

## ***Globalization versus Tribalization : The Dilemma at the End of the 20th Century***

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At the close of the twentieth century, the major intellectual, political, economic and cultural debate seems to bring to the fore the conflict between a strong tendency towards globalization on the one hand and the attachment of peoples and their leaders to national identity on the other. I am of the view that the tension between these two conflicting poles is the chief characteristic of our times. I do not intend to venture into prophesying as that would be claiming that one shall triumph over the other. The future is another matter altogether; though everyone wants to know what lies ahead, the future does not exist and cannot be predicted. Our effort is thus to analyze the present, as that in itself is, for the moment, effort enough. Mankind has suffered far too much in the twentieth century on account of prophetic ideologies, especially those that have chosen to focus on a glorious future rather than a sound present. Indeed, it is in the name of distant future bliss that the worst collective crimes have been committed. We would do better by concentrating on the present if we want peace, happiness and prosperity.

### ***1. Mondiology***

In our analysis, it is important to clearly define the conceptual tools and terms used. The methodological device we intend to employ can be compared to a looking glass through which we shall examine the present; our looking glass is called "mondiology". It is not a recognized discipline because each branch of the social sciences

has become so watertight that interdisciplinary communication is next to impossible. There is no approach capable of integrating economics, anthropology, sociology, history, esthetics and literature. It is this attempt to bring about a synthesis that I choose to call "mondiology". Certainly, such attempts have been made in the past; we have, for example, the work of the futurologist Herman Kahn in the sixties. Unfortunately, the failure of his forecasts lead to the negation of the entire approach. The approach as such was not at fault. The error lay in moving away from the present to venture into the future. Now if we accept mondiology, we shall find that it provides us with a matrix capable of interpreting current events and conflicts in a new light. The traditional conflicts-progressives versus conservatives, Right versus Left, East versus West-shall then not be as significant as the conflict between the tendency towards globalization and the tendency towards the return to roots or the rediscovery of roots. The distinction between these two is significant: rediscovering ones roots, unlike the return to roots, is the contemporary reconstruction of a tradition that modernity is diluting. To my mind the globalization-tribalization opposition can provide us with a refreshingly insightful interpretation of our times.

## ***2. From Material to Spiritual Globalization***

At the outset, I had said that terms needed precise definitions. Let us begin with globalization, which has found its way in every language. What does it mean? The most common usage is with reference to the economy. All economies of the world are supposed to be in a state of constant communication and no economic act can be independent of its international context. There are obviously a few economic activities to which this does not apply, especially local services, trade, arts and crafts. Nevertheless, globalization is the predominant trend and there will soon be no village in the world,

however far off, whose economic activities will not be directly influenced by those of another village at the other end of the earth.

Apart from the economic context, globalization refers to the rapid exchange of information. After the radio and television, the exchange of computerized information and information highways are creating networks which affect the lives of everyone, though in varying degrees. But the usual economic and information definitions are far from being complete. We have to look also at the cultural dimension and the openness of civilizations. Much more than just goods and information are being circulated. Economic and information highways bring with them individual and even spiritual ways of life capable of changing civilizations, cultures and beliefs. Today, globalization is not restricted to the economy alone; it controls the flow of information and consequently the way people think.

But is there anything radically new about globalization? The past is replete with events that seemed to anticipate globalization as we know it today. The history of mankind shows us that the impulse of globalization, like the temptation of tribalization, is an inherent part of human nature. From times immemorial, the conflict between the longing for wide open spaces and local entrenchment, the urge to discover and the need to look inwards, the outstretched hand and the closed fist, trade and war, exchange and autarky have coexisted within every individual and civilization. The entire history of mankind, should one want to view it systematically, can be summarized in this dual temptation. We shall now confine ourselves to some moments of history when the globalizing tendency had the upper hand.

An excellent example which comes to mind is Alexander the Great who left Greece two thousand three hundred years ago to venture into the East, Persia and India. His epic voyage was not just a military undertaking. Alexander did not want, as was the custom of his times and ours till not so long ago, to found an empire. As he

declared to his generals, fretting to see him cross the Indus River, his ambition was to abolish all frontiers and unite mankind. He showed his desire for unification by marrying the daughters of the kings he fought and taking on officers from the army of the adversary and more significantly by adopting the religious practices of his enemies. Alexander's quest was the great universal synthesis. But his Macedonian generals opposed this spirit of adventure and preferred to limit their empire, curb their ambition and enjoy the wealth they had amassed during their campaigns. So the tribal generals prevailed over Alexander and the tribal spirit, if we could call it such, prevailed over the spirit of globalization. In fact, in the course of history, each time the tribal temptation has clashed with the temptation of globalization, the former has constantly lost out to the latter. It would perhaps be a good thing to keep this lesson of the past in mind, even though it may not necessarily hold good for the future.

Let us stop a minute to think of Alexander's voyage. Even though he failed at the time, the voyage was not without consequences. Though at the time, the dream of globalization did not meet with success, in the centuries that followed, not only did the Greeks settle in India but Buddhist monks spread their knowledge and their religion to the western world. Globalization, even though inadvertent, leads to the intermingling of cultures.

Another episode, close on the heels of Alexander's journey, reminds us that the immediate corollary to globalization through the sword is globalization through the mind. Thus the Indian emperor Ashoka, after having won many a battle, understood that real unity could be achieved through the minds of men. He not only sent Buddhist missionaries to the Far East right up to China, but also to the West till Alexandria, a fact that is less well known. Ashoka's dream, as powerful as that of Alexander, is a premonition of what we see today: seemingly materialistic globalization naturally leads to idealism. Though the economic path seems to achieve unity, it can

only be complete through cultural channels. The desire to base globalization on the unity of minds can be found in contemporary theologies and ideologies. Let us recall that early communism, for Marx and later for Lenin, aimed at the unification of the world through a common interpretation of history for all societies. Marx's constant ambition was the upheaval of the world and universal communism.

In the earlier works of Lenin too it was clear that the communist revolution succeed in more than one country. This ideological goal, it has often been observed, was nothing more than the 19th century pseudo scientific positivist and most importantly metaphorical transcription of the Christian goal.

The Marxist world design was ambitious as the Christian one. It provided a metamorphosis or a metaphor for the Christian goal. Even today, there are traces of this goal, which the French theologian Teilhard de Chardin has defined with great clarity. De Chardin, who is also known for his work as an archeologist, conceived in the fifties, of world unification through the mind with the help of the new means of communication and information. He felt all human beings would communicate through the mind to form a common spiritual universe which he called the noosphere or sphere of thought. He obviously hoped that the noosphere would be Christian. But he was not absolutely certain. The information highways and Internet do confirm to a certain extent the prophetic assumption of Teilhard de Chardin. What remains to be seen is whether it is enough to place the means of communication and exchange at the disposal of humanity to bring about a synthesis of civilizations and cultures. This is not so certain. As we have said earlier, though the trend towards globalization is eternal and currently seems to have the upper hand, it is constantly being pulled down by the tribalization tendency and national identity.

### **3. The Nation-State Paradigm**

The term national identity is generally accepted to mean the coincidence of state-nation, culture and language. In fact, both national identity and nation state are intellectual and political creations that have appeared relatively late in the history of mankind. In the past, human societies were organized along the lines of the herd, the clan, the tribe, the principality, the kingdom or the empire. It is generally acknowledged that the nation-state is the natural if not ultimate result of these successive forms of organization. But to consider the nation-state as the end of evolution is to give history a definitive orientation and a posterior meaning. It is more a case of political rather than scientific theology. Just because the nation-state is the dominant form of social organization today does not mean that it necessarily took root in the preceding forms of social organization. Just that the nation-state is the generally accepted form of social organization does not mean that it shall not be overtaken by other forms. It is useful to recall that the nation-state appeared for the first time in the 18th century and that it is a purely French idea and incidentally British too. The nation-state is not the natural outcome of an evolutionary process but a willful political and military invention. Neither does it express the spontaneous desire of the people: it is a product of conscious thought, an intellectual construct in which poets and novelists played as important a role as war chiefs and politicians.

The nation-state is so unnatural that it could only be constituted, generally speaking, after a series of revolutions and wars. The example of 18th century France only goes to show how unnatural the nation-state is. When the French revolutionaries set about destroying the almost divine legitimacy of the former monarchy, they asked themselves how they were going to legitimize their own absolute power. They thus denied all former allegiances-local, provincial, reli-

gious and feudal-to replace them with a new concept, that of citizenship. The citizen is a philosophical invention. Citizens do have the right to individuality but they must cast it away to merge with the larger entity that is the nation. The nation, in such a philosophical edifice, is supposed to represent a kind of higher collective aspiration of individuals who have gathered together; what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the “general will”. The “general will” is not the sum total of individual aspirations, it goes beyond the will of the individual, transcends it and is superior to it. This philosophy was the forerunner of political democracy but also of contemporary totalitarianism. In practice, all the architects of nation-states, be it Napoleon Bonaparte, Mustafa Kemal, Nehru, Lincoln or the Meiji emperor, were quick to grasp that old allegiances had to be destroyed to forge new ones. More often than not the destruction was violent; violence against the local individual in order to create the national citizen. Sometimes physical violence was used, at others cultural violence. The unification of the nation-state also meant the suppression of local languages in favour of a common national language. We have seen in the 19th century and continue to see in the 20th the compliance of writers and artists, who invent the nation-state as a subject, with politicians, who use the myths thus woven to justify their policy of unification. The degree of difficulty in building a nation-state depends on two factors: geographical and civilizational. The nation-state seems well suited to cultural or linguistic units like Great-Britain, Korea or France. It is not as easy to achieve in regions fragmented by language or culture such as China, India, the Arab world and sub Saharan Africa. The nation-state of today continues to more or less coincide with an actual cultural, linguistic or economic unit. Nevertheless, it was in the name of the nation-state that the present day international order has been based starting with the League of Nations in 1920 and the UN Charter in 1945. In fact, the UN charter consecrates the nation-state as the only internationally

recognised political unit. This is fraught with consequences as all other forms of institutional organizations-principality, empire or clan-are condemned to die. It also condemns such clans, principalities and empires to split-Soviet Union, Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian empire-and embrace the nation-state. Now we have said that this takes place in a somewhat circumstantial fashion. Quite a few of the conflicts in the Arab world, Africa (Congo, Rwanda) and Yugoslavia have shown us that the nation-state is far from being perfect. It is thus possible to conceive of new institutional forms in the future which are better suited to the cultural and linguistic geography of peoples. However, the prevailing consensus is that the nation-state may not be perfect but it is still the best form of social organization known to date. This is the paradigm of the present-in other words, the rule that has been subconsciously internalized by the main players on the international scene. But we would do well to remember that no paradigm is eternal and that every paradigm is a product of History.

#### **4. *National Identity***

Do the nation-state and national identity coincide? The relationship, we have seen, varies depending on the country; however, the nation-state produces its own national culture where it had a prior fluid contours. Thus the national flag and anthem, military service, propaganda, political debate, by adopting the nation-state as the ultimate point of reference, create a national culture even though it may not have existed before. Any attempt to fragment the nation-state through loyalty to clan or tribe is immediately put down in the name of the nation-state with its superior claims to legitimacy. As a result, the nation-state, by exalting the people, can lead them on the road to prosperity, freedom and cultural creativity; but it can also repress to a large degree the economic, cultural and spiritual creativ-



ity of the very same people. Having said this, in most nation-states, the work of annihilating old identities and constructing a national legitimacy has succeeded well enough; individuals today identify first and foremost with the nation-state or at least put the nation-state before their traditional allegiances. However, this has to be qualified by cultural geography. We have broadly defined the features of the tendency towards globalization as well as that of people to organize themselves along the lines of the nation-state. Now let us examine in dynamic rather than static terms the way globalization and national rediscovery operate.

### ***5. Globalization or Americanization?***

First, globalization. My next assumption is radical, therefore likely to be challenged. Globalization ought to be called Americanization. Had there been globalization in the real sense of the term, this would have appeared as a kind of synthesis of all national cultures. Each people would have made its contribution; each religion too and each language would have provided some elements of its own in the formation of a universal language. But this is not what is happening. In the guise of globalization, the only model that is really going ahead is the American one. The political model is democracy but democracy of a certain kind; the economic model is the free market economy but once again a market economy of a certain kind. Globalization of American style does not however seem to be part of any imperialist plan. No hidden centre exists in the U.S. whose aim is to unify the world under the American banner. What we are witnessing is a natural, spontaneous reaction to economic and military power. The Americans, in a dispersed though globally coherent way, are spreading all over the world what seems to them universal. Behind such universalism, it is possible to detect an underlying provincialism. Thus the idealization of the American style market

economy by Americans excludes the possibility of any other form of market economy. The same holds good for democracy. Political analysts, like American leaders, tend to think that their Constitution is perfect and any Constitution that deviates from it is considered less democratic. In truth, their political life is only a reflection of their historical experience. Similarly, the American model of the market economy reflects the special nature of the historical experience and civilization of the pioneers and migrants who built the United States. The idealization of the entrepreneur, the preference for the individual over community solidarity are features inherent to American civilization, not to every market economy. The following needs to be emphasized: within the liberal philosophy that has the market economy and democracy as its basis tenets it is both possible and desirable to accommodate the cultural diversity of nations. This diversity does not demolish the fundamental principles of democracy or the market. That is why I maintain that globalization is, more than anything else, Americanization. Furthermore, I think it necessary to stress that apart from the political, diplomatic and economic aspects of such American style globalization, the United States is setting, whether consciously or not, cultural and even spiritual standards for the rest of the world. To understand this proposition, we need to remember the deeply religious nature of American society. The citizens of the United States generally consider themselves to have been chosen by God. The constant allusion to their direct relationship with the divine is contained in the American expression "Born again", untranslatable in any other language. This American religious experience evokes more than mundane individualism; it is the divinization of the Self. Though the United States claims to be a Judeo-Christian country, it seems to me that American society has invented a new religion, or perhaps a new paganism in which every individual considers himself to be a part of or in communion with the divine. In theology, the term used for this form of spirituality is

gnosis. Gnosis is today, perhaps more than Judeo-Christianity, the nascent religion of the United States. We may thus ask if the United States, like the Emperor Ashoka, is deliberately exporting the new American religion. It is in fact doing so through its preachers in many parts of the world, especially in Latin America but also in Russia and Asia. Such promotion of the new American religion could lead to fundamental changes in the national cultures of the countries where the missionaries work. And the preacher's sermon is not the only way the new American credo is being spread: images, cinema and music are doing the job more efficiently. To my mind, music more than Internet is currently the most powerful means of cultural penetration that the Americans have. Let us look in particular at music for the young, techno music for instance. Its effect is not confined to sound or rhythm; it is changing individual behaviour. One clear example of this, though seemingly trivial is significant: today people are dancing alone to techno music. In the classical European civilization, dance necessitated the formation of the couple. In today's society, when people dance alone to American music, it leads to the dissociation of the couple and the celebration of individual narcissism. I believe this is not merely anecdotal but has a deep significance, as it contributes if not to globalization then at least to the Americanization of the world. I had suggested, at the same time as Professor Benjamin Barber, author of *Macworld versus Jihad*, that the term *MacWorld* could be used to designate this export of the American model. The acronym, an easy play on words combining McDonald and MacIntosh, seems to express perfectly this model that adds to the material dimension, McDonald, the technical and cultural dimension, MacIntosh. Thus societies, nation-states and national identities are today confronted not so much with globalization as *MacGlobalization*.

## **6. *The Perils of MacWorld***

The MacGlobalization trend is a mixed one. Some aspects of it are positive. By serving as a vehicle for democracy, peaceful coexistence and economic prosperity, the United States is showing the way to progress to many countries where progress was unknown or unattainable. Consider the immediate past: globalization under the MacWorld Empire seems preferable to globalization under the Soviet Empire. This cannot be denied. At the same time, the fact that globalization is taking place in the garb of MacWorld presents serious disadvantages not just for other countries but also for the United States.

First, let us consider the drawbacks of globalization under the American Empire for the Americans themselves. When an Empire has no rival, all the hate tends to get focused against it. This could paralyze it militarily or diplomatically. Furthermore, the monopoly of MacWorld could make the peripheral nations reject the most positive aspects of MacWorld such as the market economy and democracy. In a unipolar world, there is always the risk of the best characteristics of American society being rejected en bloc on the pretext that they are merely its constituent elements. Thus a multipolar world seems preferable to a unipolar one even from the point of view of the United States in order to perpetuate the notions of democracy and the market economy, if these are the goals we truly cherish.

Besides, when an empire is alone and it imposes its way of life and thought it is hard to imagine that its leadership will never be in the wrong. It is thus in the interest of the American leadership as well as that of other nations to allow alternative decision-making centres, analysis and experiments to emerge and exist. Unity does not provide alternatives but competition demands that they be provided for. For this reason the unipolar world should be replaced by a

multipolar one. How this is going to happen is anyone's guess. We have to search for economic, political and social alternatives and establish decision making centers which do not clash with the United States but coexist with it. With alternative poles, it will be possible to experiment with new forms in politics, economics, even culture and religion, which may prove to be more productive for mankind than the American experience. There is nothing to stop the American model of democracy from being surpassed. There is also nothing to stop mankind from devising an economic model that is better than the free market. Both democracy and the market economy are just moments in the continuum of human experience. They are not necessarily the ultimate in human experience. The human mind is far too active to stop thinking: it is thus obvious that in times to come new utopias will appear. These may be destructive but they could well be creative too. Let us also remember that experience does count for something. Both democracy and the market economy are based on experience. They are not the products of fertile intellectual imagination. When all is said and done, there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the clock will stop at the global era, as Fukuyama states. Perhaps this is not even desirable.

### ***7.The Future of the Nation-State***

Suppose we accept that globalization is one of the salient features of our times, that it is synonymous with MacWorld, that MacWorld is not the end of history. Suppose also that we do want alternative experiments to compete with MacWorld, then which will be the framework: within which they can be carried out? Will it be the nation-state? And just how healthy are the nation-states of today? After having witnessed the emergence and proliferation of nation-states, it is possible to conceive, at the end of the 20th century, of this institutional form being supplanted by others. Though dissolution

does not seem to be the general case, some specific instances do come to mind. We are witnessing a splintering of nation-states from below. Be it Africa, the Middle East, or even Western Europe, Belgium (linguistic secession) for instance, and Italy (regional secession), in all these places there is a return to the province, the tribe or the clan. The nation-state can no longer fulfill the individual need for an identity. People see themselves as belonging to geographical, cultural or linguistic units smaller than the State. Very often, it is assumed that such balkanization is limited to traditional societies where the nation-state did not take root. The obvious example that comes to mind is Black Africa; the political frontiers inherited from the colonial period were not drawn to correspond with any identity. What is happening in Belgium and Italy is more disturbing: in Belgium, society is being fragmented on linguistic lines and in Italy, more than a hundred years after the unification of the State, a new divide between the North and the South is emerging. Thus, we might well ask whether even in modern societies like the United States or France, urban ghettos with a high degree of cultural, religious or ethnic homogeneity are overtaking the nation-state. The case of Yugoslavia is a good example. The creation of the Yugoslavian state was not more artificial than the creation of any other nation-state; nevertheless, religious and ethnic allegiances finally prevailed over the legitimacy of the central State. The endless conflict in Northern Ireland shows that the prosperity and democracy ushered in by the nation-state do not necessarily lead to the fading away of allegiances of a religious, or as in Ireland, quasi ethnic nature. The same is true for the Basque country in Spain. The continual balkanization of the new republics to the South of the former Soviet leaves on skeptical about their capacity to constitute themselves into nation-states.

The world is thus getting divided into two zones: a zone where the nation-state constitutes a stable form and a zone where the nation-state constitutes an unstable form. But the examples of Italy,

Belgium and Great Britain show that the line between the zone of stability and the zone of instability is a very thin one indeed. What is the rationale behind such fragmentation from below? The reasons given can be economic, as in Italy and to a certain extent Belgium, but generally they are related to the question of identity. Identity is an ambiguous term: it covers religious, cultural and ethnic identity. More often than not the notion of identity is an artificial construct imposed by political leaders or intellectuals; in each of these cases, religion, supposed ethnic or linguistic belonging legitimize a posteriori an identity invented by elites in quest of power. This was how many nation-states were constituted in the 19th century. The same compulsions of power may well be their undoing.

On the one hand, the nation-state is being overtaken from below. But this is also happening at the top with the creation of vast geographic blocks for economic reasons such as the European Union, NAFTA and MERCOSUR in Latin America. Then you have the ASEAN which is a military and diplomatic block; In each of these cases, such economic units cannot carry on unless they are reinforced by political will and a certain degree of cultural homogeneity. Europe in this context is a perfect example. The European Union was born of the desire to put an end to war through the creation of concrete economic solidarities. But fifty years after this initiative, it appears that concrete economic solidarities can only persist if sustained by political will and more so by the awareness of belonging to a common civilization, in this case, the European civilization. However, are generalizations possible on the basis of one example?

## ***8. The Conflicts of Civilization***

In the case of North America, it is difficult to see how the free alliance could lead to a political alliance or sense of belonging to a common civilization. The cultural barrier that divides Mexico and

the United States seems insuperable. However, some very good authors—here I am referring to Samuel Huntington in particular—are quite happily talking of the fact that nation-states have been overtaken by large civilization blocks. Such a prediction to my mind deserves to be questioned. It must be questioned because we do not really know what a civilization is or what its contours are; it must be questioned because it implies that civilizations will necessarily clash with each other; it must be questioned because it is not based on a practical analysis of present day conflicts. It is nonetheless clear since the Second World War, that most armed conflicts were not inter- but intra- civilizational conflicts. The Second World War like the first was born of conflicts among nation-states belonging to the same civilization. One could perhaps conceive of a time when conflicts will no longer take place among nation-states and that these will be replaced by a new clash of civilizations. Now we have to put this in perspective and view it in the light of what is happening. Be it Kuwait, Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, Africa, Central Asia, border disputes among China, Vietnam and Taiwan or between Korea and Japan, the clashes between culturally close peoples are always the most violent. This is an empirical fact, confirmed by anthropological studies: hatred like friendship is only possible between people of the same kind. Thus one of the most extreme examples of hatred in the 20th century, the radical anti-Semitism of the Nazis, first appeared in Germany, a place where the resemblance between German and Jew was the greatest. An immediate brother is more willingly exterminated than a distant cousin. There is nothing to indicate that this law of anthropology will change in the future and will lead to these famous clashes of civilizations.

Furthermore, the term civilization is not easy to define. When Huntington formulated the concept of Western Civilization, he did not include the possibility, though empirically observable, of an estrangement between the United States and Europe. To my mind, it



is not possible to speak of a truly unipolar western civilization: it seems more appropriate to talk of a multipolar western civilization based on nation-states or nation-state groupings. Huntington also mentions the African civilization. Now from the outside Africa might seem to be a homogeneous cultural whole, but the perspective is radically different when viewed from the inside by the populations concerned. The same holds true for the so-called Muslim population. Islam is not a civilization but a religion. In point of fact, Muslims have a greater sense of solidarity with their immediate cultural community or with the nation to which they belong than with a theoretical or generalized Islam. Islamic solidarity has not been evident when Muslims belong to different cultures: cultural allegiance has till now been stronger than religious allegiance.

This has been confirmed by the violent clashes that occurred within the Islamic world or those between Islam and neighboring countries. Take the case of Yugoslavia. Yugoslav Muslims are considered by their enemies the Serbs or the Croats as being Turks to the extent that they descended from the Ottoman Empire or because of their former allegiance to it. However the Turks did nothing to help the Yugoslav Muslims for whom they have no cultural affinity. On the other hand, when the conflict between the Russians and the Chechens erupted, the Turks ran to help the Chechens who speak Turkish and are culturally close to them. This is but one instance among many to show that though the notion of civilization is appealing to the mind, it is not so useful when we look at the ground reality.

### ***9. The Example of Korea***

When all is said and done, civilization as a concept seems to be extremely reductionist as it fails to take into account the diversity of our world. Take the case of Korea. Is it a nation-state, a culture or a civilization. In Huntington's scheme of things, Korea appears as an

element of a larger civilization, which could be the Chinese of Confucian civilization. Such a vision considerably impoverishes the cultural reality of Korea because it is neither wholly Chinese nor wholly Confucian, but constitutes an original whole. The relative weakness of Korea in the world can be attributed to the fact that its cultural originality is still not well known. There seems to be no point, in this specific case, of doing away with the concept of the nation-state and replacing it with another one. As far as Korea is concerned, I believe the bypassing of civilization is not on the agenda; the constitution of the nation-states is still incomplete, for the two Koreas have yet to be reunited. The Korean case is also interesting from the point of view of our problematic, namely the contradiction between globalization and national identity, and in this case, Koreaness. The conflict is clear to the extent that a sizeable number of Koreans, especially in the North, define themselves as much as anti-American as in relation to an ideology. Globalization as it is perceived in Korea has a distinct American flavor. In this specific case, there seems to be no need for a conflict between national identity and MacWorld. MacWorld could also engulf Korea; the other possibility is that MacWorld and national identity could coexist. In my view, all three scenarios are feasible, probably all three will live together somehow. Obviously, the best option would be the coexistence of MacWorld and Korea. This requires that we make an accurate assessment of what MacWorld is, on the lines I have suggested above. This also requires that we define what culture is, and more specifically what Korean culture is. Lastly, we need to distinguish between two definitions of culture: a living Korean culture on the one hand, and a museum Korean culture on the other.

As a concept, culture is as ambiguous as it is fascinating. The Korean culture exalted by the North Koreans is a kind of ossified museum, a graveyard of the past. Now it would be a pity to confuse culture with folklore; this would amount to denying the capacity of

contemporary creators to enrich their culture. Culture can be dead and embalmed, it can also be living. To me it seems embalmed in the North and living in the South. The vitality of the South comes from the confrontation with MacWorld. The most creative artists, the ones I consider contribute the most to Korean culture-I am thinking of Nam Jun Paik-are those whose national identity is in conflict or symbiosis, as one likes, with North American culture. This reflection on culture is vital for it is the way we view culture that determines whether coexistence with MacWorld is possible or not. Those who are the most stridently anti-American are defending, consciously or subconsciously, a museum culture, looking only to the past. The same holds true for language: the champions of pure language seem to forget that a pure language is a dead language. On the other hand, neologisms have enriched living languages in the past and continue to do so. Thus if one accepts my dynamic definition of culture rather than a static one, the coexistence of MacWorld and Korean culture becomes conceivable. Sticking to a static definition of culture makes conflict inevitable with every likelihood of Korean culture being engulfed.

### ***10. How to preserve Cultural Identity***

This model of coexistence between a dynamic culture and MacWorld is only conceivable if we distinguish between the body and the mind of a nation. The mind of a nation is a dynamic culture as I have defined; political economy is its body. In many nations, national leaders and intellectuals today use national identity as a bulwark against globalization and the United States. Their discourse would have more meaning if they would only think about the practical means and the material conditions needed to perpetuate this national identity. Now more often than not, the most strident anti-American rhetoric is also the most strident anti-liberal and anti-capitalist

rhetoric. But here there is a contradiction, for till such time as we do not get any information to the contrary or there is no more satisfactory experiment, the market economy is the best instrument we have to strengthen the body of a nation. The market economy is a kind of muscle-developing exercise for nations that wish to keep alive their identity. Conversely, it is not difficult to imagine what results from the combination of impoverishment and identity. In several African countries and in the Arab-Muslim world, cultural impoverishment goes hand in hand with economic impoverishment.

A cohesive strategy thus demands that a distinction be made between body and mind and that the most appropriate economic and political model be chosen to develop the body and serve the mind. The body-mind distinction is important. Then the market economy becomes the means not the end. Those who defend the market economy often consider that it is an end in itself. Such an attitude hampers countries from rallying around a common project and only makes them hostile to liberalism. Here perhaps is the main criticism that can be leveled against the European and North American schools and their disciples all over the world: free market advocates are too rational and underestimate the strength of popular desire for identity. The elite therefore have the duty to explain that in order to maintain and develop cultural identity and national solidarity one must acquire the means to do so by adopting the most suitable methods. The ultimate virtue of the market economy and political democracy is to make free spaces in which the creative impulses of the individual can express themselves with dynamism in the fields of economics, politics, culture and religion.

### ***11. The Multiple Identity Theory***

Here I wish to draw attention to the often artificially created conflict between national identity and globalization or MacWorld.

Simple words hide complex realities. If globalization hides MacWorld then national identity more often than not hides the will of political leaders or an intelligentsia to cling to power. This will to hold on to power tends to magnify conflicts and reduces human beings to their simplest dimension : that of a foot soldier. A case therefore must be made in favour of the infinite complexity of human nature. Man, it must be explained, is more naturally inclined to function at multiple levels of existence rather than a single level: he can be both rational and irrational, reasonable and passionate. He is also naturally inclined irrespective of civilization to identify himself in terms of his ties to the land, his relationship by blood, his family, his ancestors and finally his country. But we have also seen the other inclination at work : from times immemorial man has strived to break away from this entrenchment. Man therefore is rooted and uprooted. He is capable of assuming contradictory and above all multiple identities. Should I venture into prophesying I would say that in the future we shall see the quest for multiple roots and identities. Why should the allegiance to country come in conflict with allegiance to the world? Is it not possible to imagine that a single individual can belong to several concentric worlds? The only flaw such a hypothesis presents is that it seems work better at the level of the cosmopolitan elite than at the level of the masses. It could well be that the present social stratification is replaced by a society divided along the lines of a multicultural nomadic elite and entrenched sedentary populations. What such stratification can lead to is anyone's guess what with a nomadic elite controlling information and the economy and the sedentary population controlling political power. A sedentary country is the space in which political power is wielded while economic decision making is in the hands of the nomadic elite. When all is said and done, the sedentary-nomad conflict seems to be a better matrix to interpret the future than the globalization versus tribalization one. In other words, I would say that the globalization versus national

identity conflict is the superstructure which hides the nomad versus sedentary infrastructure.

### Question & Answer

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**Q.** How did you get acquainted with discussion in your life?

**A** In the case of France, it all starts with childhood, but you have to go beyond that. It has to do with the origins of the Western civilization. If you look at the Western development and the way we know it now, it all started with the religious discussion. Until about 15th century, Western Europe was like Asia: it was an authoritarian system with one religion and one power, the King being the master of religion and politics altogether. The debate occurred within the religious system by splitting Christianity and that was probably the beginning of discussions. Discussion began in the religious fields, went to universities (school of theology), divided families and then nations. We have to remember that it goes back far in the history. There is one characteristic of Korea which I find extremely important. It is that there are several religions competing together. I think this is the basis on which indicates that Korea is unlike any other countries in the region.

**Q** This is about dealing with unemployment. France now has a two-digit unemployment level. What are some lessons we can learn to deal with unemployment?

**A** To elaborate on the French and German experiences, we have a safety net that is so strong that it eliminates the incentive to look for a job. So, do not follow our examples. In France, it is a taboo to discuss the unemployed people in general. Thus, it is hard for the

government officials to figure out who these unemployed people are, why they are unemployed, or whether they are even looking for jobs. We have no strategic plans for unemployment, we have no idea how to cope with the problem. We even have revolts of unemployed people asking for a premium for being unemployed. And they get it because it is easier for the government to oblige than to have more headaches to deal with.

**Q** As you know, Korea has been divided into two parts for years. We would like to hear more about how globalization affects the reunification process of Korea.

**A** I have visited North Korea twice and found it a very fascinating country that should be kept as a museum. I mean, it is the only country left that is still working along totalitarianism. So, if you can keep it as a museum, maybe you can strike up some tourism for Korea. But seriously, what struck me is that there is not much difference between the people of the two Koreas. The political regime may be different, but the behavior—the way people are, the interaction between the natives and visitors, there is a certain warmth and cordiality with the North Koreans that shows that the impact of the regime has been quite superficial on the deep soul of the people. You cannot invent new people by a political regime. This is why reunification in terms of human relationships would not be much of a problem. The second thing is that North Koreans are afraid, afraid of everything. They are afraid of their own regime, their neighbors, foreigners, and especially South Korea. They have been brainwashed by the regime to think that the South is forever seeking the perfect opportunity to invade the North. What we need to do is reassure the North Koreans in many aspects.

The economic situation is worse than we think. The cities are empty because of lack of energy and fuel and people are flocking to

the country side. The industry is not working because of lack of energy and electricity. The army is not in a good situation either: they have no fuels to fly their planes or run their tanks, so the military risk is very low. So, reunification I think will be well-accepted by the North but less-accepted by the South because of the enormous unification cost. I think the solution is what is called the "soft-landing", by helping the North Koreans progressively to adjust to a new world. I think the nature of the regime is changing: they don't believe in the "Juche" ideology anymore.

**Q** What are the roles of the government and civilians in promoting the cultural image of the nation?

**A** The governments have a strong tendency to make a confusion between folk culture and culture. The foreign world is not so much interested in 18th century dancing and old music. They are fine but they are not so fascinating for the Western audience. We are much more interested in the people who are creating new things. Korea is very lucky that there are a very large number of great writers, painters, sculptors, and artists. France is very impressed by the strengths, qualities, and originalities of these creators, which is not the case with Japan. These artists need to be helped and developed because they are the ambassadors to the world that Korea never sent. It is the job of the government and the private sector. It might be difficult to sponsor them during these hard times, but I guarantee that it will be a great investment personally as well as nationally. Korea needs to utilize and develop its raw materials in self-promotion.

**Q** Is there any way that Asia and the EU can together counteract American unilateralism, particularly in the coming century?



**A** First of all, it is more like unilateralism and American imperialism. I don't want to be negative and use the term American imperialism. I don't think it is a good thing for the Americans because if it is too powerful and makes all the decisions, then the United States is likely to make some wrong decisions. You cannot make only the right decisions all of the time. So, it's not in the interest of the United States to have this monopoly. Secondly, it's not good for the United States because then it will become a scapegoat: if anything goes wrong in the world including this region, people will blame the Americans. Even though I do not recommend this book, in the final chapter of *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington conceives and observes a hypothesis where the rest of the world and China unites against the United States. It sounds a bit strange, but behind this stupid idea, there could be a concentration of hostility against the United States. So it would be dangerous for the United States as well as its good things: its capacity for innovation and education would be lost. So, it is very important to organize a multipolar world. How do we go about doing this? It is not easy. We are trying to do this in Europe by creating a unified Europe with one currency. I think it is a very important step. I used to say that it is the duty and the chance of my generation to build a unified Europe with a unified currency. If we cannot do this, then our generation would have been useless.

There is a field for cooperation between Asia and Europe to find some connections. I think in the future it would very possible to have a unified currency in this part of the world by some alliances between Japan, Korea, Taiwan and other surrounding countries. Of course, relationship with China will remain difficult but we must all work on this notion of a multipolar world, because it is for our collective interest.

**Q** What do you think the world community and Korea can do to get Korea out of the current currency crisis? You did mention the moral hazard problem since the world community through the IMF always bailout the bankers.

**A** Well, in a way, Korea is turning out to be the good pupil in the class. So there are arguments in favor of helping Korea, which other governments like Indonesia and Malaysia do not have. We have a joint economic and military interest: the South Korea is in a strategic position in this part of Asia. So, this is one of the factors which must be taken into consideration and which plays in favor of Korea.

There is no distinction between the strategic military position and the economic position of Korea. We know that Korea must remain a strong country because it plays a decisive strategic and military role in this region. So this is a part of your asset. secondly, you have a new leader in his "honeymoon" period, who is able to make the right decisions that the leaders of other Asian countries are unable to do. The role of the President-elect is very important because he will be able or unable to explain to the people the very nature of the crisis and what should be. What should be avoided at all costs is scape-goating foreign countries or some minorities within Korea. The mistakes which have been made were done collectively within and out of Korea. I hope the new President will not have the weakness to pinpoint some people and holding them responsible for the collective mistake. This is not the end of history, but it's a moment, a transitional period in the history of Korea. What Korea has achieved in the last forty years is quite impressive. Korea should take this opportunity to get itself into a more modern economy, more adapted to the demand and standard of the global market.