The Universalizing Principle and Process: On the West's Intrinsic Commitment to a Global Context *

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There is but one indivisible humanity and specific essence of all men by which all individual men are men numerically distinct each one from each. The same humanity is that of Christ and of all men, the numerical distinction of individuals remaining unblurred. Hence it is clear that the humanity of all men, who in the temporal order came before or after Christ, has in Christ put on immortality. . . . But while there is but one humanity of all men, there are various and divers individuating principles which contract that humanity to this or that subject; and in Jesus Christ alone these were most perfect and most powerful and closest to that essential humanity which was united to the divinity. (Nicholas Cusanus, *On Learned Ignorance*, iii, 8)

Other mortals waver amid guesses, and, not knowing the truth, almost ask with Pilate what it is. But there is no doubt that the monarch of the Chinese saw very plainly what in our part of the world Plato formerly taught, that no one can be educated in the mysteries of the sciences except through geometry. Nor do I think the Chinese, though they have cultivated learning with marvelous application for thou-

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sands of years, and with great rewards to their scholars, have failed to
attain excellence in science simply because they are lacking one of the
eyes of the Europeans, to wit, geometry. Although they may be con-
vinced that we are one-eyed, we have still another eye, not yet well
enough understood by them, namely, First Philosophy. Through it we
are admitted to an understanding even of things incorporeal. Verbiest
was prepared to teach them this, rightly judging that it would prepare
an opening for the Christian religion, but death intervened. (G. W.
Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica*, 74)

The present article argues for a unique combination of exceptional
elements—intellectual, moral, and religious—present at the
inception of the Western development. It suggests that at the core of
this development is a universalizing principle directed toward the con-
struction of Humanity as idea and fact, and that it was not altogether
accidental that it fell to such a society, so conceived and structured, to
create the global arena for the realization of the universal jurisdiction
of Humanity among other better known and less attractive enter-
prises. Moreover, for the outward thrust of an essentially moral/reli-
gious universalizing principle, its transformation, and its ramifying
deployments in the global arena, decisive becomes the gradual detach-
ment of the features denoting what we understand as Civilization from
the long nurturing chrysalis of the medieval Catholic Church—its
theology, liturgy, and political structures. The detachment would serve
to release the already existing and partly evident immense energies of
a comprehensive, universalizing action upon the peoples of the globe.

The very notion of Civilization, long in incubation during the
Renaissance, only begins to surface in the languages of Western Europe
toward the end of the eighteenth century (cf. Le Roy, 95, 197, 418,
424–431; Gundersheimer, 104–105, 109, 114–116). In the sense of a
developed or advanced state of human society we first encounter the
English term in an exchange between Boswell and Dr. Johnson: for
Monday, March 23, 1772, Boswell reports finding his eminent friend
preparing a fourth edition of his Dictionary. When pressed to enter the
word "civilization" he would only allow "civility." Boswell's rejoinder
seems significant: "I thought civilization, from to civilize, better in the
sense opposed to barbarity than civility." As if to reinforce the value of
the new coin Edmund Burke in 1790 would draw out its meaning with
the statement, "Our manners, our civilization, and all the good things
which are connected with manners, and with civilization" (OED, III,
257).

Across the channel, with less dispute, the Marquis de Mirabeau, not to be confused with his more famous revolutionary namesake, had preceded at mid-century the English in coining the term for the French language (Robert and Rey 2:635). In a widely and well-received treatise on population, *L'ami des hommes*, first published in 1756/57, Mirabeau introduces the word apparently for the first time with a notably Vichian twist: "Religion is incontestably the first and the most useful rein upon humanity; it is the first expression of civilization, constantly reminding us of fraternal community, sweetening our heart. . . ."[1] The Italians seems to have adopted the term later and with greater reluctance, complaining that it was a French contrivance and that the Italian language could be satisfied with its *incivilimento, costume, vivere civile,* and *civiltà* (GDLI, III, 213).

Yet it is hardly accidental that the new term would see its elaboration on the most remote frontiers of European activity—in the dense woods of North America and the wastelands of Siberia. In New Hampshire a school for missionaries to the Indians had been founded at Dartmouth College in 1769 with its seal bearing the fateful words *Vox Clamantis in Deserto* (Is. 40:3)—"The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness." Whatever the energies for proselytizing that the infant school may have harbored, they seem to have been quickly lost on the restless, enterprising John Ledyard or, better, transformed into anthropological inquiry. Ledyard early forsook his Christian proselytizing and would devote the rest of his short life in the service of English patrons and Thomas Jefferson, who suggested his traversing the North American continent, west to east, beginning in Siberia and Kamchatka; the project would serve to establish his belief in the common racial stock of American Indians and Asian Mongols (Ledyard, 20, 32–38). But for our purposes here he provides interesting evidence not only for the extensive use of the term "civilization" but somewhat ominously of "incivilization." Writing from Siberia in July 1787 he muses: "When I

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[1] Victor Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau, *L'ami des hommes ou Traité de la population* (Avignon, 1756), pt. I, chap. VIII (p. 136): "La religion est sans contredit le premier & le plus utile frein de l'humanité: c'est le premier ressort de la civilisation; elle nous prêche & nous rappelle sans cesse la confraternité, adoucit notre coeur, éleve notre esprit. . . ." While Pons (104) gives the date 1757 for first appearance and Fisch (717) gives 1756, Fisch goes on to explain that although Part I of the older Mirabeau's work actually appeared in 1757, it was backdated but already written in 1756. Curiously, Lucien Febvre in his earlier, extensive treatment of the term and idea along with its correlatives overlooks Mirabeau entirely and settles ultimately on Baron d'Holbach in two different instances, 1766 and 1773 (p. 222).

was at School at Mount Ida [Dartmouth College] there were many Indians there: most of whom gave some hopes of Civilizing: and some were sent forth to preach, but as far as I observed myself and have been since informed that all like the ungained Sow returned to the mire." Then he refers to his present condition among the Tartars: "the nice gradation by which I pass from Civilization to Incivilization appears in everything: their manners, their dress, their Language and particularly that remarkable and important circumstance of *Colour*" (emphasis and capitalizations in original). A few weeks later he writes to Thomas Jefferson on his current encounter with the Tartars and how profoundly they resembled the aborigines of America: "The cloak of civilization sits as ill upon them as our American Tartars—they have been a long time Tartars and it will be a long time before they are any other kind of people . . ." (127; 144–146).

The subsequent essay will argue that in the well-known secularizing process of the West, occurring after the thirteenth century, a process readjusting that profound association of the presence of the Christian faith with the civilities of Greece and Rome, there persists throughout a deep-seated, uniquely Western, universalizing force, oriented to ever higher degrees of human engagement and potential inclusion; this force is first seen to operate on the more expressly religious level but later more explosively on a multitude of increasingly defined secular levels. And while the effective disengagement of the civilizing from the specifically religious occurs in the culture of the European Renaissance, or differently expressed, the fundamental vocabulary and language for this shift occurs during the late Renaissance, the maturing of this now more secular, universalizing agent will only become evident in the course of the eighteenth century. By that time the vehicle and framework for that universalizing agent will have shifted from the Christian religion to the more particular reality of European civilization. Thus the focus of our study falls upon late-Renaissance and pre-Industrial Europe. The case of John Ledyard here presented puts us on notice as to the arrogance, self-delineation, and apparent masterful control that distinguish this newly self-conscious civilization. This emergent reality asserts itself well beyond its earlier religious foundations or at least that part of them which represents a universal force of comprehensive inclusion that works to realize at its best a pervasive benevolence and the recognition of a single Humanity. That the condition of a single Humanity can ever be realized would seem most unlikely but the drive for same becomes the ultimate merit and meaning of the West in history.

In the beginning there was Stoicism. Coming in the wake of the Alex-
andrian conquests and contributing to the creation of that extraordi-
narily rich context of the Hellenistic age, Stoicism introduced the prin-
ciples of interiority and universality which would progressively serve as
a corrosive to the polytheism and particularist customs of the ancient
city. While teaching outward respect to such customs, it inevitably cre-
ated an inner distance from them and prepared the ground and space
for another moral, legal, and theological code (Gauchet, 129; 215). In
the concomitant crushing and intermixing of peoples subsequent to
their conquest, Middle Stoicism, especially as promoted by the new
Roman conquerors and aristocracy, refined the notion of "cosmopo-
lis," the universal political community, poorly translated as World City,
whose practical realization the emerging Roman Empire would now
effect. Ideas of an immanent natural law bearing implications for
human rationality, dignity, and equality would be grafted into the
emerging *oikoumene,* or the then known inhabited world, by Roman
law and its extension.

    While this almost marvelous preparation of the Roman world for
early Christianity does not explain the subsequent convergence of the
two, it makes such an association in the opinion of one analyst cer-
tainly "less improbable." For with Paul's separation of Jesus the Christ's
message from the synagogue and its transcending of all particular eth-
nic links in a higher spiritual law, the new religion of Christianity—
"the religion for departing from religion"—would open out a new sort
of universal highway in its effort to teach all nations of the earth
(Gauchet, 129; 101–106, 124). Concomitantly with the penetration,
adoption, and grafting of the new Christian faith upon the ultimate
form of classical culture we have the supreme knitting together of the
two great statements of human universality standing at the ground and
the beginning of our civilization. The remarkable meshing of the uni-
versalism offered by Stoicism in its idea of cosmopolis with the com-
plementary universalism of Christ's Body would prove, however, never
to be a perfect fit. The difficulty arose from the fact that Christ had
preached a spiritual kingdom, whatever that might be, and although
its precise definition would concern the next two millennia, it would
manage to create a sacred interior space for the self, its identity and
destiny, long after its formal, single, ecclesiastical jurisdiction, paral-
leling the powers of this earth, had been broken. Yet whatever the hid-
den incoherences between the Roman imperial and the Catholic
Christian at the end of antiquity, they did not prevent a practical,
working identification of the Roman imperial community of civic

humanity from coalescing with the Christian humanity embraced by
the Church. The expanding reality of Roman citizenship came to coa-
lesce with the new citizenship of Christian baptism to extend itself in
what has nicely been called "a simultaneous open exclusiveness"
directed toward barbarians and *pagani* alike (Pagden, 22, 24). Human-
ity, having been first identified with membership in the civil, Roman
community, now after 380 C.E. was reinforced by association with the
Christian church. The ideals of civility, humanity, and Christianity
moved together, simultaneously exclusive in defining the New Society,
but open-ended in extending the composite to the rest of humankind
as includable in the club.

Apparently so high the ideals, so splendid the ends—must they not
enlist the means of coercion to hasten and secure their realization and
greater inclusion? Indeed by the end of the fourth century the Constan-
tinean Church had come into being with its first persecutions and the
transformation of the community of Love into an enforced uniformity
no matter how clumsily effected. With the collapse of the Roman
Empire in the West circumstances worked to promote a duality of juris-
dictions which found expression in Pope Gelasius's famous definition
in the next century according to which two different, unequal orders
rule the world: one dignified by the moral/spiritual force of *auctoritas*;
the other, in multiple manifestations endowed with the coercive prop-
erty of *potestas*, both to guide, direct, and rule over humankind. Thus
the moral/spiritual directive of open engagement comes to be both
enforced and skewed by the exclusive impulse to self-identity. Histor-
ical circumstance would allow the Gelasian principle to graft its two
jurisdictions upon the operation of this simultaneous open exclusive-
ness in ways that allowed for shifting degrees of participation in the
directive and coercive functions. This unique dualism of jurisdictions,
providing the first step in the Western definition of the secular, presents
a tension of internal self-criticism wherein neither spiritual nor secu-
lar jurisdiction can ever entirely identify itself with the ultimate, pre-
sumed principle, the foundational ideal of this emergent new way,
while themselves often falling into near catastrophic controversy with
each other.[2]

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[2] The text for this important statement can be found in Mirbt/Aland, *Quellen zur
Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholizismus*, Bd. I (Tübingen, 1967), pp.
222–223 and its English translation in Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State
1050–1300* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ, 1964), pp. 13–14. Regarding the uniqueness of this
dualism, I remain unpersuaded by the interesting effort of Ira M. Lapidas, "State and Reli-

This powerful principle of universal inclusion and incorporation emerged as the greatest single reality from the ruins of the Ancient World. In rallying his own generation to this momentous destiny, while contending with the catastrophe of Rome's fall, Augustine gives religious definition to the motor of inclusion and its operation that allows for a measure of particularity:

> This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace. It therefore is so far from rescinding and abolishing these diversities, that it even preserves and adopts them, so long only as no hindrance to the worship of the one supreme and true God is thus introduced. (St. Aug., *City of God*, xix, 17)

In contrast and yet as a supplement to Augustine's ecclesiastical understanding of that process, drawing all peoples and societies to the Body of Christ, let us align the more philosophical and specifically religious statement of Nicholas Cusanus a thousand years later in his *On Learned Ignorance*. For the hypostatic union of the divine and the human nature united in the person of Christ, as announced at Nicaea I and confirmed later at Chalcedon, allowed Cusanus to recognize in Christ that coincidence of contraries (*coincidentia oppositorum*), of extreme maximum and extreme minimum, central to his philosophizing, and therein the universal content of humanity to be enfolded in Christ. The idea of Christ justifies, legitimates, and sanctions the idea of humanity (Cassirer, 38–39). As expressed in our first epigraph, both philosophically and religiously, Cusanus perceives the immense import of this double-natured, three-personed God with His inscription of humanity into the very nature of the Godhead. Here humanity appears as more than a spiritual/moral endowment and rather as a total collectivity that nevertheless respects the distinctive attributes of its individual members. In case there could be any doubt as to this second understanding of *humanitas* as a universal community, each of whose particular members is an object of divine solicitude, Cusanus will quote

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gion in Islamic Societies," *Past and Present*, 151 (May 1996): 3–27, to suggest some sort of Islamic comparability: that whatever the separation of "state" and religious institutions, principally the *ulama*, in Moslem experience, it lacks the clarity, defining force, and self-conscious traditions of sustained controversy that shape the medieval, the European, and the modern political experience of the West.

Matthew 25:40 (45): "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me" (iii, 6). There emerges the uniquely Western spiritual/religious commitment to the divinely based reality of entire Humanity as fact and idea. This powerful religious ingredient, no matter how transformed or metamorphosed, will never entirely disappear in the larger processes of its secular permutations.

The thousand years elapsing between Augustine and Cusanus saw within the effective structure afforded by the Church a consolidation of the process among the peoples at the westernmost extremity of the Eurasian landmass and the definition of Latin Christendom over and against Islam. During the twelfth century—at once the most creative in our civilization, yet to which obversely inheres for some the formation of a persecuting society—the internal tension between exclusive enforcement and its critique in an expansive inclusiveness, and between *potestas* and *caritas* continues. It is at this time that there emerges a legal interpretation of paramount consequence for the later missionary thrust of the West and for the peoples of the globe. For in the general recovery of Roman law, the Church, which had fashioned itself as an ecclesiastical empire in the guise of its Roman predecessor, was better equipped than any of the contemporary, motley kingdoms not only to adopt this law for itself in an ecclesiastical rendering of the imperial Roman law but also thereby to create in canon law the "First Modern Western Legal System" common to all the western Christian political communities (Berman). Thus we need to attend the ruminations of the twelfth-century canonists on the various meanings of that fateful term, *ius naturale*, natural law.

Apart from the most immediate meaning of *ius* as signifying some absolute, higher law of what is right—moral, divine, or immanent in the universe—here having primarily an objective sense—a more individual sense surfaced. The twelfth-century canonists began to be sensitive not simply to the just thing itself but what is justly due to someone. Defining it now in a subjective sense as a faculty, power, force, ability, inhering to individual humans, the canonists would develop a panoply of such natural rights—among them the ownership of property and the capacity of individuals to form their own government. Thus an inhering universal claim promoted individual, particular expression. Innocent IV in 1250 extended these two rights both to infidels and Christians alike; in the course of the century other rights, such as to liberty, self-defense, and a right of the poor to be safeguarded from hunger came to be defined. The marvelous ambivalence of *ius* as meaning both a higher law and the inherent rights defined by that law resonated

through the language of the Gregorian decretals and their medieval commentaries. This inheritance entered formal political philosophy with Ockham and by 1400 would be recapitulated by Jean Gerson in his important definition of *ius* as "a power or faculty belonging to each one in accordance with the dictate of right reason." With the great Spanish juristic theologians this rich tradition would enter upon the early modern period (Tierney 1991, 298–299, 304; 1997, 36, 142–145; 1996, 28–29).

The development of later thinking upon natural law and natural rights would take a decisive turn during the long sixteenth century. Under the dual impact created by the American Indian on the one hand and the political and theological fragmentation produced by the Reformation on the other, the idea of natural rights would be explicitly expanded onto a global scale and most portentously divested of its religious, theological, and ecclesiastical chrysalis. Indeed the secularization of the idea would allow not only for the theoretical universalization of natural rights and the idea of humanity as a collective reality, but it would also prepare the ground for the detachment of the civilizing from the specifically Christianizing toward the articulation of the concept Civilization. The immediate impact of these ideas would be lost amidst the development of competing sovereign states and the rerouting of natural law, but they would augur several centuries later in our own age for a rich harvest of opportunity, challenge, and debate in a truly global forum.

Catholic Christianity's perdurable commitment to the universality of the human and the obligations thereunto appertaining ultimately and inevitably worked to compel that old roué Paul III to pronounce on more than just the Amerindians as *veros homines*. By *Sublimis Deus* of 1537 Rome sought to cast a protective net over all the newly discovered peoples—western, southern, and others (*occidentales et meridionales Indos et alias gentes*). Rather than brute animals fit for servitude, they appeared as true men, rational, and thus capable of being won to the Christian faith (Headley 1997, 12). Although quickly annulled by the Council of the Indies as an intrusion upon its jurisdiction, the papal bull put Europe and the world upon notice that Christianity sought Brotherhood, not Otherhoods, whether other peoples wanted it or not.

Eight years earlier, in exhorting the same emperor, Clement VII had managed once again to couple universal love with its enforcement:

> We trust that, as long as you are on earth, you will compel and with all zeal cause the barbarian nations to come to the knowledge of God, the maker and founder of all things, not only by edicts and admoni-

tions, but also by force and arms, if needful, in order that their souls
may partake of the heavenly kingdom. (Hanke, 77)

The immense proselytizing efforts of the religious orders throughout
the globe, together with the Spanish colonial enterprise, no matter
how awkwardly, even unjustly, realized for including the Amerindian
in the club, announced a unique, astounding effort at an open-ended
inclusion. Indeed, is the Catholic Church in the early modern period
to be understood in the work of the newly founded congregation for the
Propagation of the Faith (De Propaganda Fide) or that of the Holy
Office, of expansive inclusion or enforced, exclusive identity?

    With the great Dominican Francisco de Vitoria in 1539 the
mid–thirteenth-century rulings of Innocent IV regarding the rights of
infidels to the holding of property and to the determination of their
own government are now reaffirmed in the explosive context of the
Amerindian: "Barbarians are not impeded from being true lords pub-
licly and privately, on account of the sin of infidelity or any other mor-
tal sin." The assertion was more than academic for Vitoria's fellow
Dominican, Bartolomé de Las Casas. Speaking from the political and
evangelical trenches of engagement, he rebutted Sepúlveda's attitude
toward the Indian with the resounding statement: "They are our broth-
ers, and Christ gave his life for them." Nor did he limit his outlook to
the immediate problem represented by the Amerindian but rose to a
view that included Blacks and Asians as well; quoting Cicero and sig-
nificantly appealing to the Stoic idea of a universal brotherhood of
man, Las Casas insists: "All the peoples of the world are humans and
there is only one definition of all humans and of each one, that is that
are rational. . . . Thus all the races of humankind are one."

    It can be argued that Las Casas was something of a maverick and
that despite his best efforts he stood at the dawn of a new period of
racism. Nevertheless the very complexity and polyphony of the Euro-
pean intellectual context would never allow the rich universal reso-
nance of humanity to be entirely marginalized or suppressed. With the
Dutch prodigy, Hugo Grotius, the idea would by necessity shake itself
free from its hitherto protective, nurturing religious shell and reengage
the rational, secular origins of the notion in Stoicism (Tierney 1997,
267, 273, 86–87).

    By necessity? Yes, because the Reformation had created a complex
of warring, confessional camps out of the former Latin Christendom,
each flourishing its own dogmatic brand and each insisting on its own
exclusive truth. Grotius felt compelled to construct a system of laws
which would carry conviction in an age wherein theological contro-

versy ground against itself and no one doctrinal camp was able to address all Christians in a now disfigured *Corpus Christianum*. Seeking a theory of laws independent of all theological presuppositions, Grotius returned to Aristotle and the optimistic belief in the distinctive sociability of humans, which he erected into an immanent law of nature. He effected this major step of deliberate but enforced secularization in the Great Hypothesis appearing in the Prolegomena of his *De jure belli ac pacis* of 1625: that the law of nature would still apply even if, "which cannot be admitted without utmost wickedness, there is no God or human affairs did not concern him." Enunciated in the midst of the raging Thirty Years War, the worst religiously inspired war of them all, this extreme measure sought to achieve a deliberate religious neutrality in order to make possible the potential universality of civil/political procedures and the reign of a Stoic "sociableness" (Grotius, 6, 10). Grotius' fateful step only became possible as being a recipient of the long tradition of the alternate meanings of *ius* and the recent rendering of that inherent natural right by the Jesuit Suarez: namely, that the capacity to establish communities endowed with political power was innate in humans from their first creation, and that ruling power came into being by the will and the consent of free, right-bearing individuals entering into a compact among themselves to form a political community (Tierney 1997, 310–311, 324–325). Indeed the principle had been in practical operation since Innocent III (Black, 18–23). Its future development would lie in the American and the French Revolution and in the twenty-first century.

The Renaissance sees a progressive displacement of what had been understood and included in the concept *Christianitas*, replaced by the notion of Europe as a distinct civilizational construct whose base belongs to the same sub-continent. In the course of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries political, moral, and cultural links will replace the former preeminence of religious and ecclesiastical ones. In late sixteenth-century France, Bodin, Le Roy, Pasquier, and La Popelinière extend the term *civilité* to create at least the idea of Civilization (Huppert). The new importance of navigation and geography heightens the power and self-confidence of Europeans over other peoples, cultures, and lands. Here the cosmographers, drawing upon the recovery of Strabo's *Geographia* and ultimately Hippocrates, claim in contrast to Asia that Europe's intense variety and very harshness produce opposing stimuli promotive of the warlike and the resourceful, of courage and prudence, working for its preeminent vitality, beauty, and enterprise. To Sebastian Münster in 1544, Europe, although smaller,

surpasses the other continents in being more fertile, more cultivated, more populous. The emerging European ascendancy becomes visually imaged in the title pages to geography books picturing Europe as crowned, cuirassed, weaponed, and scientifically equipped, while the other continents appear in varying states of servility and nakedness. In his *Thesaurus geographicus* of 1578 Ortelius specifically equates *Christiani* and *Europaei*. But as early as 1526 the Spanish humanist, J. L. Vives found Europe's very diversity the source of dissension, an increasing danger in this new, quasi-national, multi-cellular, secular construct; such explosive tensions encourage him to forsake the traditional term of Christendom for that of Europe (Céard; Headley 1999). Connoting not just a continent and its people but a superior culture, civility, even civilization, Europe in its particular national shapes—unequal bearers of a greater universality—strained outward in pullulating enterprises during the late Renaissance toward the rest of the globe.

Howsoever anachronistic the term for the increasingly global influences of Europe after 1600, Europeanization nicely includes the shifting ingredients within that universalizing amalgam of specifically Christian religious and of Classical secular origins. The medieval chivalric/courtly tradition, culminating in Castiglione's ideal courtier and the subsequent books of manners, further enhanced the secular, while developing the civil characteristics (cf. Scaglione, 64–67, 229–257). The definition of such ingredients and their transforming relationship, seen under the lens of Europe's expansion in America and more precarious penetration in Asia, will serve to extend our inquiry into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The recovery of Ptolemy's *Geography* in 1406–77 had allowed the practical application of Alexandrian mathematics to the interests of cartography and to supplying the vital intellectual component to the Age of Discovery. Mathematics, the most universalizing of all intellectual disciplines, provided a grid of coordinates that rendered the globe's surface uniformly homogeneous. America to the west and access to the Indian Ocean basin to the south and east represent the final achievements of the Renaissance and the decisive milestones in the European construction of the global arena. By the end of the sixteenth century Europe's initial engagement with the peoples of the earth was well advanced. Of that process the bitter, brutal realities of epidemic, conquest, enslavement, subjection do not concern us here. As an inquiry into the concurrent intellectual factor—and the dialectical restraint and critique advanced by its ideals—the present study turns to the shifting composition of attitudes harbored by Christian conversion expressive of the universalizing principle. What was the cultural face

in its entirety and in its components with which Europe intruded at this time upon the peoples of other cultures?

Certainly among the forces impelling the first half century of the missionary orders in the New World, the expressly religious stood uppermost: the spiritual drive by means of quick baptism to include the newly found children of Adam within the Christian fold before the impending end of time. With the coming of the Jesuits to the American scene, however, the more explicitly civil, secular dimension to the European impact upon the indigenous populations revealed itself. It had become a matter of missionary policy for the Jesuits, whether evangelizing in the Indies or in those *otras Indias,* such as the back alleys of Naples, first to establish "civility" before attempting baptism and formal conversion (Selwyn, 8). We are reminded of this connection by that notable authority on political geography, Giovanni Botero, when he writes in *Relationi universali* that there is nothing more alien to evangelical doctrine than unsociableness in our bearing and cruelty of mind, for Christ presents himself as gentle and humble of heart in which manner it was easier to inform them more effectively as to the meaning of humanity. We hear the apostle asking us to bear each other's burdens and in another place duly to respect our superiors—*ecco la somma della civiltà, e d'ogni gentilezza:*

> Thus I consider it the greatest advantage to the introduction of the faith that refinement, *(pulitezza)* whatever it may be, is introduced by government and by rule of the great princes in America, because it removes peoples from rudeness and from harshness, disposing them to the gentleness and pleasantness that so become the life of a Christian. (Botero, IV.ii.14)

The Classical seems here to inform, promote, and be fulfilled in the Christian. Despite the intimate association, even coalescence, of the two, the Classical and the Christian, the Jesuit program reflects the beginnings of a potential disengagement which becomes evident in the light of an earlier statement on this relationship. In the course of the Middle Ages the two had been so closely identified as to be indistinguishable and only with the Renaissance do the beginnings of a concept of "Civilization" emerge. Standing at the beginning of the Age of Discovery the Italian humanist historian Polydore Vergil, in concluding his rambling *De inventoribus rerum* with a section dating from 1521 entitled "The Preeminence of the Christian Commonwealth," identifies the civilizing process with the very heart and purpose of Christianity so that the later Jesuit priority is reversed and the civil manners and virtues are the gift, import, and consequence of the Christianizing.

The mission of Christianity is to civilize and to soften the ferocity of savagery with mild-tempered virtues, *pudici mores* (Hay, 77–78): "Thus it is generally recognized that only to the Christian Commonwealth has it been given to promote in the world the most perfect mode of living."[3]

It can be argued that although Vergil conceives of Christianity and civility as a single amalgam, one cake, he has, in giving the entirety a secular purpose, gone well beyond the later Jesuit program in understanding the relationship between the two and thus their potential separation. At any rate in the context of Spanish colonialism after 1570 the long-standing practice of the *reducciónes*, of resettling the Indians into urban contexts and using such enforced association to instill urban, civil customs of living, became extensively applied during the viceroyal administration of Francisco de Toledo in Peru. Such exposure of the Indian to the regularities and rationalities of the inherited classical *polis* conveyed, one hoped, that measure of *policía* which embodied what was understood by the later term Civilization. The broadly held assumption prevailed that living in towns meant becoming Christian and, even more, becoming true men. Implicitly Christianity/Civility/Humanity marched now together. And for the Spanish administrator the greatest of these was civility. Whatever the degree of failure, there can be no doubt as to the presence of the civilizing ideal in the purposes of the *reducción*, that urban/civic resettlement of the Amerindians, coexisting along with the religious as well as the economic and administrative purposes of the program (Headley 2000). Conversion to civility jostled conversion to Christ.

Before leaving the Americas let us consider for a moment the truly remarkable statement made by the mestizo priest Bartolomé de Alva to his diverse flock found in his *Confessionario* of 1634. Apparently responding to the news of the 1622 martyrdom of Christians in Nagasaki he exhorts in his native Nahuatl the fragile faithful of the New World:

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[3] "Palam igitur est solam Christianam rempublicam ad extremum perfectum vivendi modum in orbem terrarum induxisse" (p. 509). I am here preferring the text offered by Hay which comes from the Basle 1553 edition representing the text as Vergil left it for the last edition in his lifetime (Hay, p. 78; cf. p. 56, n. 1). Other versions of the same passage are less expansive in their connotation; the Estienne, 1528, 140^V reads: "In confesso igitur est, solam sacrosanctam Christianam rempublicam ad postremum perfectum vivendi modum introduxisse"; and Rome, 1585, p. 477 reads: "Palam igitur est, solam Christianam rempublicam ad extremum perfectum vivendi modum introduxisse." Here—and also with "mild tempered virtues" rather than "quiet virtues" for *pudici mores*—I have chosen to depart slightly from Hay's rendering.

> Turn your eyes back (better I should say forward) and look at the
> nation of the Japanese and others who, being your younger brothers
> in the faith and very modern and new in it, have left you far behind,
> being very firm and constant with the acts and demonstrations they
> have made. They do not have your superstitions and bad habits, . . .
> and [have] banished from their hearts the idolatry in which they
> blindly (like you) used to go along.[4]

In two respects this exhortation rewards pondering: first, in that it
manifests a totally new, global interconnectedness and responsive
energy; secondly, in its appeal to younger brothers, it asserts a Christ-
ian community and common humanity that transcend the distance of
oceans and the separation of continents. And this from the mouth of
one only part European.

In the western hemisphere the rampage of Iberian peoples had
rapidly led to the obliteration of at least three pre-Columbian civiliza-
tions and the almost breathtaking erection and imposition of a system
of Spanish Catholic brotherhood which incorporated the native pop-
ulation both religiously and legally. In the east, in Asia, however, mat-
ters proved very different indeed. There several ancient, well-estab-
lished "civilizations," confident, even complacent, in their superior
sophistication and maturity, could afford at least for two more centuries
to look down upon the apparently barbarian intruders. Hence it could
not be a matter of annihilating existing native societies and cultures
but rather living on sufferance in toeholds of trading posts and precar-
ious conditions of ephemeral recognition. Despite the previous medi-
eval and now continuing presence of the mendicant and religious
orders in Asia, the conditions of coexistence and contacts between the
European intruder and the indigenous populations would be dictated
there more by the issue of economics and commerce. Trade rather than
conquest and religious imposition distinguished relations. What with
the relatively unruffled continuance of great empires—Mughal and
Chinese—together with their religions, social systems, and customs,
the expressly cultural or more anachronistically civilizational issue
came to the fore, where anything like a Catholic Christian sweep
American style was quite out of the question. In Europe's reconsti-
tution and transformation of its universalizing features the initial cul-

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[4] John F. Schwaller, "Don Bartolomé de Alva: Nuhuatl Scholar of the Seventeenth
Century," in A Guide to Confession Large and Small in the Mexican Language, 1634, ed. Barry
D. Sell et al. (Norman, Okla., 1999), pp. 3–15 and 80–81. I want to thank Prof. Schwaller
for bringing this reference to my attention.

tural hesitancy, curiosity, and respect of the European would give way
ultimately to a growing self-confidence, arrogance and even disdain,
beyond our present inquiry (cf. Rubiés, Adas). But through its cultural
confrontation and engagement with China the expressly secular
dimensions of Europe in its civilizational register articulated them-
selves. All the more ironic that this shift in register from the preemi-
nently religious now to the preeminently cultural, technical, and civil
should itself be effected by the foremost religious order of the day—the
Jesuit.

If the more explicitly civil, secular aspect of our universalist com-
posite now asserts itself, given the different conditions in Asia, how
well did Renaissance Europe measure up to the other leading civiliza-
tions of the globe—Islamic, Indian, and Chinese? The recent analysis
of a long pervasive parable, shared largely among merchant communi-
ties, allows us to dispose of the first two civilizations at the outset and
concentrate upon China as the only effective competitor to an aspir-
ing European cultural hegemony. Readers of Marshall Hodgson espe-
cially will be shocked by such apparently arbitrary legerdemain and
even those most innocent of Muslim history can justifiably protest the
enormous contributions of Muslim culture to Latin Christendom down
to 1300—not to mention Islam's rival ecumenical ambitions.[5] After
that time, however, not only does the emerging European civilization
begin to pull ahead technologically, despite the economic contraction
following the Black Death, but the whole Islamic system, especially
Iran, suffers an even worse contraction and dislocations from the Mon-
gol invasions. Whatever the long-standing cultural preeminence of
Islamdom over Christendom during the Middle Ages, it is important
to recognize that in the very period 1300–1450/1500, which saw the
distinctive cultural revival in the Italian Renaissance, a more or less
general decadence and remission befalls the world of Islam stretching

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[5] In his *Islam and the West* (New York and Oxford, 1993) pp. 5–47 Bernard Lewis has
some interesting thoughts on the rival ecumenical ambitions of world religions of which he
identifies three—Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. Of the first and earliest, Buddhism
came to be rejected in its Indian homeland and became stalled in Southeast Asia. Islam
alone emerged to dispute with Christendom the idea that there is a single truth for all the
peoples of the earth and it is the duty of the faithful to share that truth by various means of
conversion. It may be opined here that no matter how much more effective and sensible in
practice the Muslim means of conversion have proven historically that whatever its poten-
tial universalism, it is skewed from the start by envisaging the present world as divided
between Dar al-Islam, the House of Islam, and Dar al-Harb, the House of War, constituting
everyone else. In contrast, Christianity, whatever its flawed practices, all too historically
evident, begins not with an almost ontological division between Muslims and *harbi* but
with the centralizing idea of a single, common humanity to be realized.

from Morocco to India and Southeast Asia (Hodgson, II, 362–385). Rather it will be in the mirror of China's acknowledged superiority as a civilization that Europe's understanding of itself as a more than viable competitor, a civilization, matures.

To the Venetian Nicolò Conti (c. 1385–1469), who traveled in Asia for more than thirty-five years, "India" signified the whole of mysterious Asia. In his long sojourning particularly in the central and southern parts of India proper the alert traveler made some comparisons which distinguish "India" into three parts, the third being everything beyond the Ganges that "excels the others in riches, politeness and magnificence and is equal to our own country in the style of life and in civili[ty]" (*vita et civili consuetudine nobis aequalis*). Good and bad, civilized and barbarous are determined according to their conformity to European practice: eating at table attests to Civilization, eating on a carpet to barbarism. Conti's idealization of what exists beyond the Ganges begins to pertain to "Cathay," China. While his account of China is based on hearsay, is anachronistic and partly mythical, Conti's Cathay is that of his oriental companions, who included Arab and Persian merchants and sometimes oriental Christians.

Focusing upon the European-like civilized model Conti goes on significantly to report: "The natives of India call us Franks, and say that while they call other nations blind, they themselves have two eyes and we have but one, because they consider that they excel all others in prudence." Confronted with the repeated recurrence of this comparison over the centuries, a remarkable analysis of the language, circumstances, persons, and contexts strongly argues against simple cases of textual borrowing. Indeed, as J. P. Rubiés has recently argued in his thorough analysis of the recurrence of this proverb in different authors, the use of this visual metaphor for comparing these levels of civilization enjoys wide support from late medieval/Renaissance European sources on Asia. In his historical/geographical report to Pope Clement V in 1307 regarding central Asia and the Mamluk power of Egypt, Prince Hayton of Armenia speaks of the people of Cathay:

> These people, who are so simple in their faith and in spiritual things, are wiser and subtler than all the other peoples in material works. And the Cathayans say that they alone see with two eyes and that the Latins see with one eye, but of the other nations they say that they are blind. And from this it can be understood that they see the other peoples as thick-witted.

Shortly afterwards the author of the *Book of Sir John Mandeville* appropriates the comparison, claiming for the Chinese with the two eyes

superior subtlety, malice, and wit, crediting the Christians with one eye "because they are the most subtle after them; but they say all the other nations do not see at all and that they are blind of science and artistry." In all of this exchange we recognize in the making the cultural criteria of Civilization, absent the explicitly religious. *Res* long precedes *verbum*.

Perhaps the best independent source for this parable of civilizations derives from the account of a Castilian embassy to Timur's court at Samarqand in 1404 with its display of different goods from various peoples:

> And the goods that are imported into this city from Cathay are the best and most precious of all those brought thither from other parts, and those from Cathay say it themselves, that they are the subtlest people in the whole world; and they say that they see with two eyes, and the Moors are blind, and the Franks have one eye, and that they have an advantage over all the nations of the world in the things that they make.

Most interesting here is the clear distinction among three levels of civilization according to the production of sophisticated commodities and the designation of these other nations as essentially the Moors (=Muslims). As a fifth source for the proverb Iosafa Barbaro, relating in 1487 his embassy to Persia, reports on the King of Persia allowing that "the world has three eyes, the Cathayans have two and the Franks one." Barbaro's anecdote has further interest in that it suggests such a view had spread as a result of the devastation produced by the Mongol and Turkish invasions of the late Middle Ages—invasions that rocked Islamdom. The consequent reconfiguration of the earth's peoples revealed a conception of a world that had two main centers of civility at its two extremes—East and West—a view that even had some currency among leading Muslim intellects: in the fourteenth century the great Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta declares that "the Chinese are of all peoples the most skillful in the arts and possessed of the greatest mastery of them"; and at the turn of the century Ibn Khaldun observes, "We further hear now that the philosophical sciences are greatly cultivated in the land of Rome and along the adjacent northern shore of the country of the European Christians."

The proverb about the superior wisdom and civility of the Chinese became common to sixteenth-century Europe. The Portuguese humanist chronicler Joâo de Barros in the third of his Asian *Décadas* (1563) explains:

> And in the same way as the Greeks thought that in respect of them-
> selves all other nations were barbarian, similarly the Chinese say that
> they have two eyes of understanding concerning all things, that we
> Europeans, after they have communicated with us, have one eye, and
> that all other nations are blind. And truly . . . these gentiles have all
> those things for which Greeks and Latins are praised.

Remarkable here is the shift of Franks or even Christians to Europeans,
or more exactly "those from Europe" (os da Europa) and the alignment
of the Chinese with the ancient Greeks and Romans as a model of Civ-
ilization. Furthermore de Barros essentially consolidates from the prov-
erb the maturing European appreciation of China as the most civilized
kingdom of the world, an attitude which would be soon reaffirmed by
Botero himself (Relationi universali, II.ii) and persist in Europe until the
eighteenth century (by which time Europe had managed to acquire a
second eye!).[6]

By the closing decades of the sixteenth century tiny Europe, having
established a network of carreras, or maritime highways, throughout
the world and having thus created the global arena for her further
enterprise, was now positioned for a more sustained engagement with
the superior Chinese civilization whether the Middle Kingdom wanted
it or not. Although the subsequent contacts would be formally con-
ducted by Catholic religious orders, especially Jesuits and Franciscans,
it would be on the more secular level of a comparable civility and a
superior technology rather than that of the expressly Christian and
religious that the issue of universality would be contested. And in the
Jesuit Matteo Ricci's effort to convert by civil means to a Christianity
of Catholic renewal the largest and grandest civilization that history
had yet produced, we encounter one of the supreme moments of the
human intellect comparable, howsoever impossible and abortive, on
the historical/social level to Kepler's contemporaneous charting of the
orbit of Mars, each equally universal in its own way and equally expres-
sive of our universalist principle.

Founded in the mid-sixteenth century, the Society of Jesus had, by

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[6] I welcome the opportunity to express my gratitude to Joan-Pau Rubiés for allowing
me to use these passages culled from his very recent study, first made available to me in type-
script by Cambridge University Press for the purpose of obtaining my professional opinion.
In more recent correspondence with the author I have since learned that the history of this
proverb, which appears rather compressed in the present magisterial study (pp. 113–116),
will appear more fully in a separate article.

1615, 13,500 members active throughout the world. Indeed the new Jesuit international announced the coming of the global age. It has been perceptively claimed that "the Jesuits were the first planetary men, the first in whom the world network became, to some degree, a world system" (Adshead 1995, 242). In their vast enterprise of world evangelization China figured as the preeminent task; in fact from the Columbian beginnings China had been the express goal and Francis Xavier had early recognized that the conversion of the whole East depended on that of China. So imperative seemed the winning of China that it would become an obsession of the Jesuits (Cummins, 85). Yet the Christianization of the most advanced civilization on earth did not present itself as a simple matter of bagging another people and its beliefs for Christ; rather it raised the most profound and intricate problems. Where and how to direct one's efforts? And how far down the road of engagement could one go without losing one's own identity? And then there was the problem of gaining access in the first place to a highly xenophobic Ming China.

From his arrival in China from Macao in 1583 to his reaching Peking in 1601 Matteo Ricci kept his gaze fixed upon winning over the emperor. It had long been a practice of the Jesuits first to seek out the ruler and make their appeal to the ruling class. Here Ricci and his associate Michele Ruggieri had initially stumbled in assuming the attributes of Buddhist monks, appealing thereby to the people at large, which could quickly lead nowhere. Better to direct one's efforts to the mandarin bureaucracy, appear as a mandarin, not only dressed in crisp silks and hoisted about in a sedan chair, but also a most learned mandarin, prepared to extend—in impeccable Chinese—Christianity laced with the fruits of European science and technology. As a student of the great Clavius at Rome, who had effected the Gregorian calendar, Ricci was supremely well equipped both in natural and in moral philosophy. During a period of eighteen years of careful planning, study, and sending such devices as maps, a clavichord, and a clock, to Peking, Ricci had to make some fateful decisions. While directing his efforts to winning over the ruling class and insinuating himself into the emperor's palace, Ricci and company had to determine the correct Chinese term for the deity, a notion otherwise lacking to the Chinese. Here the closest arrived at but never completely successful was *Tian*, which had the sense of the Master of Heaven. More formidable appeared the issue of determining the nature of the rites performed by the Chinese to honor their ancestors, practices deeply ingrained in the entire social matrix. Eschewing the least hint of Christian exclusivity and advancing every effort at accommodation, Ricci fatefully interpreted such practices as

signifying a civic rather than religious cult and proceeded to fortify his tenuous position with an appeal to Probabilism (Cummins, 44–45).

As a product of the late-sixteenth-century groundswell of Stoic revival in Europe Ricci also advanced a minimalist brand of Christian Stoicism, more Grotian according to one perceptive author, than Erasmian, in his ambitious accommodationist program (Miller 110–127). As in the beginning, so now, Stoicism once more would recommend itself to the task of comprehensiveness and inclusion. Chinese sensibilities were not to be ruffled by the *scandalon* of a crucified God: here the China mission of Ricci would be reluctant to display the crucifix. Furthermore in his Chinese catechism six of the seven sacraments remained unmentioned. By reducing Christian teaching to natural reason Ricci obviously sought to construct a common basis for both civilizations. In this respect certainly the most arresting and daring of his intellectual enterprises was to identify and construct from the Chinese past a monotheism that could effectively serve as a *praeparatio evangelica* (Cummins, 46–47).

In this huge effort to reveal an inchoate monotheism of indigenous Chinese belief Ricci fixed on the remote, shadowy figure of the sage Kongzi, otherwise Kong Fuzi, Italianized to "Il Confutio" from which would derive by 1689 the Latinized equivalent Confucius. Ricci envisaged this task as a reduction of China, her civilization, and the main thread of her past to Confucius and the moral philosophy associated with him. *Ru,* insofar as being the lettered followers of Confucius, tend to become for Ricci the mirror image of the Jesuits. What Ricci took to be their laws of the literati *(legge de' letterati)* conformed to natural light *(il lume naturale)* and to Christian truth. Ricci claimed sole legitimacy for his identification and interpretation of the tradition of the *Xianru,* in short, Kongzi's authentic teaching. In proceeding by means of Renaissance philology far across the bridge to an entirely other system of belief, Ricci probably never realized how much of his own he had been forced to relinquish. On the basis of an apparently common rationality and moral philosophy Chinese and Jesuit seem to metamorphose into each other. He reveals his own self-understanding of his own achievement: "We have acquired much by pulling Confutio over to our opinion." By the time of his death in 1610 the authority of the Jesuit interpretation of a primordial monotheistic lettered tradition had obtained recognition by some Chinese. Succeeding generations of missionaries would sustain it and some of the Jesuit membership, especially Ferdinand Verbiest as Director of the Bureau of Astronomy, would enjoy high appointments in the imperial bureaucracy (Jensen, 7, 61, 90–94, 108–112, 283).

The Jesuits proved equally adroit in drawing a European public to their accommodationist achievement. From 1662 to the end of the century, Jesuit translations of Chinese texts disclosing the latent Christianity of the Chinese began to appear on European bookstalls. Published in the same year as Newton's *Principia mathematica*, the *Confucius sinarum Philosophus* (Paris, 1687) marked the most deliberate statement in that process of selling China to an already supremely Sinophilic European readership. This composite work of many hands coins for the first time the term "Confucian." Through the workings of those tricky Greek suffixes, the "isms," Confucianism would be progressively reified in the European imagination. Among rulers subscribing to this enthusiastic appropriation of China and the Chinese can be listed Louis XIV and shortly Frederick William I, King of Prussia; among the intellectual leadership the numbers are legion, including Newton and Leibniz. Nevertheless the most notable single appropriation of Confucianism by the Enlightenment comes with the Amsterdam 1758 edition of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers*. There amidst the traditional thinkers of classical antiquity could now be found a ninety-page exposition of Confucius and Confucianism (Jensen, 8, 112, 118, 121, 146). By such a simple alignment of the Confucian Chinese with the classical inheritance, a bridge to Chinese civilization had been created for its apparent inclusion into the expansive European on the basis of a shared civility and natural law. Something distinctively new, a new confidence, a new civility long maturing, a new civilization capable of contending with the most ancient, extensive, established, had in the meantime come into being; its leadership, from Leibniz to Metternich, from Gibbon to Burke, would recognize it as a single country, Europe, a single culture, European.[7]

Contrasting ironically to the apparently huge indifference and xenophobia of China, the xenophilia of Europe had increasingly come

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[7] Admittedly, the momentary experience of a European, presumably enlightened civilization would prove most fragile and subject to pluralization both within and without western Europe. Immediately prior to the French Revolution and the explosion of nationalism and nation-states the multicellular nature of European culture and civilized life afforded a transcellular civilization to emerge as expressive of general human civilization. The celebrated notion of a "commonwealth of Christian Europe"—suggestive of that new common cultural reality which had come to displace what had heretofore been a religious/ ecclesiastical Empire—Burke would see shattered by the chaos of revolutionary upheaval. The concept of Civilization would soon become pluralized both internally within Europe itself along the most strident nationalist line—French, German, *civilisation/Kultur*—and externally beyond Europe as Europeans had increasingly to contend with other peoples, societies, and cultures where the hegemonic would have to give way in time to a taxonomic, pluralistic view of civilizations—of peoples, their respective cultures and societies,

to be focused upon and even mesmerized by China. Most immediately this express Sinophilia has been interpreted as working to the benefit of the moderns over the ancients. But more in keeping with the theme of our inquiry here, the European espousal of Confucianism and things Chinese, made possible on the presumption of a common rationality and civility, suggests a further displacement of the expressly Christian from the original amalgam of universality. Yet it is not our intention here to argue for the greater expansion of the universalizing principle to the total evacuation of its religious ingredient, nor for any simple process of secularization. The identifiably Christian component never entirely disappears but is transmuted and continues to exercise a potentially beneficent effect upon the more aggressive, expansive, ramifying manifestations of the universalizing principle. In the restructuring of the universalizing principle, at the expense of the specifically Christian to the enhancement of Europe considered as a self-conscious, coherent civilization, a natural ethic for morals, a natural law in politics, and even a natural religion all afforded to the potential outsider and more immediately to the European insider a relatively neutral ground, appealing to that presumed rationality that becomes a human being.

In many ways Leibniz's *Novissima Sinica (The Latest Chinese News)* of 1697/1699 represents the culmination of European Sinophilia. Coming shortly after the great Kangxi Emperor's edict of toleration 1692 for Christians in the Middle Kingdom, it signifies the long work and attitude of conciliation on the part of a European philosopher which had included the Christian churches but now extended to different civilizations in the interests of achieving a universal jurisprudence, an overarching practical philosophy, a common civility. For Leibniz begins by noting in his Preface that human cultivation and refinement appear today to be concentrated at the two extremes of the continent— Europe and China. One vies to learn from and surpass the other.

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each organized into its appropriate civilization. The ambiguity—or better the internal tension—between the transnational/universal implication of Civilization as a superior ideal and the exclusive, national manifestations of same, "between process and achieved fact," must wait for the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries to be worked out. I want to thank Jerry Bentley for providing me with proofs of Prasenjit Duara's forthcoming article in the *Journal of World History* 12/1 (2001): 99–130, esp. 105–107, 123–125, as well as for reminding me of Febvre's article, here esp. 241–247 and for bringing to my attention, alas, at the final stage of this article's redaction for publication, Garth Fowden's arresting study of universalism and monotheism in an earlier time and space. Fowden's concept of commonwealth would extend to the entirety of the Western development and thus uniquely omit from it any prior stage of world empire, even apparently in an ecclesiastical guise. On the decisively multi-cellular character of European/Western civilization see Jones, 124.

In profundity of knowledge and in the theoretical disciplines we are
their superiors. For besides logic and metaphysics, and the knowledge
of things incorporeal, which we justly claim as peculiarly our province,
we excel by far in the understanding of concepts which are abstracted
by the mind from the material, i.e., in things mathematical, as is in
truth demonstrated when Chinese astronomy comes into competition
with our own. The Chinese are thus seen to be ignorant of that great
light of the mind, the art of demonstration, and they have remained
content with a sort of empirical geometry, which our artisans univer-
sally possess. They also yield to us in military science, not so much out
of ignorance as by deliberation. For they despise everything which
creates or nourishes ferocity in men, and almost in emulation of the
higher teachings of Christ (and not, as some wrongly suggest, because
of anxiety), they are averse to war. They would be wise indeed if they
were alone in the world. (Leibniz/Lach 68–69)

While Europe surpasses China in matters theoretical, mathematical,
and especially military, the Chinese prove superior to Europeans in the
precepts of civil life—a shameful admission for Leibniz, a Christian, to
affirm. If we have advanced, as the epigraph suggests, from our one-
eyed condition to acquiring another eye for understanding things
incorporeal, the Chinese manifest a superior exercise of practical, civil
philosophy. So great and admirable does Chinese civility appear in its
idealization by Leibniz that he posits the highly unlikely, incongruous
diaspora of Chinese missionaries to Europe to instruct us in a more per-
fect manner of living, despite the superior gift of Christian revelation
granted to Europeans. For a Europe slipping into ever greater corrup-
tion daily, the Chinese missionary thrust might teach Europeans the
use and practice of natural religion and assist in advancing the bound-
aries of natural law and the jurisprudence of humanity (Lach, 68–75;
Riley).

While maintaining close relations with the Jesuits, Leibniz sought
to arouse Protestant Europe to emulate the Jesuit missions in order to
effect the greater good of their faith, country, and humankind. He espe-
cially placed his hopes in Brandenburg Prussia. In 1700 he wrote to the
Elector Frederick III regarding the opportunities awaiting therewith:

> ... Particularly since nowhere among the Protestants has such a foun-
> dation been laid as in Berlin for Chinese *Literatura et propaganda fide*.
> Moreover, and with the help of the special dispensation of Providence,
> the uncommonly good personal relations with the Czar opens a wide
> gate to Great Tartary and to magnificent China. Through this gate

not only goods and wares but also light and knowledge may find an
entrance into this other civilized world and "Anti-Europe. . . ." (Lach,
52)

This Anti-Europe, this magnificent China had apparently in its
emperor and the obedience of his people achieved that Platonic har-
mony or justice, attaining to a sort of mathematics of justice implicit
in the Platonic ideal, where justice and mercy are not occasional or
arbitrary but eternal truths like the very nature of things as numbers
and fixed proportions. Leibniz's thought moved relentlessly to a justice
marked by balance, harmony, and a charity of the wise: *justitia est car-
itas sapientis seu benevolentia universalis*. In this cosmos of reliable ideals
Christ had only become necessary because humans use their reason
poorly. Writing in 1697 to Father Claudio Grimaldi, Leibniz will in
effect shelve the necessity of Christian revelation and allow that God
aids all those of good will by means of another kind of grace (*alio gra-
tiae*). He can await the unlikely arrival of those Chinese missionaries
with the natural religion and universal benevolence that Europeans
had apparently lost (Riley, 228–235). Yet in the very criticism of his
own civilization in the mirror of that of China and in his very forsak-
ing of the specifically Christian for a rational charity of universal
benevolence Leibniz had distinguished a quality that would increas-
ingly characterize the operation of Christianity in the modern world,
howsoever offensive to the Arnaulds and the Augustinians of his and
future generations.

In the course of the eighteenth century the great love affair of the
West with China began to wane. A significant change in European val-
ues effected this important shift in perceptions from an enthusiasti-
cally positive to an increasingly disdainful, negative outlook. Leibniz's
view reflected the essentially Jesuit version of China which still pre-
vailed in 1700: a well disciplined, stable society based on the respected
authority of parents, tradition, and the emperor. Nevertheless this tra-
ditional, patriarchal order failed to address for the European the rising
tide of interest in human relations, in spontaneity, creativity, and
progress. Adherence to the past and its traditions now seemed less
admirable and promotive only of stagnation. China came to be judged
as wanting in terms of military power, effective government, and tech-
nical/scientific knowledge. The former principle of civility seemed to
retreat before the Enlightenment's confidence in progress, science, and
the ideal of individual, personal achievement. More specifically, per-
ceptions had soured, especially those of the British whose rising impa-

tience and arrogance fretted before the apparently blind, obstructive
conservatism of the Celestial Empire. By 1778 Dr. Johnson delivered
himself of a magnificent condemnation of the Chinese as barbarians,
allowing them only the single accomplishment of pottery (Marshall
and Williams, 175–177; Kiernan, 152–155).

Indeed by the end of the eighteenth century Europe had developed
sufficient political, economic, and technical/scientific power to over-
run the globe. Fortunately it is not our task here to attempt to follow
this story any further but rather to conclude by suggesting a few reflec-
tions on the relationship between the original religious framework of a
society and its later development with the more secular construct of a
civilization. Given her natural expansiveness and inclusiveness inher-
ited from the Christian chrysalis, having by 1800 forsaken all effective
religious constraints, Europe—or more exactly European national
states—overwhelmed the globe in the course of the next century and
a half in a dominance and exploitation by rival imperialisms that would
only be broken after the mid-twentieth century, following upon the
near suicide of the West in two world wars. Yet in the meantime among
the neo-Europes that had been spawned in the Western hemisphere,
one of them would manage to salvage the rich intellectual and cultural
resources of this extraordinary civilization.

In concluding we wish to accent three stages through which we have
attempted to perceive and analyze the process of universalization as a
single theme among many in our history: initially the religious/ecclesi-
astical/Christian, best manifest in the medieval church and its render-
ing of Roman law; with the increasing emphasis upon classical, secular
elements in the course of the Renaissance, Europe as a distinct, self-
conscious civilization matures, ultimately facing down the acknowl-
edged preeminent civilization of China; after 1800 the new construct
of consolidated power that has been emerging earlier as the nation-
state in its particular manifestations overwhelms the world as well as
itself in a third stage that begins to feature the agency of "the West."[8]
The motifs of superiority, dominance, and exploitation, developing in

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[8] While the Western identity and orientation of our civilization has a long pedigree—
beginning first at that moment when Zeus in the form of a magnificent bull decides to bear
the delectable Europa westward—reinforced by the administrative division of the Roman
Mediterranean world by Diocletian into two parts, *occidentalis* and *orientalis*, plus the west-
ward trek of *translatio imperii* and *studii*, followed by the Columbian experience, it is not
until the late nineteenth century that the term "the West," according to David Gress (p.
558), comes to displace European to represent the entire collectivity of our civilization.

the second stage and explicitly realized in the third, subside necessarily in the aftermath of imperialism and colonialism, broken for a more chastened Europe by the event of two world wars. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 a seemingly unique opportunity occurs for attending to the ideal of human rights, hitherto secondary and at times barely perceptible within the universalizing process, but now recognized as part of the larger impact of the West. Had the moment come to advance now more significantly, if only in small stages, the ideals of humanity and equality constituting the inclusive factor in the universalizing principle, thereby beginning to redress the scars of former inequities?

We end by returning to the Vichian statement of the Marquis de Mirabeau, apparently the first minter of the term "civilization," and to the problem of the relationship of the original religious beginnings of a society to its efflorescence into a civilization. By the time that Mirabeau writes, the roles of Religion and Civilization have become reversed. Religion is a function of Civilization. What had started as love and community of all humankind had somehow developed by 1800 into the elaboration and deployment of a number of forces into a global context, forces that seemed more expressive of Power than of Love. Indeed the Jesuits had been able to extend their tenure in China largely by serving as cannon founders for the war machine of the Qing emperors (Waley-Cohen, 1531). The universalizing agent in Western civilization, while it had not lost all of its original religious focus and momentum, had provided the modern or postmodern world with two universalizing forces either directly or indirectly: first, the political, broadly conceived, not in terms of dominance or express forms of government but rather in the workings of human equality, rationality, and dignity affecting moral attitudes, practices, and law; and second, the other, expressly intellectual and scientific, affirming a rational, sovereign Legislator whose physical universe may be decoded by his rational creatures as evinced in the technological, scientific current shaping the present world. Two other forces, currently claimed as constituting elements in the Western impact upon the globe—namely, world capitalism and constitutional democracy—howsoever important, appear historically contingent and not attributable to the inner logic of the universalizing principle, as understood here. With the properly political and the intellectual, we recognize characteristics that make these two remaining forces integral to the universalizing impulses of the original Classical/Christian amalgam. Perhaps the best encapsulation of the intellectual force is provided by Ernest Gellner when he refers to the Sovereignty of Knowledge deriving from Descartes (1988: 116–

118)—and one might add Socrates—namely, that cognitive and technological mental cast, although the distinctive product of one culture,
yet truly now a "culture-transcending knowledge" that will inevitably
have to be engaged by all peoples of the earth in a sort of cognitive
replumbing of each society for better or for worse (1992: 71, 77–79).

There remains one strand, ultimately political in its moral and legal
dimensions, that gives unity to the picture presented here and, if often
forgotten and poorly pressed, represents the most attractive feature of
the Western universalizing principle; it is based upon the belief in an
essentially rational Humanity, the extension of a rule by law in programs of human rights to all the peoples of the earth—or as Second
Isaiah would announce in another register with a culture-transcending
resonance, *Vox Clamantis in Deserto*.[9]

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[9] Coincidentally, as this article was being prepared for printing I encountered the
recent book by John Diggins, *On Hallowed Ground,* and could not help being struck by the
similarity of our perspectives, although approached from different ends. In its quest to reidentify the essential nature and historical import of America through the Lockean inheritance and the liberal consensus, the book manages effectively to carry forward from the
Enlightenment into the present the basic perspective advanced here.

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