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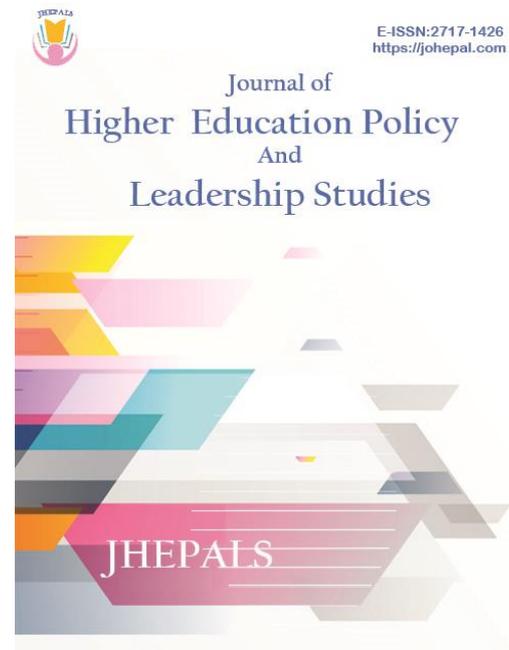
**Can Philosophy Lead Us
Out of the World
Calamities? The Role of
Higher Education**

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Abstract

Philosophy, as the study of knowledge, reality and existence to guide behaviour, emerged in different parts of the world at around the same time. Origins of Buddhism, Chinese, Greek and Indian philosophy are traced back to the 300 years beginning in the 8th century BC. These ideas shape the ways people live and think about life's big issues. Most people do not consciously articulate their philosophical assumptions and probably are unaware of them. However, conventions about the nature of self, ethics, knowledge and life goals are deeply embedded in our cultures to frame thinking and action. How does philosophy contribute to a better world? It is based on careful observation and critical analysis of ideas, concepts and statements, regarding rationality, equality, relativism, social construction, moral truth, justice and religious belief. Questions are epistemological- how secure is social scientific knowledge? Methodological- what ways suit the study of societies? Explanatory- what makes effective social account? & ontological- what assumptions are needed to research the social world? Normative social philosophy is the theory of justice, well-being and liberalism for organized thinking about values, ethics and social arrangements. Therefore, philosophy helps to understand issues that need solving for human progress and Higher Education has an important role here in promoting these powerful ideas to bring better acceptance of diversity.

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The Present World

As nations become globalised and integrated a loss of diversity is noted in lifestyles. Now, all large cities worldwide seem similar, with high rise buildings, shopping malls, McDonalds and Starbucks as certainties! Erosion of variety, however, is not seen in the way that different ethnic cultures think and believe for preserving their identity and customs. This thinking results from historical circumstances and philosophical traditions of different societies, which tend to resist change. While globalisation has led to a huge increase in movements of people and goods, there has been little transition and acceptance of ideas across borders.

Julian Baggini's book: *How the World Thinks: A Global History of Philosophy* (2019) suggests that we are more familiar with Indian *korma*, a classic food dish, than with the meaning of *karma*, the cycle of cause and effect. Karma theorises that what happens to a person is because they caused it with their actions. Thus, *material* overrides the *mind* in this example.

In a Western, industrialised, educated, wealthy, democratic society we forget that 3/4s of the global population live in Africa and Asia, where 70% exist on less than £10 a day. Understanding the philosophies of these societies expands thinking, says Baggini. He presents the South African concept of *communal interdependence*, called '*ubuntu*', as an example. The West views rights and rule of law as inviolable. However, *ubuntu* allows rule-bending because inflexibility must not get in the way of a just, peaceful solution to problems. Western thought sees this as corrupt. Another feature of cultures following *ubuntu* is that important decisions are reached by consensus. This is seen in Japanese schools, where all teaching and non-teaching staff meet before the beginning and at the end of a day to plan and reflect together (*Hansai*). Democracy needs agreement, or the powerful squash preferences of the less influential, with social unrest inevitable. Higher Education leaders have a role here in helping people to understand each other.

The value of **impartiality** was captured in Jeremy Bentham's maxim '*everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one*' - exploring equality of interests (1843, p. 9). Bentham was a 19th century jurist and political reformer, who focused on quality of life and what this meant. However, in much of the world the idea of treating everyone the same is bizarre. In Chinese Confucian philosophy, the moral responsibilities of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, rulers and ruled all differ. Roger Ames (2011), a Professor of Chinese Philosophy, describes Confucianism as '*role ethics*' because obligations differ depending on the part played in a community. Most people take this approach. You rarely find an idea in one culture that is completely unfamiliar in another, with the difference one of emphasis. Thomas Kasulis (2018), a Professor of Comparative Studies, suggests that what is *foreground* in one culture is *background* in another. Therefore, priorities of people differ and may give rise to conflict.

In reality, people believe they should treat family and friends differently to strangers. Many also see obligations to fellow citizens as greater than those for other nationals. Political battles over immigration are because governments do not acknowledge this and try to create a system based on idealised *universal* values, which are not wholly accepted.

Belief Systems

An interconnected world should be one of greater diversity, where nations and cultures are regarded as equal, with free movement of ideas as a progressive force. In practice, the world is becoming increasingly Westernized, with material goods the primary goal of life. More Western ideas are

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studied in Eastern universities than Asian ones and the latter not in European & North American curricula. Thus, is celebrating diversity leading to *relativism*?

The view of *relativism* is 'anything goes' with no right way for people to live and behave, whereas *pluralism* says that although some life styles and actions are wrong there are many ways to achieve a successful society. We should be open-minded but not afraid to review, reflect and refine *all* traditional ideas. However, many people dismiss alternative cultures and defend theirs, or believe they should not criticize other ideas but are quick to critique their own. If we do not understand what others believe and *why*, there is little chance of changing minds. Dismissing other beliefs as senseless is a sure way to be regarded as prejudiced. To live together, it is not necessary to agree on everything but differences must be accepted. When observing *all* traditions one notes indications of extremism as well as openness. Islam demonstrates free as well as intolerant societies throughout history. To avoid a clash of civilizations does not mean it must drop its religion or adopt a European position, but revive its mores of pluralism and tolerance.

Therefore, a range of approaches exist for making decisions that provide the best outcome for everyone (*utilitarianism*). You may also believe there are *universal rights* applying to everyone (*deontology*). Probably, you do things daily to feel good and not as duty or consequence (*virtue ethics*). Philosophers have developed many ways to decide if actions are right or wrong. Some identify one, valid, ethical theory – **ethical monism**. Others say it is impossible to take an objective approach because of personal feelings, culture & background – **ethical relativism**. An alternative to rigid monism & the 'anything goes' attitude of relativism is **ethical pluralism**, recognizing many moral truths which cannot be reconciled into a single principle. DesJardins (2006, 262-4) gives the example of two equally competent doctors prescribing different treatments, which does not mean all possible ones are valid. He points out the big difference '*between a good physician and a quack*'. In the context of environmental ethics, he argues that while there are areas of disagreement, strong consensus exists amongst people.

Ethical pluralism accepts there is more than one theoretical model for use, but differs from **relativism** as it does not view that all are equal. Morality is not just personal preference, as it is possible to judge some ideas/frameworks as better than others. Distinction is made between one person using various moral frameworks to make different decisions - **intrapersonal pluralism** and diverse people/cultures using dissimilar ethical systems - **interpersonal pluralism**. Whether we can follow more than one ethical theory is considered for relationships and decisions (Baird Callicott, 1990, p. 104-11). Callicott believes that **pluralism** allows weak/unscrupulous moral agents to choose principles favouring their own advantage. "With a variety of theories at our disposal, each indicating different, inconsistent or convenient or self-serving in the circumstances" (p. 11).

Before accepting **pluralism** as a compromise, what happens if different people follow many ethical frameworks in society? Could some lose out? Who is right or wrong? **Interpersonal pluralism** is encountered in today's multi-cultural societies. This presents difficulties, with views that there is not one '*correct*' decision to take but many '*incorrect*' ones. Each decision results in some people gaining and others suffering. Examining ethical issues behind each option enables clearer choices, starting from the position that *all* human lives are equal.

Problems of Pluralism

A problem of pluralism is inequality in distribution of resources - like money. Those with money have power. Thus, if political success depends on mobilizing resources, some groups will always have unequal advantage. A second issue is the contradiction that society works best when ordinary

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citizens govern the least, although elite leaders do not have unlimited authority and must attend to public opinion. Sceptics say 90-95% of citizens are *spectators* not *participants*. Individuals are not free until learning how to make decisions and taking responsibility for choices. Emphasis on individual/group competition means pluralism fails to motivate *personal development*. Individual growth & public involvement must be encouraged.

John Rawls (1993, 1971) proposes '*reasonable pluralism*', with people subscribing to conflicting moral and religious doctrines and willing to cope with disagreements. Communities have many strands, which need careful weaving to produce an effective whole. If diversity is not well managed some groups feel marginalized and oppressed to create conditions for conflict and violence. Focus must be on what unites and not divides people. There is unity for *peace and security, personal development, rule of law and human rights* – all requiring equal consideration. The challenge is competing claims/entitlements – justified and defended but not compatible. Europe has established legal systems to protect minorities but pluralism is seen as a threat. Social prejudice has risen against religious and cultural minorities, but a fall in trust and confidence in political institutions has led to extremists. Mutual respect and tolerance must be taught and fostered through constant public dialogue to combat fear. Different traditions should be regarded as strength and harmony not weakness and discord. Rawls (1993, 1971) suggests that for a fair society, individuals must have...

- Liberties and rights – to vote, hold public office, have free thought and speech with fair legal treatment,
- Power and opportunities to develop and progress to compete fairly in society,
- Income and wealth for a comfortable life offering some choices,
- Conditions for value, self-respect and equal treatment.

For these to occur, people behind '*The Veil of Ignorance*', must achieve: 1) *the best possible life which does not harm others* 2) *ability to improve position*. This thought experiment is potent as opinions of just and unjust are formed from experiences – family, race, gender, class, education, appearance, career etc. On the other side of the '*Veil of Ignorance*' these do not exist, so the resulting society should be fair. Imagine your task is to develop a new social contract. Although not able to minimize all personal biases and prejudices, Rawls suggests you imagine yourself behind a '*Veil of Ignorance*' to reduce them. Shermer (2016, p. 12) said about the fairness principle: '*When contemplating a moral action, imagine that you do not know if you will be the moral doer or receiver and when in doubt err on the side of the other person.*'

A mix of policies and institutions manages relations between indigenous and immigrant groups requiring strong political will. However, this view is not rooted in reality because corruption and crony-capitalism fuel anger within and across nations. Dialogue, reform and reconciliation give people access to power as an antidote to destructive winner-takes-all politics. There are no short-cuts to the following requirements:

- Government with full executive powers to establish a neutral environment
- An inclusive national dialogue that includes all sectors of society
- Review of the constitutional order and one legal system with rules for all
- Continuity of government institutions with well qualified, knowledgeable staff
- Commitment to accountability, national reconciliation, equality and justice.
- Gender/race equality, protection of vulnerable groups and provision of necessary aid

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Policy advice on pluralism is important for creating stable, fair societies where people can be fulfilled and live in harmony. Solutions must be tailored for the unique situation of each society.

The Social Contract

The present situation corrodes the social contract that we are all subject to common rules and equal opportunities. (Sage, 2017, p. 34). Frankopan (2015) provides historical evidence showing that when the majority feel they are losing out things can turn ugly. If present trends continue, the early 21st century will be marked as a time when free societies faltered, because they were weakened by divisions. Worldwide, dictators, autocrats, terrorists and corrupt opportunists demonstrate that assumptions of Western freedom could be mistaken. How does a liberal society deal with illiberalism? By becoming less liberal, says Professor Furedi (2021). Although free societies give chances for all, they need strong leadership and protection, along with effective communication and relationships and a determination to be united.

Consistent approaches to maintaining evolved principles must be followed by all, according to Herodotus, the Greek Philosopher and '*Father of History*' (see Godley, 1920 on Herodotus). He used systematic investigation to study societies over time. An aspect that interested him was movements of people – observing that they must *think, live, look and behave in similar ways* to avoid suspicion and rejection when incomers to new nations. Recently, a Muslim schoolgirl was sent home from a UK school for wearing a skirt that was too long and not the branded one or trousers of uniform rules. If regulations are flouted there are penalties. Some insist this erodes individual rights and freedoms but they allow and support divisions. In diverse societies agreement is problematic unless there is *acceptance of the national history, traditions, values and lifestyles*.

There is conflict with people not accepting equality, tolerance, respect and disagreement. According to the Olchawski (2016), 20% of 25-34 year-old British males believe female equality has gone too far. This was supported by a politician, who announced in the European Parliament that women are weaker, smaller and less intelligent than men, so must earn less. When made a professor, I discovered I was paid £20,000 less than equivalent males, although having more qualifications and work experiences. This is common amongst female academics in many universities. How far do we go in abrogating or compromising principles, standards and laws to extinguish threats to a way of life and loss of identity and equality? British laws for only one wife are not enforced in cultures with a tradition of multiple partners, with Sharia Law allowed in the UK to support this custom. Rules for some and not for others create unequal practices and divisions. The Greek philosophers, Socrates and Plato, said democracy brings tyranny. Giving rights and freedoms guarantees people assert views and confront others with different values, attitudes and customs. This happens everywhere. Studying for a first degree, our psychology lecturer asserted that a benevolent autocracy was the only government that worked! How can education encourage acceptance? Honest, open talk and empathetic communication helps solve conflicts, with studies in philosophy important in all subject areas.

Those used to living how and where they wish must realize that these are not guaranteed rights in today's world if those in power disrespect freedoms. It is not possible to understand or uphold European ideas of law, liberty, government, education, family morality or culture without tracing relations to Christian roots and civil peace. Effects of Islamic presence in the West – attacks on free speech, segregation of males and females (*with more of the latter covering faces*), radicalization in schools and Jihadist violence - demand a firmer idea of what our civilization is and

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how to preserve it by conforming to national principles and laws. Somehow, education, as responsible for teaching society mores, must develop an identity, value-system, life-style and challenges acceptable to all cultures, whilst retaining national principles and traditions. This is a vital role for education at all study levels.

People with shifting identities and social norms, need a strong anchor if not to feel outcasts in free societies. *The Good Immigrant* (Shukla, 2016) assembles ethnic voices in Britain today, revealing how it feels to be regarded as different and treated suspiciously by a country they think does not accept them. There are foreign practices, however, that are anathema to British values and traditions, such as multiple wives, child brides and virginity testing ceremonies. Acceptance is two-way and 21st century illiterates will be those who cannot *learn, unlearn* and *reflect* on experiences, to evolve flexibility for surviving changing circumstances. This means committing to communicating and implementing principles that enable cultural integration.

Issues with Social Models

Sweden regards itself as a humanitarian super power and has welcomed refugees into their nation. However, it has not been able to fully integrate them, because significant numbers lack the education necessary for entry-level jobs so cannot get work. This has created a shadow society with its own moral codes and legal system. Parallel courts deal with underworld crimes, like a failed, attempted murder, with fines equivalent to £50,000. The Swedes have, therefore, cut refugee welfare to discourage immigration. Their social model, created from good intentions, has resulted in a violent underworld out of police control. The same is seen in America, with an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants, shadow societies, mafia-style courts, gangland killings, attacks on Sheriffs and conundrums like '*child brides*'. Trouble is buried, with politicians dismissing problems and failing to face reality. Popular risings result from ignoring feelings on issues affecting lives in negative ways.

At the start of 2000, Pim Fortuyn, a Dutch academic, formed an anti-Islamic party, which gave rise to a populist movement. He did not oppose immigration on a racist basis, but said the Muslim religion was too dogmatic to integrate into Western culture. In 2002, Fortuyn was murdered by a Dutch environmentalist for promoting such ideas. A liberal proposed an illiberal view and was shot dead by another liberal. Although illogical, this demonstrates that mass immigration is not just about jobs but **identity**. To some, racial or national identity is bigoted, but for others rooted in place and tradition. Globalization portrays free movement as removing loyalties to birthplace values, but this is not how humans react. Identity questions eclipse reason, producing fear if immigrants, with differing views and lifestyles, swamp existing populations. This is not to suggest that incomers cannot integrate, as Rotterdam's Moroccan Muslim mayor has done. However, not everyone wishes to assimilate, as they view that original identity is vital to preserve with specific lifestyle and customs part of this (Sage, 2020).

Wide discussion of such issues is discouraged by the '*opinion corridor*' into which public debate is confined. Those stepping outside to talk about immigration problems risk accusations of bias. Some in public life and the media, in spite of holding other views, see the future as an extension of the past, even though the present crises are attributed to rapid change, increased people movements, secularization, family collapse, capitalism/neo-liberalism* decay, technology worship, establishment breakdown and overpopulation. The world is in a continual rumble with conflicts, prejudice, poverty, inequality and limited understanding between people and nations. Some individuals try to outwit and beat their fellows to gain power and so produce unrest. We should value

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diversity's range of ideas from which problems can be approached and solved. Too much liberty, however, has produced fascism, so it may be wise to control immigration and prevent countries reshaping to lose their traditional identities.

Identity Crisis

An identity crisis is faced by some who now live in democratic Britain, but originate in autocratic nations. British principles of liberty, equality and fraternity do not always fit comfortably with their heritage norms. These arise from different national histories, with suppression of women, sexual orientation and majority ideas. Such people find themselves in torrid seas without the anchor of knowing who they are and what they should think and believe in their present community. In homes, traditional values reign, often conflicting with school and society norms (Sage & Matteucci, 2021, In Press). Culture clashes are common among people of different origins, thinking they are right & others wrong. European identities are mostly built on ancestry & Christianity. Today, a disinterest in Christian principles of respect for others means we are not energetic in creating wise, safe, moral pro-social codes. There is no longer a strong central code for life based on *agreed virtues* of love, compassion, forgiveness, humility, respect, reverence, beauty & equality. '*Do as you would be done by*' is rarely uttered today or reinforced.

Policy makers talk of a national identity founded on liberal, universal values, which mean little to people reared without a concept of what liberalism means. To these folk, it means living as you want, with freedom to do so, even if conflicting with host norms. There is a lack of what our historical identity has passed down, which extremist groups provide with lurid behaviour like bombings and beheadings. Incomers must be appraised of the past and why principles and identity have evolved, so they understand the reasons for indigenous population lifestyles.

There was a famous quote from G.K. Chesterton, the author: '*democracy means government by the uneducated, whilst aristocracy means government by the badly educated*'. British nobility, as independent citizens, traditionally stood for freedom and so restrained the tyranny of rulers and citizens. They are now replaced by the new wealth of industry, with commoners given titles because of political party support. In the House of Lords, aristocrats are greatly reduced and replaced by business people, media-types, spin-doctors, political hacks and donors with agendas. Who will dampen forces of excess and extremism now impartial political parties or special interests have diminished? Where will minds be nurtured? Academia should be the answer, as independence of mind is the reason for their existence. However, Furedi (2021) points out that universities have lost their climate of freedom, tolerance and experimentation and given way to political correctness and an illiberal, preachy atmosphere, where a '*cancel culture*' reigns (*staff removed if not agreeing with management*). The magazine '*Spiked*' found in a 2017 survey that 90% of British universities restrict speech, censor specific ideas, speakers, language and texts, implementing '*safe spaces*'. Effects for a fair society are disturbing. In 2017, Durham University Islamic Society handed out booklets saying '*every Muslim should be a terrorist*', during a *Discover Islam* week. Media gave support for this terrorist propaganda, but have clamped down on many Christian views.

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Is a good society possible?

It has been suggested that community has 2 elements: 1) *a web of relationships among groups that reinforce each other* 2) *commitment to a set of shared values, norms and meanings to produce an identity culture*. Hard questions must be asked about what is valued and works:

- Deceleration of population growth to make a sustainable economy easier
- Renewable resources that cannot be consumed faster than they are regenerated
- Non-renewable resources that must be reused/recycled - creating a circular economy
- Fairness of wealth distribution to generate national social and economic stability
- Development focusing less on ever-higher consumption and more on quality of life

The English political theorist, John Stuart Mill, contributes to this debate. He is considered a leading expert on the philosophy of the English language. A mental breakdown in 1826, at age 20, led Mill to conclude that his academic, analytic education had done him no favours. He was home educated by his father and busy learning Greek when only three years old. After the breakdown, he became interested in holistic human development, viewing personal and practical abilities as important as academic ones. Promoting language as the instrument of complex thought and writing about *word denotation* and *connotation* led him to study issues about communicating meaning. He concluded that higher-level language and thinking were only possible through **inductive reasoning** - generalising from observation and experience and able to articulate this to others. This underpinned his views about *nonconformity, diversity, equality & individuality*. Mill felt that education focuses on a **deductive** logical, but narrow predictive approach. **Inductive reasoning** aims at developing a theory, moving from specific, observations to broad generalisations, while **deductive reasoning** at testing an existing one. Thus, **inductive reasoning** is bottom-up, creative thought, whilst **deductive** is top-down, critical, logical thinking. Research (Sage, 2000) shows how a UK focus on deductive approaches in teaching and assessment contributes to narrow views. **Inductive thinking** should begin all decision-making, as it creates a wider interpretation from which to move into the logical steps of the **deductive** approach for the implementation stage. The fictional character, Sherlock Holmes was a master of induction** (see end note).

The Japanese promote these views. They suffered mental traumas when their economic bubble burst in the 1990s and concluded education was too academic, with insufficient focus on personal development for adaptability and resilience. The new policy puts *communication and relationships (the moral curriculum)* to the fore of learning, with children commonly teaching to practice both *internal* and *external* language-thinking processes. On a research project, Sage, Rogers and Cwenar (2007) saw a 7 year-old boy teaching science to a class of 60 with 8 experiments judging the effect of one substance on another - for 12 groups of five. In his school, pupils teach twice a month on any subject they like, to learn how to communicate to diverse audiences. Assessments found Japanese students 4 years ahead of UK ones at every level, showing a greater communal focus in education, with students working on projects/tasks together.

Universal not Inclusive Education

Cuba does not favour an *inclusive education* with everyone following a common curriculum. They have a **universalistic** approach, with learning suiting student interests, abilities and national needs.

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Thus, Cuba values personal, practical and academic competencies equally, with active learning engaging students and enabling them some control. Another principle is the importance of *communication*. Unless there is understanding of how this develops and breaks down the teaching of and interaction with diverse groups is impossible. Heads of pedagogical institutes have a first degree in communication and medical sciences, a masters in psychology and doctorate in pedagogy, with speech pathologists holding key positions.

As a poor nation economically, prevention of health & education problems is a Cuban strategy. A more autocratic government style means advice is followed by citizens. Parents must attend the early learning programmes at polyclinics, where children are monitored and supported. This means less health and education problems to disrupt life routines. British experts say their advice is often ignored. The result is that the UK has many learning, behaviour and health problems, with serious consequences for life quality. Also, greater equality of salaries in Cuba ensures less disparity between families and a more congenial society (Sage, 2008).

A Cuban slogan: *Hasta la victoria siempre: Ever onwards to victory (Che Guevara)* is a mantra for life, which focuses strongly on the *mind* rather than *material* goals. At a time in history of severe world problems, this philosophy regarding living and learning has much to recommend and inspire. In a *periodo especial (special period)* of Covid calamity we can reflect that Cuba has achieved higher health and educational standards and equality of life than Britain. It shows how to cope with uncertainty, by *cultivating minds* and *manners* rather than *materialism*. In Britain between 45-65% of visits to medical doctors were for mental health issues with less than 5% in Cuba, researched on a Leicester-Havana University project (Sage, 2008).

Review

'All men have greater regard for what is their own than for what they possess in common with others'.
(Aristotle, Greek Philosopher)

John Stuart Mill, as the first exponent of modern liberal doctrine, offers a compelling view about the continuing political tension between individual rights and community demands. His acceptance of uncertainty and plurality as conditions of politics saw solutions in human development, communication and relationships as a way forward (System V11:19, V111:663) discussed by Losonsky (2006) *Linguistic Turns in Modern Philosophy, Cambridge: CUP*.

Many celebrate the West as rooted in the rational and deductive, while, in other cultures, divisions between reasoning, spirituality and emotion are seen as less pronounced. Even if true, is philosophy just a description of how people think or does it prescribe the way they achieve this? Debates are about where values come from and the extent to which present political desires, cultural attitudes and world social needs have developed from the philosophical histories of their regions. Questions arise from discussions: *What accounts for an individualist tradition in the West and a collectivist one in the East? What makes secularism weaker in the Islamic world than in Europe? Why has China resisted pressures for greater political freedom? Does philosophy tell us about the culture of a society or vice versa? How have ideas shaped the places from which they emerged? What is the influence of thinking on cultures, ideals and how we see ourselves? How can study of philosophies be best integrated into Education?* Such queries suggest human beings and their societies are complex! Can more focus on philosophy in Education answer these questions?

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Few dispute that acquiring knowledge of how others think and creating a dialogue between differing views is a step to greater human understanding and acceptance. However, **universalism** (*concern for others without regard to national or other allegiances*) is interpreted as favouring 'Eurocentrism' or 'uniformity' with common rules & norms imposed on everyone, irrespective of cultural difference. Thus, is diversity understood as a relativistic retreat from alternative thinking? How can we develop honest engagement between different cultures and places if rejecting universal values or staying within our philosophical traditions? Can different ways of thinking be incorporated into a single narrative for understanding world history? Are we all tackling the same challenges, but in various ways and with different answers? These are big questions with no perfect answers in an imperfect world, where all humans are, by nature, a mixture of good and bad. Many citizens live in an economic & political system (*capitalism*) in which trade & industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state. This results in competition & huge wage differences between people. Although this makes nations overall more prosperous, tensions easily arise because of disparities.

Global instant connectivity through technology, presents a perfect world and abundant fake news, so establishing the truth about life is difficult. Once, we believed that a government role was to teach people to restrain their destructive inclinations for the greater good. However, anarchic forces of hate and division proliferate on social media. The distance & anonymity of the internet has much to do with the mist overwhelming it. Coupled with the legitimizing of violent action and incipient grievances the possibilities are terrifying. Intelligent leadership, human knowledge and effective communication are vital for achieving fairer societies. Discussion alludes to the crises of present society in regions where diversity reigns:

1. Differences in attitudes and values resulting from cultural mixing and people movements
2. Large disparity between rich and poor from the varying values assigned to job status/roles
3. Power within a narrow political elite lacking common knowledge and understanding
4. Leaders & followers no longer sharing patriotism and identity
5. Decline in communication & community creating mental health issues

The present crises are attributed to rapid changes, increased people movements, over population, secularisation, family collapse, technology worship, establishment breakdown and the decay of capitalism. The first step in dealing with these is achieving community acceptance of the national history, traditions, values and lifestyles of where they live. The values of the national identity must be acceptable to all cultures, whilst retaining its principles and traditions. We often talk about complex, evolving human systems, such as our social networks and the economy, as at the mercy of politicians. If only they tightened regulations, pulled the spending lever, trimmed the budget or timed interventions or new policies well, they could tame the crisis cycle and eliminate problems. This arrogance underlies Keynesian macroeconomic policy, which sees *downturns* as government failure to increase spending and operate at potential. Time and again, however, those who reason control are found wanting.

George Stigler, the late Nobel Prize winner, said the state's power to exhibit significant control over outcomes is a matter of *desire* rather than *demonstration*. When there is failure to achieve objectives we do not question the wisdom of micromanagement and attribute this to incompetence or lack of will. There are reasons why politicians cannot easily control circumstances, as they often rely on partial, inaccurate information and speculative forecasts, based on mathematical models, to make decisions. Policies are then applied to humans who respond variously within situations that

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are changing. This was shown in the 2020 pandemic when lockdowns were announced. Some people fled to find refuge elsewhere or enjoy their last days of freedom socialising, to worsen the near-time spread. Obviously, external factors knock even competent technocrats off course by *'unknowns'*, like foreign crises. Although government actions influence us collectively, we downplay the fact that ultimately population behaviour is the over-riding issue - stemming from diverse preferences, needs & local information that no politician can know. It is not that government policies & actions are wasted, but they cannot easily control outcomes, as population aims and ambitions are so varied. This was seen in a recently discovered *'brides to order'* scam, where forged documents duped immigration officials for a decade to enable thousands of illegal immigrants to obtain British passports. Thus, government rules for incomers were easily violated!

Philosophy provides awareness from careful evaluations of societal circumstances. It points out that it is only by improving levels of thinking and communication that we can learn to connect, cooperate and collaborate effectively. Fostering such attributes has not been priority in all nations, but is the first step on the rocky road to coping with calamities. Using both *inductive* and *deductive* reasoning is the way to evaluate facts and arguments. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, stressed the *inductive approach* and careful observations to support knowledge. We can only reason from discernible phenomena. From there, we use *deductive logic* to infer causes. Education has taken a *deductive approach* for rigid academic goals. Can more attention to philosophy in teaching and training ameliorate divisions?

Insect colonies are a model for well integrated societies. They function as a single organism to produce a new level of *'self'*. The honeybees' dance about food location shows how their colonies integrate and act on information that no single individual possesses. Their unity of purpose is seen in the heroism of the worker bees to protect the single reproducing queen. We do well to study our friends from nature, who can teach us a thing or two to make our own lives better! This mechanism of reflection could eliminate life arbitrariness and bias. Higher Education must put philosophy studies at the top of their agenda to lead thinking that accepts differences as a progressive force. As Robert Kennedy said in the 1960s, to remind us that we all have a role in improving the world:

'Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance'.

(<https://www.quotes.net/quote/49660>)

Philosophy & World Calamities: The Role of HE

Note

***Capitalism/neo-liberalism-** an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state. Neoliberalism or neo-liberalism is the 20th-century resurgence of 19th-century ideas associated with economic liberalism and free-market capitalism.

****The fictional character Sherlock Holmes** is a master of *induction*. He is a careful observer, who processes what he sees to reach the most likely conclusion, although pretending his knowledge is of the *deductive*, black-or-white variety. Consider how, upon first meeting Watson, he reasoned that he had just come from Afghanistan:

'Observation with me is second nature. You appeared to be surprised when I told you, on our first meeting, that you had come from Afghanistan....I knew you came from Afghanistan. From long habit the train of thoughts ran so swiftly through my mind that I arrived at the conclusion without being conscious of intermediate steps...The train of reasoning ran, 'Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan. The whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I then remarked that you came from Afghanistan, and you were astonished'.
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *A Study in Scarlet* (1887)

Inductive and deductive reasoning makes: **Smarter Arguments, Better Decisions and Stronger Conclusions**

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