INTERCULTURALITY IN EASTERN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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Abstract

In the realm of philosophy and philosophy of science, the East-West dichotomy has been a longstanding framework through which people ascribe cultural identities to philosophical traditions. This division delineates the cultural hemispheres, categorizing them into Eastern and Western paradigms. However, the concept of interculturality challenges the notion of cultural purity, whether in religion, philosophy, or scientific concepts, viewing it as a fictional construct. Instead, interculturality emphasizes the common cultural inclinations that necessitate cross-disciplinary comparisons in all scientific fields. It rejects absolutist views rooted in any single philosophical tradition, thereby expanding philosophy beyond narrow monocultural boundaries. In the contemporary landscape, our interconnected global society demands cross-cultural foundations, understanding, and awareness. Interculturality in philosophy is not confined to any single culture; rather, it transcends cultural boundaries while enriching the diversity of human thought. This article addresses three key objectives. Firstly, it provides a concise conceptual clarification of intercultural philosophy. Secondly, it delves into the causes of the Eastern-Western scientific divide. Lastly, it explores the existence of interculturality between these two traditions and proposes interculturality as a harmonizing solution to bridge the existing East-West philosophical gap.

Keywords: Intercultural-Philosophy, Cultural-Hemispheres**,** Interculturality, Harmonizing-perspectives, East-West Divide

1. Introduction

Sociologically, the East-West dichotomy represents a perceived distinction between the Eastern and Western worlds, primarily shaped by cultural and religious factors rather than geographical boundaries. It is often believed that the East and the West are fundamentally different in terms of their historical narratives, religious beliefs, and political systems, among other aspects. This dichotomy is deeply rooted in an ancient philosophical concept, asserting that the Eastern and Western cultural hemispheres evolved in opposed directions: one from the particular to the universal, and the other from the universal to the particular.

Science, a product of its societal and cultural context, began its modern journey during the Renaissance in Western Europe and subsequently expanded to become a global endeavor in the twentieth century. While other civilizations, such as Chinese, Indian, and Islamic, had achieved significant advancements in fields like astronomy and mathematics, modern science's systematic development remained primarily a European phenomenon.

Western culture undeniably played a pivotal role in shaping the evolution of science, drawing from the influences of the Bible and Greek philosophy. However, it's crucial to explore the characteristics of Eastern culture, with a particular focus on China and India, to determine whether interculturality exists in the philosophy of science. Eastern culture, with its richness and unique perspectives, challenges the perception that science is solely a Western creation.

Notably, Eastern countries like India, Japan, Korea, and China have surpassed Western nations in economic, technological, and scientific advancements in recent times, reshaping the global

economic landscape. This shift prompts us to consider whether Eastern traditions have contributed to this transformation. Modern science, with its groundbreaking theories like evolution, systems theory, relativity, and quantum physics, has evolved significantly since the nineteenth century.

In light of these developments, one can argue that Eastern culture and ideas offer a more suitable conceptual framework for contemporary science than traditional Western culture. Acknowledging Eastern culture's influence can foster new scientific hypotheses and intellectual diversity, potentially enriching the European scientific landscape.

In today's interconnected world, cross-cultural knowledge, expertise, and appreciation are essential. Philosophy should no longer be confined to a monocultural approach, but rather embrace cross-cultural and comparative perspectives, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of its role in facilitating cross-cultural expertise.

This article focuses on the intercultural aspects of philosophy, particularly the question of interculturality in the philosophy of science within Eastern and Western contexts. It challenges the prevailing notion that philosophy and philosophy of science can be categorized solely based on the East-West dichotomy and emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and interconnected philosophical exploration.

The three primary objectives of this article are: first, to provide a brief conceptual clarification of intercultural philosophy; second, to explore the causes of the Eastern-Western scientific divide; and third, to examine the existence of interculturality between these traditions and propose interculturality as a solution to bridge the existing East-West divide.

Concertizing Intercultural Philosophy

Intercultural philosophy represents a fresh and inclusive approach to philosophical inquiry that extends beyond the confines of singular monocultural perspectives. It is instrumental for the existence of comparative philosophy, preventing it from existing in isolated parallel tracks. This philosophical model acknowledges the wide-reaching applicability of the very concept of philosophy while also recognizing the legitimacy of diverse philosophical centers and origins. The ultimate aim of intercultural philosophy is not only to be an integral aspect of philosophy from an intercultural standpoint but also to serve as its overarching objective.

Intercultural philosophy staunchly rejects the notion of purity within culture, religion, philosophy, or scientific concepts, recognizing it as mere fiction. Instead, it commences with a foundation of shared cultural inclinations, an essential element for any cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural comparisons and communications. It emphasizes the need for a tertium comparison within all scientific disciplines and intercultural exchanges. This departure from absolutist views forms the basis for rectifying the historical injustices perpetrated in the name of various theories and beliefs, including colonialism, imperialism, expansionism, and contemporary attempts to impose democracy (Yousefi, 2006).

Intercultural philosophical thought is resolute in its rejection of absolutist or exclusive claims to a

singular philosophical Truth, whether from European or non-European traditions. The dominance of Greco-Eurocentric philosophical thought, stemming from exogenous influences like imperialism, colonialism, and shifting political power dynamics, no longer goes uncontested (Copleston, 1980).

Intercultural philosophy aims at genuine philosophical truths that are found within different philosophical traditions, and maintains that the difference may itself be the freedom that must be reciprocally recognized. Thereby intercultural philosophy forestalls the tendency of many philosophies, cultures, religions, and political outlooks to spread globally. Intercultural philosophy advocates unity without uniformity (Kimmel, 2000).

Intercultural philosophy, as a novel philosophical perspective, embraces all cultures and firmly rejects monocultural dogmas associated with any 'ism.' It recognizes that no single culture or nation's philosophy can rightfully lay claim to containing the whole truth or proclaim to be the philosophy for all of humanity. While intercultural philosophy is evident in all cultures, it simultaneously transcends them. It is crucial to understand that interculturality does not dismantle the meaningfulness or applicability of concepts such as truth, culture, religion, philosophy, and more. Instead, it dismantles the absolutist, monolithic, and exclusive claims that have often been associated with these terms.

Intercultural philosophy is a process of liberation from all forms of centrism, whether European or non-European. It allows for the special consideration of philosophical traditions without discrimination or homogeneity. It facilitates a critical and empathetic examination of one intellectual tradition from the vantage point of another and vice versa (Ibid, pp. 72-74).

Intercultural philosophy advocates the concept of a new historiography of philosophy that replaces the Eurocentric approach. In this new historiography, not only Western philosophy but all philosophical traditions are recognized as part of the history of philosophy. Instead of viewing diversity, pluralism, and difference as deviations from unity and conformity, the spirit of interculturality values and celebrates them.

Intercultural philosophy is a novel approach to the practice of philosophy. Its primary objective is to harness the potential contributions of diverse cultures and ideologies in addressing contemporary issues. The traditional approaches to studying and practising philosophy have proven to be limited. The nomological stance that Western philosophy adopted claiming universality and attempting to assess all philosophical thought from a single standpoint, has become increasingly problematic. Today, this monologue does not resonate with a broader audience (Bekele Gutema, 2004, p. 47).

In essence, intercultural philosophy is not a fixed system of thought; it is a philosophical viewpoint or orientation that fosters the spirit of philosophy in a multitude of cultural contexts. It dismisses the idea of a universal philosophy and, instead, stands as a beacon of this new philosophical perspective. It coexists with various concrete philosophical traditions, preventing them from adopting an absolute or monolithic stance (Mall, 2014, p. 68).

Therefore, in today's society, cross-cultural foundations, understanding, and awareness are indispensable. Philosophy can no longer be approached with a monocultural perspective. Cross-cultural and comparative philosophizing has become an essential approach in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Eastern-Western Sciences and their Causes

The evolution of science is intricately tied to distinct philosophical concepts and cultural underpinnings. Variations in these ideas and civilizations serve as the driving force behind the divergences observed in their respective disciplines. This discussion delves into the profound disparities between Eastern and Western sciences and the fundamental factors influencing their development. The Eastern world is currently striving to outpace Western technology, with the ultimate aim of generating novel knowledge that could potentially bring it on par with Western industrialized nations in terms of scientific and technological innovation (De Riencourt, 1985, pp. 303-305).

Science, in its essence, revolves around the establishment of knowledge, encompassing ideas, norms, theorems, equations, theories, and various other components. According to a dialectical materialist viewpoint, scientific knowledge can be viewed as a form of intellectual expertise rather than perceptual knowledge. Throughout history, scientific knowledge and philosophy have remained closely intertwined.

Fundamentally, science can be regarded as a branch of natural philosophy. Consequently, the distinctive philosophical and cultural foundations inherent in different societies can give rise to diverse scientific approaches. In common parlance, science is often defined as a method for unravelling the causes of a phenomenon and interpreting them, primarily from a Western perspective. The rationale underlying these investigations is situated within the context of human experience. It's crucial to note that science is not merely a compilation of empirical observations; rather, it serves as the theoretical underpinning for technology, which can subsequently apply scientific principles. However, it's important to emphasize that science itself is not synonymous with technology. While scientific principles, theorems, and equations can be repeatedly validated, the essence of science does not solely revolve around correctness or truth (Qian, 1999, pp. 35-38).

Using the framework presented by Ma and Qian (2003, pp. 62-66), we can summarize the distinctions between traditional Eastern and Western sciences as follows:

a) Traditional East Asian sciences prioritize the description of natural phenomena and the accumulation of empirical experiences, while Western science is primarily concerned with uncovering the underlying causes of natural events.

b) Traditional Eastern sciences rely on intuition and tacit knowledge, often overlooking precise definitions of terms. In contrast, Western scientists place a strong emphasis on logical and deductive reasoning, along with experimental approaches to rigorously examine and validate knowledge. This commitment ensures the accuracy, precision, and systematic qualities of Western sciences.

c) Traditional Eastern sciences lean towards pragmatism, focusing on the practical applications

of knowledge. In contrast, Western sciences are driven by the pursuit of understanding the mysteries of nature and the eradication of ignorance. Consequently, science in the West is not primarily a source of practical utility. The primary objective of research is not necessarily to enhance productivity and stimulate economic growth (Ibid).

d) Traditional Eastern sciences prioritize the acquisition of knowledge, often without intensive scrutiny and rational analysis, while Western sciences meticulously observe, verify, and scrutinize all forms of knowledge. These can be categorized into three types: objective, subjective, and rational comprehension. Western culture values the use of reasoning and personal experience to investigate the different facets of knowledge, including literature, the arts, feedback, religion, and philosophy (Ma and Qian, 2003, p. 63). Historically, eastern civilizations, including China, excelled in matters of wisdom and talents derived from scholarly studies rather than scientific innovations (Ibid, p.65).

In contrast, Western science has consistently sought to enhance knowledge and unravel the mysteries of nature, not merely for practical purposes. In ancient Greece, most philosophers were natural scientists. Aristotle's comprehensive work spanned politics, physics, ethics, common sense, biology, meteorology, and metaphysics. His approach was rooted in logical reasoning and contemplation for the analysis of the natural world (Qian, 2003, pp. 53-58).

According to De Riencourt (1985), Western science is fundamentally interested in deciphering the origins of natural phenomena. Plato, for instance, used the concept of circularity and causation to divide the world into the observable, ever-changing, and imaginary realm, as well as the knowable, stable, and genuine realm, which represents the objective of all phenomena. Democritus prioritized the quest for understanding the cause and effect over the possession of a Persian empire. Aristotle declared that the ultimate goal of inquiry is cognition, as people can only be considered to have truly experienced a problem once they have grasped its primary cause.

This perspective suggests that, when attempting to comprehend the world, reliance on our intellectual faculties, as opposed to mere sensory perceptions, is essential, as our senses alone cannot uncover the truth. Plato's ontological principle is rooted in rationalism. Aristotle emphasized formal logic as the standard for rational inquiry. He developed the criteria of formal logic to gain an understanding of the objective reality that comprehends the origins of all phenomena. Concepts such as Descartes' "ego cogito ergo sum" and Kant's "synthetic judgment a priori" also exemplify these Western philosophical notions.

Western sciences are characterized by their emphasis on logical rigor, clarity, and precision in reasoning. Therefore, a strong commitment to the precise definition of concepts and rigorous reasoning is intrinsic to Western scientific practice. This focus on systematic thinking distinguishes the Western intellectual tradition from the Chinese way of thinking.

Western sciences consider that the cosmos is simple, harmonious, structured, and uniform, and that the laws of the universe can be discovered via

reasoning: "technology and the modern world" is mathematic, and mathematic is one component of highbrow history (Whitehead, 1925, p. 209).

In Western sciences, a robust sense of skepticism and a critical outlook prevail, emphasizing the cultivation of novelty and the expansion of existing theories. The replacement of old beliefs with fresh theories demands a skeptical, analytical, and forward-thinking approach (De Riencourt, 1985, pp. 299-312). Western sciences rely on rigorous testing and reasoning, employing both logical and experiential methodologies as fundamental tools for validating information.

The "Subject-Object dichotomy" holds a longstanding presence in Western sciences, where expertise revolves around the study of objects that serve as the goals of cognition. In this context, nature serves as the subject of scientific investigation. This approach stems from the fact that the subjects of scientific inquiry, particularly entities and phenomena, are objective existences that remain constant regardless of an observer's perspective. The notion of "subject-object duality" was popularized, notably, by Platonism (De Riencourt, 1985, p. 304).

As Parmenides stated, knowledge must have an object in order to exist; otherwise, there would be no knowledge. Aristotle critically succeeded Plato's ideology, claiming that senses are not senses themselves, that there must be something that exists outside of senses, that active things are always previous to passive things, and that these two correlative nouns are also applicable to the question of senses (Princeton University Press, 1984).

In the Eastern perspective, sciences bear the imprints of both philosophical and cultural predecessors. Traditional Chinese sciences, in particular, are characterized by a distinct cultural heritage. They place a strong emphasis on intuitive and implicit reasoning, generating conclusions without rigid formal definitions or logical deduction. Instead, these sciences rely on the description and interpretation of relational propositions, drawing from human imagination and experiential insights, as they are more concerned with what is perceived rather than explicitly expressed (Qian, 2005, pp. 25-30).

Traditional Eastern sciences are rooted in dialectical questioning, as exemplified by the teachings of Confucius. He emphasized principles like "going too far is as terrible as not going far enough," "focusing on each aspect and choosing the middle path," and "achieving impartiality without leaning in any direction." These principles advocate for a balanced and harmonious approach to problem-solving without favoring one extreme over another and promoting compromise without rigid bias.

Due to the fundamental differences in philosophical foundations, lifestyles, thinking methods, orientations, and ideas between the East and the West, numerous fundamental contrasts exist in their approaches to science. Before the 16th century, Eastern experiential science was predominantly based on study and significantly outpaced Western advancements in various domains. However, with the resurgence of systematic examination, modern science, primarily rooted in the West, has become the dominant paradigm. This shift has led to several

notable gaps between Eastern and Western scientific knowledge and their underlying causes:

i) Eastern philosophical traditions cannot naturally give rise to Western esoteric science. This is attributed to inherent modes of thinking, intellectual orientations, and cultural foundations in the East, which contain unique philosophical and lifestyle genes. ii) Progress in the modern era relies on technological innovation, and a nation's ability to innovate is intrinsically tied to its scientific advancements. iii) Philosophy serves as the foundational underpinning of science and as the core of societal values. In the East, a proper emancipation of the mind is necessary to address the disparities between Eastern and Western scientific knowledge, and it demands the courage to acknowledge indigenous shortcomings and cultivate philosophical growth. iv) Mere absorption and imitation of Western scientific knowledge, without a profound cultural transformation, will lead to stagnation and being left behind. The East, while assimilating Western thought and lifestyle, must undergo a profound "cultural shift." v) When the East seeks to learn from the West, it must do so critically and sceptically, rather than unthinkingly venerating Western scientific authority. This is the only path for Eastern science to truly compete with and surpass Western science, fostering innovation and the creation of new capabilities.

In the present age, human consciousness and self-awareness have evolved, allowing us to view the world with a more positive outlook compared to a century ago. Human awareness, rooted in immediate self-knowledge, stands as an indisputable reality in the cosmos. Even the existence of technology and the physical universe ultimately stems from the workings of the human mind. It is noteworthy that history has bestowed the East and the West with spiritual twins, exemplified by Hinduism and Buddhism in the East and Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the West, demonstrating the interconnectedness of human philosophical and spiritual traditions.

The East springs mostly from India's cultural heritage, the West from Greek philosophy and the prophetic tradition of Judaism. The first striking difference is that the West often believes in the literal truth of its myths, scriptures, dogmas and ideologies and often takes their contents as historical facts, very much as the Victorian physicist thought that his scientific world-picture literally described the universe as it is (De Riencourt, 1985).

Conversely, in the East, there is a notable absence of dogmas, where all narratives are seen as inherently valuable, and interest in antiquity has waned. The Western creation of the perceived conflict between science and religion, materialism and spiritualism, may find its origins in this context. In the East, where all mythologies are regarded as allegorical and symbolic, there is no potential for clashes with any scientific aspect of the cosmos, meaning there are no factual or absolute claims in any form.

For the Western world, the physical existence of figures like Christ holds great significance, and it is vital whether these historical events occurred. In contrast, the East places less emphasis on the historical existence of figures like Rama, Shiva, or Buddha, as their value is seen as symbolic rather

than historical. The West has historically sought to exert dominance and influence through means like the sword or scientific proof, driven by a belief in a God-given historical mission and the monopoly of literal religious truth.

The apparent paradox lies in the fact that Western scientific knowledge is primarily rooted in this literal perspective, which has been passed down from medieval scholasticism through the intellectual rigor of figures like Duns Scotus and Abelard. They elevated the concept of word-image to near-mathematical precision, enabling abstract ideas to detach from emotional impact. This freed the concept from subjective emotion, allowing it to engage in an objective relationship with nature.

In contrast, the East continued to expand its knowledge while preserving the mythology from which it originated. These myths were viewed as metaphorical representations of deeper truths, projected from the unconscious mind and regarded as closer to ultimate reality than conscious concepts. Both the East and West aim to provide a path to spiritual enlightenment for their followers without infringing on the secular domain governed by scientific knowledge.

The Greeks initiated a shift in their perception of the external world as a collection of discrete, self-contained elements. They began connecting these elements through cognitive processes, constructing logically coherent systems of causal relationships guided by rigorous logical principles. They viewed the atom as the fundamental building block of the physical universe, with the term "atom" denoting "indivisible," representing an irreducible unit.

This led them to rely heavily on rational thought and discursive reasoning, believing that these faculties were capable of comprehending and explaining everything in the natural world and beyond. In the East, such a shift was unnecessary, as it maintained a strong emphasis on the subjective experience, distinct from emotional attachments to the surrounding world. Consequently, while Western philosophies are grounded in strict logical constructs, Eastern philosophies are rooted in profound transformation, resulting in a form of human wholeness that eludes the Western context.

To an Easterner, religion is not just an abstract concept but a recognition of ultimate reality. It emphasizes psychology and practice over theology and doctrine. Western thinkers traverse from concept to concept, deducing, inducing, discriminating, and learning. In contrast, Eastern thinkers transition from one subjective state to another, prioritizing consciousness itself over the tools of awareness.

Eastern philosophies are essentially empirical accounts of humanity's capacity to progress from one level of understanding to a higher level of consciousness (De Riencourt, 1985, pp. 294-296). In the East, the journey involves transcending and shedding the ego as a crucial step toward discovering one's inherent connection with the unindividualized divinity within.

Regardless of the East-West divide, there is a notable point of agreement among mystics worldwide. While most individuals live their lives in accordance with the ethical standards of their respective societies, mystics seek a profound connection with higher spiritual powers. This path,

often conveyed through imagery, metaphors, music, and poetry, remains mysterious and inexpressible in words. The essence of the religious impulse can be found in the direct experiences of mystics, transcending doctrinal interpretations and cerebral dogmas.

The question of why science and technology initially flourished in Western Europe more than in the East prompts reflection. Other civilizations had achieved remarkable technological advancements due to their profound theoretical understanding, particularly in fields like astronomy and mathematics. Notable examples include Chinese, Indian, and Islamic civilizations, as well as ancient Greek contributions to scientific concepts and ideas. However, these early endeavors did not culminate in the systematic development of modern science, which predominantly took place in Europe (Memmi, 2019, pp. 27-30).

Nevertheless, science has undergone significant transformations since the end of the 19th century, evolving into a distinct paradigm. It has introduced radical concepts such as evolution, systems theory, relativity, and quantum physics. This new scientific worldview is characterized by increased complexity, dynamism, systemic thinking, non-determinism, and holistic perspectives.

One might argue that Eastern cultures and ideals provide a more welcoming foundation and robust philosophical underpinning for modern science than traditional Western cultures. Such a foundation could potentially alleviate the intellectual tensions that accompanied the development of new scientific theories in Europe, offering fresh and valuable insights. In the same way that Western philosophy has informed European scientists, an exploration of Eastern culture can enrich contemporary scientific principles.

Hence, we can shed light on the origins of modern science in Western culture, its evolution into modern science, and the potential insights offered by Eastern cultures. The comparative analysis of Western and Eastern cultures serves as an enlightening endeavor, deepening our understanding of the West and our core Western beliefs. This exploration of Eastern perspectives provides valuable insights that might otherwise remain unexamined.

Interculturality in Eastern and Western Philosophy of Science

Ancient Athens played a pivotal role as an intercultural and intellectual bridge connecting Asia and Europe. The renowned statement by Socrates, "I am neither a citizen of Athens, nor of Greece, but of the world," powerfully illustrates the impact of interculturality, comparative analysis, and the quest for identity in both his era and contemporary society. Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle ventured beyond their own cultural boundaries, engaging in debates and discussions on fundamental global values such as goodness, justice, truth, and happiness (Tarrow, 1992).

These early philosophical reflections on the nature of identities and values greatly contributed to the potential for beneficial intercultural, multicultural, and global world perspectives. They fostered civilizational and cultural dialogues that emphasized unifying aspects over divisive ones. Over time, various efforts have been made to

harmonize Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, dating back at least to Kant in the 18th century, who drew inspiration from a range of intellectual, scientific, and humanistic influences.

This intellectual universalism transcends narrow perspectives and geographical boundaries, rejecting all forms of "isms" and relying on objective scrutiny to ascertain truth. A synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas must commence with a rejection of identifying strictly with either Eastern or Western positions. The labels "Eastern" and "Western" have lost their relevance as the boundary between them fades (Kamiat, 1952, p.41).

Truth is not confined to either Eastern or Western origins; it is universal. Anyone who creates, discovers, accepts, or promotes a truth becomes, to that extent, a Universalist, transcending the confines of any specific school of thought. When these different schools of thought share a common truth, they are integrated. The synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophies does not entail Easterners adopting Western ideas or vice versa (Kamiat, 1952, p.41-42).

Synthesis is about connecting theory to theory, hypothesis to hypothesis, and truth to truth. There is no need for exclusive group affiliations. Science and philosophy play essential roles in facilitating such intersections. Describing the amalgamation of two or more schools of thought may be inaccurate or even inappropriate. A "school of thought" often involves more emotion and imagination than logical reasoning (Ibid).

A school of thought emerges when a group of individuals subscribe to a more or less integrated set of ideas. Such a school consists of people who share a creed, a set of principles, or a particular perspective. Emotional biases also shape a school's selection of presuppositions for its reasoning. These presuppositions are often partial and one-sided, focusing on a particular aspect of reality, amplifying its role and significance.

In extreme cases, the existence of alternative aspects of reality may be denied, leading to a false monism. Consequently, the preconceptions of a school of thought, or an "ism," revolve around something presented as fundamental, central, and primary, or even as the sole reality. Elaborate arguments are constructed to assert that the chosen slice of reality is all-encompassing or, if not, that it represents the fundamental or primary component. Therefore, a school of thought can be seen as a way of perceiving or envisioning the world.

An "ism" may be a socially shared dream. But dreams cannot be synthesized. One does not unite dreams. The task of synthesis, therefore, requires one to step out of his dream universe; one must repudiate the dream approach and the "isms" that grow out of it. It is necessary that those of a rational character replace emotional criteria. There must be an end to this business of taking a slice of reality and shuffling it under all the rest and calling it central, primary, basic, or, what is worse, mistaking it for the whole. Schools of thought cannot be synthesized, but the truths and theories they may contain (Kamiat, 1952, p.43).

As previously mentioned, the term 'ism' often implies a biased perspective, an inaccurate assessment, or the risk of adopting a false monism. Biased viewpoints can be rectified, erroneous evaluations can be replaced with correct ones, and

false monisms can be substituted with views that better represent the whole. When science is employed in synthesis, the outcome need not be an 'ism,' a creed, or a set of doctrines and dogmas. It can take the form of working hypotheses, laws, or a system of theories as long as there are objective grounds for doing so. Nonetheless, science does have its limitations; certain issues remain beyond the realm of scientific inquiry. Some metaphysical, religious, and mystical claims defy scientific testing. The synthesis of metaphysical, theological, and mystical perspectives requires an objective, transcendent standpoint.

It may be argued that the intellectual universalism articulated earlier may not be truly universal, and it tends to align with the Western advocacy of an objective, scientific viewpoint. However, irrespective of its Western or non-Western origins, there is no alternative to overcoming narrow perspectives. A school of thought often signifies a manner of experiencing or imagining the world. Breaking free from such a mental confinement is essential to perceive and understand the world. Objective methods are vital for bridging the gap between East and West.

An intellectually universalistic transcendent attitude becomes imperative. Moreover, the objective approach is not exclusively Western. Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Arab cultures have all demonstrated mastery of reason and science, reflecting the human spirit's universality rather than Western exclusivity. In summary, the synthesis of East and West, if achievable, will not be the result of Eastern or Western individuals per se but of those who adopt an attitude of intellectual universalism, transcend the constraints of Eastern and Western thought, and strive to unite truth with truth through objective means (Kamiat, 1952, pp.43-44).

A significant topic addressed in a recent meeting of East-West philosophers centered on the difference in conceptual origins between the East and the West. In the East, concepts often arise from intuition, while the West tends to rely on postulation. Western thought emphasizes rational, empirical evidence, whereas the East places greater trust in intuitive understanding. While Western philosophies tend to be more theoretical, Eastern philosophies lean towards practicality. Additionally, the West typically focuses on the immediate global context, while the East often sees the world as transient and insignificant (Fieser, 2020).

It is evident that Eastern scholars closely follow Western intellectual trends, particularly in English-speaking countries. Western philosophies or philosophical schools are integral to the curriculum of philosophical studies in Indian and other Eastern universities. As a result, there is no ambiguity concerning Western concepts in the modern educational landscape (Hösle, 2013, pp. 431-454).

Prominent Indian philosophers, such as Prof. S. Radhakrishnan and Prof. S. N. Dasgupta, have recently produced extensive works on the history of Indian philosophy distributed across multiple voluminous texts. Prof. Hiriyanna has also authored significant works on Indian philosophy. Numerous English-language studies on Vedanta, Nyaya, and other philosophical frameworks have emerged in recent years. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for a

Western philosophy student to claim a complete lack of knowledge regarding Eastern thought in the current educational context (Deshpande, 2015, p. 272).

It is worth noting that gatherings of Western and Eastern philosophers are common occurrences, where topics such as science, truth, morality, and society are discussed. One notable observation at such gatherings is that intuition is regarded as a central element in Eastern philosophy. However, characterizing Eastern philosophy solely as intuitive is a simplification that stems from a fusion of mysticism and philosophy. This perception can create confusion for both Eastern scholars and Western historians of Eastern civilization. The Vedas and Upanishads, for instance, represent only a partial record of the spiritual experiences of India's sages and seers in their quest for spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, discussing Vedic or Upanishadic philosophy in isolation is an oversimplification (Fieser, 2020).

In reality, India hosts a multitude of other philosophical systems that not only differ from Vedanta but also diverge significantly from each other. Regardless of the term's etymology, "philosophy" now has a well-defined meaning, albeit it may retain a somewhat loose connotation in everyday discourse. Etymologically, "philosophy" signifies "love of wisdom," and its original sense was "knowledge of the fundamental." Sundar Sarukkai's Indian Philosophy and Philosophy of Science show how the two very different approaches from East and West can illuminate each other. It is not an introduction to the philosophy of science but rather an invitation to look at the philosophy of science in a new way, using the approaches of classical Indian logic, in particular Navya Nyaya (Sarukkai, 2005, p.13)

Sarukkai's intention is not to establish chronological priority, nor is he concerned with whether certain scientific concepts emerged in the East before the West. He is not, for instance, working on an Indian rendition of Fritjof Capra's "The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism." Instead, he aims to introduce new readers to the style and concepts of classical Indian logic, inviting them to contemplate how the philosophy of science can be enriched by the classical Indian approach to logic, which is unfamiliar to most Western readers.

As per Sarukkai, Western philosophy of science seeks to incorporate logic into science, whereas Indian logic endeavors to integrate science into logic. In other words, it strives to render logic more scientific. The conventional Western approach to logic is often abstract, formulating science using abstract logical and mathematical theories. In contrast, Indian logic is grounded in empirical observation of the world, maintaining a continuous connection to it. Consequently, logical arguments in Indian logic must encompass contingent facts and observations.

It is worth noting that the value placed on intuition is not unique to Indian philosophy; intuitionism has also played a role in various philosophical traditions within the Western world. Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, and elements of Greek philosophy, for example, all incorporated elements of intuitionism. Additionally, Christian theology

evolved from a concept of Christianity's essence rooted in the revelation of the Deity through Jesus Christ, a perspective that persisted throughout the Middle Ages.

In current European philosophy, intuitionism is unquestionably important. Bergson, for example, became an anti-intellectualist who devoted his main works to proving that the mind should be abandoned in favor of instinct as the proper organ of philosophizing. He began giving regular lectures on intuitive Metaphysics (Daya, 1983).

Given these considerations, it is important to question the depiction of Western and Eastern philosophy as opposite, with Eastern philosophy leaning on intuition, abstraction, and practicality. In contrast, Western philosophy relies on reasoning, concreteness, and theory. In the pursuit of a synthesis of Western and Eastern philosophy, one of the potential outcomes, if attainable, might be a distinct philosophy in its own right, warranting further investigation. However, resolutions passed at international philosophical gatherings are unlikely to accomplish this desired synthesis. Some argue that Eastern perspectives tend to be more pragmatic than the theoretical orientations often associated with Western philosophies.

Ultimately, it is misleading to assert that Eastern philosophy is entirely practical and Western philosophy is purely theoretical. This assertion is rooted in a misunderstanding of the philosophical process. There is also the matter of armchair philosophy, which is akin to other leisure activities like sports, for example. Nevertheless, armchair philosophy is considered pseudo-philosophical because it often lacks a profound understanding of the issues it addresses. True philosophy is born from a profound engagement with the questions at hand. For a genuine philosopher, these questions are all-encompassing, infiltrating every aspect of their life. Therefore, there is a common thread in the development of thought shared by both Eastern and Western philosophies. It is an oversimplification to assert that the East is entirely distinct from the West in terms of philosophy and philosophical exploration.

Before the advent of modern science, Western culture was significantly shaped by Christianity, which offered a rather pessimistic view of the world. Early Christians were acutely aware of the imperfections of worldly life when compared to the heavenly ideal found in the teachings of Jesus Christ. This understanding was a primary motivator for the establishment of monasticism, a highly unique way of life. Beliefs undeniably influence people's outlook on life. Similarly, both in the East and the West, ideas that promote pessimism or optimism face resistance. Consequently, there may not be an absolute divide in terms of life perspectives between the East and the West.

There is no such thing as Eastern Science. There really isn't such a thing as Western Science either. There is only one scientific method, and everyone can use it everywhere on Earth. Now, it just so happens that most of the history of the scientific method was developed in Europe, but due to its effectiveness, it has since been propagated around the world (Mark, 2016).

The scientific method has consistently proven to be the most effective approach for extracting objective truths from human imagination, as evidenced by its

superior results. While there are various types of information systems that people find valuable, it's important to note that not all of them qualify as scientific knowledge. It's not uncommon for "Western Science" to be viewed with a degree of bias, often traced back to its origins in the West, with deep roots in ancient Greece and significant development during the Enlightenment in Europe.

However, the essence of science remains universal, irrespective of its Western origins. Its cultural independence and its ability to yield consistent results among different practitioners are the defining characteristics. After all, what qualifies as scientific knowledge is its operational effectiveness. Encouraging traditional Chinese medicine in China is equivalent to urging "Western" doctors to revert to practices like leech therapy, bloodletting, or reliance on the humoral theory. Such a stance can be considered discriminatory when applied to those perceived as different or unfamiliar.

2. Breaking the Shackles of "ism": Reconciling the Eastern and Western Divide

Numerous philosophical traditions exist across Europe and other parts of the world, making attempts to categorize them as strictly Western or Eastern an elusive endeavor. However, there are some recurring themes that can be identified, though they may not be sufficient to unify all philosophies under a single label. These common topics are found to be more prevalent in Europe compared to other regions, and vice versa. Despite the significant variations within both Eastern and Western philosophical systems, their shared goal is the pursuit of truth and the exploration of the most suitable way to lead one's life.

Scholars today frequently draw an arbitrary and sharp distinction between the East and West, which is irrational and creates an artificial division between the two traditions. Since the 'discovery' of Eastern philosophy by Western explorers and students in the 18th and 19th centuries, an arbitrary distinction has been maintained, particularly in schools and universities, between 'western philosophy' and 'eastern philosophy,' as if the two systems provide significantly different perspectives on the world (Mark, 2016).

When it comes to addressing the most fundamental questions about the nature of human existence, there is no clear distinction between Eastern and Western philosophies. The central purpose of philosophy is to explore the meaning and purpose of one's life journey, and in this regard, Japanese and Western philosophies share a common pursuit.

The shared elements between Eastern and Western philosophies far outweigh the differences highlighted by contemporary scholars and speakers on the subject. Perhaps the most noticeable contrast is that Western philosophy is often described as "fragmented," while Eastern philosophy is often referred to as "holistic." For instance, Sankara Saranam, author of "God without Religion," explains that Eastern philosophy is concerned with general wisdom, whereas Western philosophy tends to focus on specific knowledge. A comparison of the core ideas of Confucius, the renowned Chinese philosopher, and Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, reveals their shared foundational concepts.

Both philosophers believed that the pursuit of virtue was the ultimate goal, and those who prioritized virtue over material wealth would attain lasting rewards. Korean philosopher Wonhyo astutely observed that "thinking makes things good or bad," suggesting that our beliefs significantly influence our perception of the world. Similarly, the Greek philosopher Epictetus noted that it is not external events themselves that trouble people but their judgments about these events.

In this context, Wonhyo's philosophy aligns with the idea that everything is interconnected, and all life experiences contribute to the singular joy of being human. Teng Shih, a Chinese sophist, and Protagoras, a Greek sophist, share remarkably similar relativist viewpoints. Claims of opposition between Mo-Ti and Plato, as mentioned earlier, are misleading, as both philosophers emphasize the importance of self-improvement before attempting to influence others.

The works of two of the most prominent philosophers from each hemisphere, Plato (428-348 BCE) from the west and Wang Yangming (1472-1529 CE) from the east, provide the best example of the essential commonalities between eastern and western philosophy. Wang Yangming, unlike Plato, does not reside in the West, despite living in China, Korea, and Japan (Mark, 2016).

These philosophers have made significant contributions through their works, each advocating for the presence of innate knowledge within humans. They argue that individuals are born with an inherent sense of right and wrong, good and bad, and that they need guidance to lead virtuous lives. Their works revolve around the theme of "inborn wisdom" and the importance of recognizing one's path in life.

According to their perspectives, people should possess the ability to discern what is morally correct and reject what is not. Thus, they do not require explicit instruction on goodness but rather guidance or training to align their actions with their innate understanding of what is best. Empirical evidence fails to support the empiricist claim that there is a lack of evidence for innate knowledge, as one must first recognize the need to pursue something before one can actively seek it. Wang emphasizes that the allure of morality is an intrinsic human pleasure that defies easy definition. To acquire this crucial skill, individuals need to learn how to apply it correctly, much like a child learns to express their hunger.

In Plato's "Meno," Socrates praises an enslaved person who exhibits a deep understanding of mathematics despite never having received formal instruction. Plato uses this enslaved person as an example of innate knowledge to illustrate that humans possess an inherent grasp of what they are taught, whether the information is true or false. Both Wang and Plato share the belief that self-centred desires can cloud people's judgment and lead them to act in ways contrary to their innate understanding of what is right.

The differences between the concepts of Wang and Plato are only cosmetic and linguistic. There is no difference in their fundamental ideas. Philosophers from the East have always been engaged in the same pursuit as their counterparts in the West. There is no 'Eastern' or 'Western' philosophy; there is only philosophy (Mark, 2016).

Beyond geographical distinctions, various regions of the world have distinctive ways of life and approaches to living shaped not only by geography and physical conditions but also by the prevailing philosophies in the major societies of the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

Let's begin with a definition of "philosophy" and its influence on distinguishing Western and Eastern cultures. Philosophy is generally defined as "the study and comprehension of fundamental issues, facts, and situations related to human life, values, motives, and universal truth." It seeks to explore the meaning of life and its various aspects, as well as solutions and fundamental causes. Hence, when discussing philosophy, we are addressing a system of thought that delves into the realities, issues, and circumstances faced by specific cultures, such as those in the East and the West in this context.

Contrary to popular belief, having a spiritual perspective on life has become more accessible today than it was a century ago, in part due to the scientific advancements of the 20th century. During a period when the cosmos was viewed as a cosmic mechanism operating under strict mathematical laws, it appeared as though an unyielding deterministic science was poised to gain ultimate control over humanity and its environment. As Arthur Eddington aptly puts it, modern physicists now perceive the material universe "in a more mystical, yet no less genuine and realistic way." This shift has taken place in a post-Christian world, marked by a profound and growing skepticism toward the dogmas and theologies of Western faiths, even as spiritual yearnings among individuals have increased.

Furthermore, the increasing contributions of Eastern scientists hailing from India, China, and Japan are deepening this connection. Physical science has evolved into a global scientific knowledge, attracting a growing number of non-Western scholars who discern numerous parallels between their traditional cultures and this new cosmological perspective.

It is important to note that distinguishing between Eastern metaphysical statements rooted solely in mystical belief and modern physics declarations based solely on observations, assessments, and mathematical computations is not always straightforward. Recent scientific advancements have provided a perplexing new insight into the universe, asserting that the everyday world we inhabit is not a true reality and that our perceptions of stable substances are illusory.

In summary, it is reasonable to anticipate a future global civilization in which Eastern mystical pursuits and Western scientific quests for ultimate truth intermingle and transcend one another. Scientific knowledge, grounded in the physical world, will continue to evolve within its self-imposed boundaries. At the same time, a mysticism-based approach will cast aside contemporary dogmas, theologies, and ideologies to concentrate entirely on this enigmatic and profound trans-human experience.

The relationship between Eastern and Western philosophy often sparks intense debates between the two philosophical traditions. While both philosophies share an interest in morality, one leans more toward understanding reality through common sense and reason, while the other places

greater emphasis on faith. Eastern philosophy adopts a more metaphysical approach, focusing on individuals and society, while Western philosophy tends to adopt a pragmatic and individualistic perspective.

Conclusion

Today, the era of embracing Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," has waned. Kipling's perspective held that the cultures of the West, encompassing Europe and the Americas, would forever remain distinct from those of the East, representing Asia (Kipling, 2012). However, we find ourselves living in a world that is profoundly interconnected and in a state of constant transformation, shaped by technological progress and the emergence of globalization as a new world order. Our contemporary world is characterized by the fluid movement of people and their cultures across the globe, as well as the ever-increasing interaction of global society through diverse channels. Consequently, contrary to the sentiments expressed in Rudyard Kipling's poem, the East is no longer purely the East, and the West is no longer purely the West. It is the result of multifaceted, multidimensional, and multidirectional interactions and communications that have given rise to interculturality among various communities worldwide, transcending the boundaries of the East and the West.

Presently, intercultural philosophy has evolved into a paradigm-shifting field, with each theoretical construct built upon the foundation of empirical hermeneutic approaches and rooted in dialogic principles. Intercultural philosophy expands its horizons in the process of shaping and pursuing internal goals. It endeavours to foster mutual respect among representatives of various worldviews, cultures, religions, philosophies, and scientific perspectives. Furthermore, it strives to enable a mutually enriching dialogue among these representatives without imposing the constraints of a particular framework. It embodies a new culture of philosophical discourse.

These divisions are arbitrary and fail to acknowledge the interculturality between Eastern and Western philosophies in general and the philosophy of science in particular. When people refer to Eastern and Western philosophies, they are often referring to a hypothetical divide among Western European cultures. Such distinctions may overlook the profound impact of Eastern philosophies like Confucianism, Shintoism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism, among others. The core tenets of these philosophies influence individuals across various worldviews, thereby shaping the literature created by each culture.

The discourse on the relationship between Eastern and Western philosophy often sparks contentious debates. While both philosophical traditions are concerned with virtues, one seeks to uncover truth through rational deliberation and logic, while the other places greater emphasis on faith. Western philosophy adopts a more pragmatic and individualistic approach, whereas Eastern philosophy leans toward a metaphysical perspective, placing greater focus on individuals and communities. Therefore, instead of hastily and arbitrarily dividing the Eastern and Western worlds

into distinct entities, the world would benefit more from appreciating the contributions of both philosophical endeavors and the potential for further enrichment in the years to come.

It is worth noting that both of these philosophies have had a profound influence through their works, and they both argue for the existence of innate knowledge, asserting that humans are born with an innate understanding of right from wrong and good from bad. Such philosophical undertakings exist in both the East and the West, albeit in distinct styles, approaches, and methodologies. These variations in approach are reflective of their cultural differences. Hence, in the realm of philosophy, it is premature to accept assertions such as "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

One cannot deny the critical role played by the distinctive features of Western culture in shaping the evolution of science both within and beyond its borders. However, it could be argued that European culture, which is deeply rooted in the Bible and Greek philosophy, represents the optimal blend of beliefs that has facilitated the flourishing of modern science. A similar narrative can be observed in an Eastern context, where science interweaves with traditional and religious beliefs. In both instances, culture undeniably forms an integral part of classical scientific conceptions and theories without undermining the significance of social and political factors. All of these aspects provide strong support for the presence of interculturality in philosophy in general and in the philosophy of science in particular between the Eastern and Western worlds.

If we acknowledge the existence of intercultural philosophy between the Eastern and Western worlds, then the inevitability of interculturality in the philosophy of science becomes apparent. Thus, in today's modern society, the most sensible approach is to embrace the existence of interculturality in philosophy in general and in the philosophy of science in particular. Intercultural philosophical contemplation empowers us to view people, their culture, and their philosophy from their own perspectives rather than imposing our own viewpoint or centrism. It liberates us from the constraints of old dogmas and "isms," allowing us to perceive others as they truly are rather than how we expect them to be. Pursuing the idea of a linear philosophical path would ultimately lead to a single philosophical system that rejects truth, which appears to be antithetical to the very essence of philosophy.

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