosmopolitanism, thereby taking into account the global social world. He has determined that human beings and political entities are not only imbedded in local frameworks, but rather are found within supra-local to global settings with an ecological and economical basis. A multitude of side and bumper effects have made the unified nature of a world society unavoidable. A systematic world political economy must necessarily become the working perspective here (Beck 1998; 2004; 2009; Beck/Sznajder 2006: 11p.; similarly, see Arizpe 1996; Pilardeaux 2008).

Many theorists assume, to the contrary, that there is such a world society only to some extent, with many arguments already known to support this position. World society is only slowly now emerging, as Messner, Habermas and others have emphasized. What we are lacking is social integration and a social contract that is binding to all societies. There are as well still local worlds in which people live. Some social theorists and people active in international relationships also admit that the political world is made up today of more than the sum of all national societies. But they also emphasize, as opposed to the theorists of a world society, the point that nation-states are still the prominent and central political actors on the world stage. Some authors speak not of a world society but rather, more cautiously, of an "international society" (Buzan 2004). Critics of Beck fault above all his farewell cry to the nation-state (Heins 2002: 72 – 79; Fine 2007: 9 – 13; Calhoun 2008: 443p.; Rossi 2008: 434 – 436). It is important to keep in mind

that Beck adheres to the concept of the state. He wants to understand the transnational and cosmopolitan in correlation with the nation-state (Beck 2004: 9, 15, 25). The state should be transnational within the framework of a polycentric world society, sharing loyalty with institutions on a supra- to sub-national level. Such a state is not based on territory in which state and society are locked together in some kind of holding tank.

His critics are correct in saying that a worldwide concept of "we"-awareness does not exist. A slowly emerging feeling of sameness appears to come about, contrary to Beck, less as the result of experience of world society. Our awareness of a common humanity and common problems of survival may more likely be the result of our awareness of differences. Human beings are becoming ever more aware of the fact that national particularities and different forms of civilization produce strong bonds and interdependencies. This occurs through increasing reciprocal exchange and the need, becoming ever more necessary, for negotiated compromise in order to avoid conflict (Rossi 2008: 436). The contrary lines of argument show one thing: We need more empirical knowledge when considering the question of world society.

Network studies on global contact could demonstrate to what extent there is in fact a worldwide interconnectedness. So-called "small world studies" are especially revealing (for an overview and for criticism as well, see Kleinfeld 2002). The subject here is not economic or technological interrelationships, but social networks in the strict sense, that is, contact between persons. These studies examine, for example, how a connection between two randomly selected persons in the world could transpire. How could Christoph Antweiler get in touch with Madonna when any direct attempt to reach Madonna by phone would at best get as far as her manager? The surprising results of the studies indicated that, for every person searching for someone, and every person being sought, there stood on average 6 intermediaries before final contact was made. At first we might find this not so surprising, when we consider that, with an assumed 100 acquaintances per person, we would, after 5 stations of contact, reach a contact pool with a number greater than the entire human population on the planet. This is not at all to be expected since many friends of friends already know each other to such the extent that it would not be easy to form new contacts with every step along the way to final contact. The overlapping among circles of friends and acquaintances produces redundancy. Therefore it is by no means guaranteed that with a few intermediate steps, every nodal point in a network can be reached (Holzer 2005: 316). The paradox is that, according to empirical results, every contact is reached in a few steps, even though the network involved is local and highly concentrated. Great interpersonal networks have a worldwide or at least transnational scope, but are locally heterogeneous.

## A “Small World” rather than a “Global Village”

The solution to the paradox is that the average path length between persons is small due to a few shortcuts. Few direct cross-connections – or the bridges formed between persons far apart from each other – drastically raise worldwide connectivity. These are typically “weak” connections, which are intransitive, to the extent that A is connected with B and C without necessarily meaning that B and C are connected. (In close social interaction pools with common presence, direct contact between B and C would be unavoidable.) Global accessibility is compatible with high local concentration. While the average path length is a global feature, which does not indicate local contexts, the concentrations are a local circumstance. The regions of this network are not similarly connected with one another. Therefore the network of the “small world” links two seemingly contradictory features, local concentration (cluster form), on the one hand, and worldwide accessibility, on the other.

The almost limitless accessibility, or connectivity, can be seen as the core feature of globality, or the state of the world (Therborn 2006). Social interactions, which demand mutual presence, are limited in number and variety due to the attention and mobility needed for their existence. Communication in the small world network no longer demands that people are physically together (Lübbe 2005). As such, each and every human being can become basically the recipient and source of communication. This pertains to information that is unwelcome, as well as to illnesses. All human beings represent not only communication partners but possible partners in a social relationship as well. There are no longer human beings or cultures that are considered principally inaccessible or incomprehensible (Holzer 2005: 320p.). The boundaries, which limit interconnectedness and which are not to be ignored, are no longer specifically societal, but rather of an economic or political nature. In this respect, features of the “small world” can be seen as specific structural patterns of the growing and developing modern world society. The fact that each and every one of us is in theory reachable is, for questions concerning the diffusion of humanistic ideas, more relevant than the mere possibility of sending messages.

From research on worldwide networks pertaining to people who travel for professional reasons and to people who are part of global migration, it has been suggested that we speak in terms of *global ecumene* (Hannerz 1992). Similar to this is the concept of “transnational spaces” (Pries 2007; Faist 2009), where worldwide interconnectedness of regular and social relationships is emphasized. This is in line with certain directions in thought that emphasize the historical formation of new universals, a point which stands at the centre of the arguments presented by Keith Hart. He argues that the world since the Second World War has formed for the first time into a single interactive network. Accordingly, the



emerging world society is not only an idea, but rather a basic fact. The increasing cosmopolitan ties and links could form “a new human universal” (Hart 2008: 1p., 6pp.). Increasingly, the close ties between local living environments and global currents are being carved out (Anghel et al. 2009; Forte 2010). In the globalization debate, this nexus was already re-formulated early on as localization, or more to the point, as “glocalisation” (Robertson 1998). Hermann Lübke speaks in terms of *Zivilisationsökumene* (*civilisation ecumene*) (Lübke 2005: 72pp., 203pp.) and means something quite different from Hannerz and his *global ecumene*. One specific civilization becomes prominent in the world. It promotes its universalizing aspirations across the globe, with success. The scientific-technological civilization developed its roots mainly in Western countries. Today, it has turned indifferent with regard to its cultural roots. While isolated cultures and religious communities remain partially fractionalized, the civilization society becomes universalized.

Some universal historians and historically-oriented sociologists ask themselves, to what extent did earlier great cultural entities produce the beginnings of worldwide patterns. Civilizations had intensive contact with each other and were imbedded in worldwide processes. The convergence of these transnational patterns leads to a worldwide civilizational web (or human web; see McNeill/McNeill 2003). We should also consider the concept of “world civilization” (or global civilization of modernity). In large measure due to the critical response to Huntington’s concept of a “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 2001), the question has come up as to what extent great civilizations were always structured as internally diverse (Eisenstadt 2000; Arnason 2003; Katzenstein 2010). Other directions in thought, or those who represent these directions, ask whether, instead of a comprehensive world society (Stichweh) or an economically-based world system (Wallerstein), there is rather a worldwide interconnected culture. They speak in terms of global culture (Featherstone 1990). In view of the typical pluriculturality of nation-states, a pattern that holds true for the entire world, we can characterize this as “global multicultural” (Nederveen Pieterse 2007: 196).

Some theorists not only take into account global diffusion by way of goods and ideas but by way of concepts as well and talk of a “world culture.” According to the neoinstitutional perspective, or World Polity, from John Meyer, what is important is how principles of political interaction and regulatory patterns found in organizations are spread across the world. Rational thought processes, institutions and their associated goals such as individualism, justice, fairness and world citizenship are discussed. The concepts meant here are those that are themselves, in terms of content, universalistic. These principles spread across the world through governments as well as non-state organizations and actors, especially since the Second World War (Meyer 2005). Through the transnational

spread of a cultural system, new universals have developed, thus creating the form of a world culture. Meyer, however, as Wallerstein, does not assume that a world society or world culture already exists.

A new "cultural universalism," under the catchword *world culture* (or *global culture*; Robertson 1992: 108–114; Lechner/Boli 2005: 22–25, 44pp.; Weiß 2005: 86; Therborn 2010), is no longer questioning the dominant form of Euro-American homogenization. The world culture approach is interested in questions concerning how cultural diversity is globally organized by seeing the world in its entirety, for example, in the worldwide movement of non-governmental organizations in civil society or in the sciences. Important here are universal elements that are presented in such a way as to make them universally relevant, such as in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) IV classification system for mental disorders.

## Humankind: The Ethical Relevance of the Category of Species

World society or a similar form thereof, however, is not a synonym for humankind. If it were, then the entire theoretical debate on world society would be nothing more than a cosmic or aesthetic game, or *glass bead game* (Nuscheler/Wittmann 2010: 131). Members of indigenous groups that are less economically and politically integrated are as yet only to some extent integrated in the world society, though still part of humankind. When we talk of the world, we are employing a unifying concept:

"The unifying concept of world includes not only that which is common to all, the common in the variable, but also that which includes the variable, and the outer boundaries of variability that creates unity" (Koslowski 1990: 19).

Only in the more recent work on theories of world society has the subject been approached that the convergence of human societies in the last 500 years into a world society is coupled with the unity of *Homo sapiens* (Stichweh 2010: 1).

Humankind as one entity is not only based on interconnectedness. The unit "world" by no means exists simply through the (partially) homogenizing context that has come about through globalization. Communication, the trading of goods, financial networks, transportation, migration (from people, animals, plants and diseases), science, and world organizations are not the only things that bind human beings together. Independent of over-arching and global integration, humankind already existed as a biological and especially mental or psychic unit. Human beings belong to one and only one species, a species that is, in a unique measure, dependent on culture as a means of adaptation. The entire current world human population goes back to small original populations, which

spread across the planet over the last 150,000 years. There has subsequently been no further speciation. This has limited the genetic diversity of the human being and the breadth of behavioural variants (Stichweh 2010), giving rise to “universals of human existence” (Koslowski 1990: 20). All human beings move within a wide variety of constellations and yet experience the same things such as birth, growth, death, as well as work, self-protection, play, and art.

Our belonging to a species is of ethical relevance as well, not only as an abstract demarcation that covers all human beings and cultures. Nature cannot tell us what we should do and what values we should have. We need to avoid drawing conclusions based on false naturalist premises. But understanding human nature can aid us against wishful thinking, arrogance, and inhumanity. A new form of humanism must avoid not only Eurocentrism but also total anthropocentrism. It is important to avoid an anthropomonism, while it is necessary that humanism maintains an anthropological basis and follows a moderate form of anthropocentrism.

There is an urgency existing in today's world for establishing a concept of humanity as a unit or an entity. An important approach that would bring us in this direction is to look to the great intellectual traditions and great religions to uncover elements that could be useful in creating a new brand of humanism. What could end up being convincing sources for “cosmopolitan knowledge”? Diversity should not be considered of petty interest but rather be recognized in this context. The question is significant of whether the great traditions, religions or civilisations – despite all their differences – might reveal similarities and commonalities, or even and more importantly, shared concepts of what it is to be human. When we uncover concepts concerning human beings, being human and humankind that are also universalistic in form, then we would be contributing to an inclusive concept of humankind (Gieselmann/Seebold 2004: 3p.).

## **Cultural Traditions and Universal Values**

With regard to all the possible concepts of humanity, we know very little that could be deemed systematically certain in the great traditions and religions. We know even less about commonalities in “little traditions,” or similarities among the thousands of individual cultures, societies or ethnicities, especially in such matters as shared norms, values and ideals. This is where this book begins. I am looking empirically, with the tools offered to me by the field of anthropology, or cultural anthropology, for commonalities in many or even all cultures, and for cultural universals, or simply said, for universals. They do not simply relay global values, or values to be globalized. But they do help in presenting a starting

point from which to create a common orientation. A fundamental insight in the shaping of individual identity and collective group identity (ethnicity) is that identity develops significantly in interaction with others. Kwame Anthony Appiah has determined a problem here in terms of identity:

"Loving America has, in part, to be hating, or anyway disliking, America's enemies: amity is the daughter of strife. And the trouble with humanity, as an identity, is that, until the *War of the Worlds* begins, there is no out-group to generate the binding energy that every in-group needs [...]. The force of objection is not that we can't take a moral interest in strangers, but that the interest is bound to be abstract, lacking in the warmth and power that comes from shared identity. Humanity isn't, in the relevant sense, an identity at all" (Appiah 2006: 98).

This book proceeds from the maxim that any form of humanism must consider the conditions of its own feasibility. Those who want to establish global forms of behaviour, or interaction or value, need anthropology. Each and every normative intention of humanism needs the descriptive knowledge of facts, though any knowledge of facts does not in any way give us then values!

I assume that any direct search for cross-cultural values would become too overwhelming for us and would lead to a certain amount of wishful thinking. Because we need a common orientation, shared norms and values, we tend to see them all too easily in other cultures rather than in fact taking the time to really search them out. When they are difficult to find, we become frustrated by the search while facing strong resisting forces as well. This is true especially when we are dealing with moral universals. There is a history of the exporting of western concepts of morality that we need to consider in every discussion of humanism and cosmopolitanism (Köhler 2006; Allolio-Näcke 2009; Zimmermann 2009; Nederveen Pieterse 2007: 156p.; Sznaider 2010: 11; and Toulmin 1990). One's own historical experiences are too quickly categorized as universal. The danger of equating the values found elsewhere with the values of our own kind is always a risk in such undertakings. It is a danger that occurs in the work of such groups such as the World Social Forum or in a "radical ecumenism" that not only calls for tolerance and a "cosmopolitanism from below" but also for the common humanity in all religions (Hernandez 2010: 222). This leads then understandably to counter impulses. Many representatives from different religions fear a homogenizing of belief or a reducing of morality to a common level. They repudiate certain values as only supposedly universal and see them in fact as imperialistic. This is more so the case when we are dealing not only with values and norms but with rights as well. Who so attempts to uncover human rights in Confucianism, Buddhism or in Islam will often be forced to read the religious sources in an unconventional manner, choosing a minority interpretation or at least defending a more controversial reading of religious texts, controversial that

is from the point of view of the culture from which it comes (Barnhart 2001: 47; Hood 2001: 96).

As with Paul Ricoeur, I assume that the claim of universality for a few central values such as the inviolability of the body, and the subsequent rejection of torture, as something worth upholding and worth putting forward as a topic for discussion. This may sound paradoxical, but in light of the culturally fragmented nature of the world, realistic. A sensible goal would be to search for that which Ricoeur terms “inchoative universals” (Ricoeur 1996: 350), or universal values that are “standing at the beginning,” of becoming universals, or are taking on the form of universals. The universal, historical, and culturally specific are intertwined in these few universals. They therefore have the potential to produce a cross-cultural consensus. Only through dialogue between people of different beliefs will we be able to decipher which of these alleged universals turn out to carry the values that are recognized by the majority of cultures in the world. The basic assumption has to be that any culture that appears strange to us at first will end up offering valid universal insights or understanding. This is a fundamental and important recognition. Only after what most likely will be a long process of intercultural dialogue will we find the moral depth of these values being validated.

Up until now no one has empirically proven the existence of certain values that are in fact universal, or shared throughout the world. It is, as mentioned already above, less than realistic for us to search directly for shared values. A more modest endeavour would be in the search for moral principles that we might call “second best.” As we remain uncertain as to which values might in fact be shared, we will search more specifically for emerging moral universals. They are “second best” because they cannot be defended through an absolute and rational argument, but rather through available cultural standards (Margolis 1996: 207pp.; Barnhart 2001: 57). We are searching for moral universals that are most likely to be seen as having the greatest potential of being “projected” in the conceptual construction of the world (Goodman 1978: 125pp.). Through dialogue, emerging values could become incipient universals as they increasingly encompass more and more cultures and are found anchored in respective local traditions. It would not be a disaster if, at the same time, attitudes continue to vary in the world.

To establish an inclusive humanism, it is important not only to focus on values as such, but to understand the context from which they come. For this reason, I will concentrate on general questions in this book concerning which similarities or likenesses exist in the fundamental life patterns of people across all variety of cultures, despite the unique particularities of each individual existence. I will also address the question of common worldviews that rest behind certain values. This is a condition that should make a *Fusion der Horizonte*

("fusion of the horizons") possible. I will do this from a primarily anthropological point of view grounded in the present day. Current ways of life will be the focus here. Now and again historical aspects will be touched upon in the following pages, as it is a weakness in humanistic and cosmopolitan debates to remain non-historical. A global humanism, which responds to current world dynamics, might not primarily be constructed out of cultural tradition, but must consider it nevertheless (Schmidt-Glintzer 2006: 3; Antweiler 2007c).

## **Egalitarianism and Cosmopolitan Correctness are not Welcome Here**

In terms of dealing with strangers or "others" in society, and particularly with reference to the media, I want, as a cultural anthropologist, to contribute to a scientifically based subversion of such notions of culture that create social facts rather than clarify them. I will deal with culturalization, or ethnicization, or the widespread attitude of seeing everything through "cultural" or "ethical" causes. I am basically interested in presenting an integral view, cultural understanding and a comparative perspective. In our culturalized and mediatized society, we may be able to contribute something to de-essentializing, de-ethnicizing, or deculturalizing current views. Anthropology should encourage everywhere a more integral or systematic manner in regarding culture (Bruck 1985; 1997), instead of making culture into a summation or an appendix of facts, for example, in the way of speaking and thinking in terms of "cultural factors".

When we are dealing with cultures, the human being, being human and humankind, we are basically handling a hot potato. This is true for my particular concentration in anthropology and its core concept: culture. Culture has always been a difficult term, while today the use of the word is more sensitive than ever (cf. Müller 2003; Hauck 2006; Moebius 2009; for a classic look at the subject, see Niedermann 1943). In writing this book, I am not only moving over quite an expansive terrain, where one never feels really quite comfortable, but also across territory that might include a few minefields along the way. Therefore I would also like to state explicitly what I do not intend to do with this book. It is not my goal to argue that in this interconnected world we are all sitting in the same boat. The image would only be applicable if we are thinking of a lifeboat and it is made clear that some of us are sitting in the safer inner part of the boat, while others are hanging on the outer planks in danger of falling overboard. The metaphor of the world as a "village" is not accurate, since a village without a mayor or chief is no village. This book is not a plea for or against globalization, or for or against cultural homogenization. It will not become a polemic for cultural under-

standing and will not become an advertisement for inter-religious dialogue. I also think that we need a minimum in sympathy or a globalization of sympathy in a world of distant neighbourhoods (Stichweh 2007; Sloterdijk 2007: 9). In this book, I am primarily interested in a scientific taking of stock. I want to offer evidence and theoretical findings from anthropology that could contribute to the foundation of a realistic humanism. For some time now, we have been able to determine concrete forms of “cosmopolitan empathy” (Beck 2004: 13). Another point is to encourage people to act as world citizens and show the same amount of empathy to all human beings as they would to their families and their close neighbours. This is, from the observation deck of anthropology, unrealistic. But with this backdrop in mind, I am in fact sympathetic toward certain sparing or prudent and anthropologically informed ideas of cosmopolitanism.

The focus of this book is to describe and analyse commonalities in cultures. These will be discussed throughout in the context of diversity. I employ the use of open comparisons in my analysis of commonalities, similarities or differences in cultures. A global humanism can and should not act to reduce or level out differences. That would only silence non-Western voices. I am against any type of “reductive comparison” (Yousefi 2009), which either contrasts different cultures in an exaggerated form, emphasizes the exotic, or makes everything equal or the same. Comparisons allow us basically to determine likenesses, similarities or differences. A comparison does not have to equalize its subject matter; rather, it helps us to see particularities in something with more focus or accuracy. If a comparison remains open to interpretation, and goals and measure of comparison are given, then I consider the undertaking legitimate, also and especially in the cultural sciences (Lutz et al. 2007). Apples and oranges can be compared, even when we are talking about culture.

Just as the insistence on difference leads us to lose our focus on things that may bind cultures, so too is it ineffective to try at levelling out the playing field. Differences will always remain, even concerning the most fundamental questions. This is true with regard to how we deal with life before birth or the importance we give to the individual. The levelling out of difference is not a realistic option. Neither humanism nor cosmopolitanism should be concerned with producing premature unity in Europe or forcing the rest of the world into a normative construct (Delanty 2009). Always lurking behind concepts of unity is what has characterized the nature of Christian comparison since the Colonial period as an “angry judgement of unity” (Solé 1982: 114). With regard to cosmopolitanism, I will mainly address problems and opportunities in intercultural dialogue. The more recent cosmopolitan discussion neglects the cultural aspects. Concrete political questions of institutional cosmopolitanism, or even a cosmopolitan political agenda, such as democratization, participation in a civil society or politics involving a world order will only be touched upon in this book

(see, e.g., Cheah/Robbins 1998; Habermas 1998; 2004; Cheah 2006; Beck/Delanty 2006; Mouffe 2007; Archibugi 2008; Held 2010).

I am not going to be blowing the bugle here promoting the now popular multiculturalism bashing. A moderately universalistic perspective must not stand in opposition to cultural relativism. At any level, I am offering a serious warning here against extreme forms of cultural relativism, which can easily mutate into cultural racism (Terkessidis 2010: 113–118). Perspectives from the camps of universalism and cultural relativism belong inseparably together. We are dealing here with patterns in diversity. Just as cultural diversity, which has been observed everywhere, does not negate the occurrence of commonalities, so too are we not trying to play universals off of cultural diversity. The subject matter of this book is not to point out that the things binding cultures are simply features we share as members of the species *Homo sapiens*, even if these features are far from trivial. We are also dealing with commonalities that occur and reside on the level of societies, or cultures. Quite a few of these cultural universals fall back on biotic commonalities of species that all humans share as individuals. But cultural universals are not at all reducible to simple biology.

Speaking openly, without censure, is a given in academia today, although we cannot help but notice the powerful influence of political correctness. We find it in the rare cases when, in the cultural sciences, positions are held concerning the differences among the sexes that are not considered part of the radical constructivist mainstream. As a means of strengthening the position of minorities or of encouraging recognition and respect, a moderate level of political correctness is of course reasonable. Strict forms of the same, though, are anti-Enlightenment. They hinder good science as well as sound politics. It is therefore my wish to avoid creating a new kind of correctness, by way of a humanistic and cosmopolitan-motivated search for commonalities and ties among cultures, a search which in the end merely points out trivial cultural differences, allowing only “Western culture” to be criticized. We do not need to add to the already exaggerated forms of political correctness with a new kind of *cosmopolitan correctness*, or a CC added to the PC.

## Humanism Informed by Anthropology: The Argument

This book is meant to be a contribution to an inclusive humanism. A central question in the pursuit of a new and non-Westocentric humanism goes as follows: What do we owe strangers by virtue of our shared humanness (Appiah 2006: xxi). I tend toward a monistic and materialistic approach. As an anthropologist, who is expressly interested in the “whole human being,” I have, along with specialized research goals, clearly more generalized interests as well.



Within the cultural sciences and humanities, I maintain, in comparison to the majority of my colleagues, a strong universalistic approach. I am interested not only in the specifics of and differences in culture, but also similarities and likenesses between cultures. I regard these patterns of likeness always within the context of amazing diversity.<sup>1</sup> This book was developed from the body of two earlier works, one in which I presented a comprehensive study on the topic of pan-cultural likenesses. The history of research was the focus, as well as the broad range of universals, and systematic and methodological questions (Antweiler 2009a). In the second book, which is shorter and intended for a popular audience, I examined selected cultural universals (Antweiler 2009b). The present book discusses normative questions as a means toward application: How can universals be made useful for a non-Western humanism? I am refining humanism with the cultural comparative perspective on universals and with cosmopolitan positions.

Chapter 1 prepares the reader for the subject matter of this book with a story. I tell of first contact between groups of people who are culturally very different from another but who do not have an explicit cultural concept of strangeness. With this example, as a kind of ground zero of Anthropology, it becomes clear what would make intercultural contact easier and what are the problems associated with it. With the example of the universal aspect of mimic and gesture, which become apparent in this initial contact, I consider the possibilities of cross-cultural understanding.

Chapter 2 provides information on the scope and multi-faceted nature of cultural diversity that needs to be addressed in humanism. I demonstrate that culture should not be reduced to a discussion on difference and I argue that cultural theories should not be fixed on differences between (ethnic) cultures, national cultures and great cultures (civilizations). Even more so than has thus far been the case, these theories must, on the one hand, consider diversity within cultures and, on the other hand, from within pan-cultural communities. Moreover, I explain here the current anthropological understanding of culture and ethnic groups and present ethnicity as a collective “we”-awareness.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the possibilities and limitations of cosmopol-

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1 In my academic career I have mainly dealt with subject matter that is more in line with traditional cultural anthropology than with questions concerning universals. My empirical research interests include culturally specific cognition, regional forms of urbanity, and regional cultural change and transformation. I have explored these topics in localized studies on the basis of intensive fieldwork in South Sulawesi, Indonesia (Antweiler 2000, 2004). My interests in the natural sciences go back to my studies in geology and palaeontology before I began studying anthropology. Biology with an emphasis on evolution was also my minor at the time. These different interests of mine have coalesced in theoretically based studies on cross-generational cultural change, or social evolution (Antweiler 2005b; 2010a; Antweiler / Adams 1991; Wuketits / Antweiler 2004).

tanism. Before I sound out the potential of an inclusive concept of humanity, I want to warn against succumbing to wishful thinking or favouring implicit values while searching for common values. I will demonstrate this danger by way of concepts of humankind such as "the human family" while also pointing out that, rather than defining humans through catalogues of attributes, we could consider the possibilities of looking genealogically at human beings, at the link between human beings of all generations through time. The central theme of this chapter is characterized by a discussion on newer cosmopolitan approaches, especially those from Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum. These writers are convincing with their argument that cosmopolitanism and humanism must take into consideration the realities of human beings and their cultures. These approaches, however, are not empirically constructed, which leads us, first off, to the question of human nature and, secondly, to commonalities in cultures which are relevant for a non-Eurocentric humanism. These pan-cultural universals form the central focus of chapters 4 thru 8. I return to the topic of human nature in chapter 9.

Chapter 4 presents universals as commonalities among human beings at the comparative level of cultures. I explain how these "universals," or pan-cultural commonalities such as incest taboos or norms of reciprocity, represent something other than biotic species attributes, or "human nature." I also demonstrate that there are causal connections between both levels. With respect to methodology, I describe comparison as a key method in a comprehensive anthropology. Comparisons serve equally in both universal research and in recognizing or detecting human nature. While anthropology looks at synchronic comparisons between ethnic groups, and history analyses diachronic comparisons between societies and civilisations, the comparisons of species, as practiced in behavioural research, primatology, socio-biology and evolutionary ecology, are important for an empirically based concept of the human being.

Chapter 5 discusses the essential structures in intercultural contact, structures that a realistic humanism must take into consideration. I will first demonstrate that the concept of unified humanity, in both the level of biology as well as beyond the level of ethnicity, has only a fairly recent history. For a better understanding into the particularities behind intercultural contact I will explain the problem of using words that include the prefix "inter." I also present the varying aspects and levels of a system of classification for intercultural contact. The chapter offers anthropological findings regarding pan-cultural patterns in the relevant humanistic areas of kinship, status, inequality, leadership and socialization.

Chapter 6 considers how the concentration of experience and behaviour operates on the group level all over the world. This type of ethnocentrism will be explained as a comprehensive attitude that is not limited to stereotypes or