Democratic Limitations on Diversity and Pluralism?

I The Challenging Question

I have been asked to offer a response to a most challenging question: ›What (if any) limits ought democratic pluralism impose on diversity within a cross-cultural context?‹

In responding to the question by taking up the issues it raises, I will not engage in philosophical theorizing in search of answers in the form of universally and necessarily true principles by which to determine the need for, and how to impose, limitations on democratic pluralism. Rather, I regard the question as an opportunity to join others in giving thought to how best to resolve vexing conditions affecting associated living – political life – within, between, and among persons and groupings of persons comprising socio-political formations of various forms and scales – including organizations, institutions, and polities (the latter ranging in size from villages to nation-states) – that are conditioned, internally and/or through external relations, by significant diversities (cultural and otherwise).

Considerations of how best to respond to the question should, in my judgment, be disciplined by an understanding that whether, how, to what extent, and by whom limitations might need to be, should be, *imposed* on diversity, and imposed *democratically*, must, as well, be determined and imposed, if at all, *democratically*. That is to say, not determined solely by an appeal to, and on the basis of, the results of engaging in philosophical theorizing in a quest for guiding principles thought (mistakenly) to be invariant, true, and appropriate universally, theorizing that purportedly also secures the authority of the successful theorizer(s) to impose the principles. Endeavors of philosophical theorizing on such an authoritative and authoritarian quest and endeavors of democratic praxis in political life are two entirely different enterprises, and are governed by entirely different criteria, modes of praxis, and possibilities of success with quite different con-

sequences for affected polities and persons. Such theorizing is not a democratic venture.

There are many, much-too-long and continuing, traditions (misguided in my judgment, though not in mine alone) of aspiring and endeavoring to have philosophical theorizing about matters political determine and impose ›universal‹ and invariant ›right‹ principles on the ordering of political life. And quite often, central to this theorizing quest has been the determination, the requirement, that the principles of ordering displace factors of unessential or ›morally irrelevant‹ diversity in favor of some factor of ›essential‹ sameness in all relevant persons that is to serve as the foundational anchorage to which the universal principles are to be connected.

In what follows, then, in the way of an initial response to the challenging question directed to my attention, I will offer considerations that are not at all intended to specify limitations, general or specific, but, rather, considerations of several of the issues most poignant in the question that, I propose, might be among those taken up by persons interested in the question and involved in thinking and working through challenges to life in political formations in which the issues carried by the focal question command their attention. What I offer, then, are considerations for democratic discussion and debate. First, though, more about the challenging question.

II Parsing the Question: ›Diversity‹ and ›Pluralism‹

The question put to me is pregnant with several notions that have reference to complicated conditions of particular forms and instances of political life: ›democratic pluralism,‹ thus ›democracy‹ and plurality; ›pluralism‹; ›diversity‹ (same as or different from ›plurality?‹); cross-›cultural contexts‹; ›imposed limits‹ on diversity by ›democratic pluralism.‹ Important work is required to flesh out each of these notions, and to understand them in their relatedness within the configuration of a single question emergent from concerns with particular historical conditions. And, to my mind, it is important, in taking up the question, to test, and verify the adequacy of its formulation as a means by which to refer to historical conditions of political life by specifying, as fully as possible, the relevant constitutive particulars of those conditions that give rise to the issues encompassed by the

question. As a contribution to this fleshing out, I offer the following initial considerations.

First, regarding ›diversity.‹ This is a fundamental characteristic of what we have come to ›know,‹ provisionally, about the wee bit of the vast and at present, practically speaking, mostly unknowable universe within which our species is but one among many that currently persist on planet earth. (Achieving knowledge by our own means of the existence of other forms of ›life‹ elsewhere throughout the universe is presently beyond our capabilities.) Our species-existence is radically contingent; our possible, probable, likely, and preferred futures are more or less open and uncertain. We persist on a constantly changing planet that is situated in, is part of, a dynamic universe the time-and-space dimensions of which far exceed our efforts of knowing and our practical and other efforts to fully control our lives and destinies (to say nothing at all about our inability to control any aspects of the universe beyond planet earth), and within which there are processes of coming-to-be and passing-away – we might say process of ›emergence,‹ ›development,‹ and ›entropy,‹ decline leading to death – that are beyond our complete control.

Further, our precarious, always contingent species-persistence is situated in various earth-bound environmental locales that condition, in very substantial ways and to varying extents, our evolving embodiment and how the necessities for continued living are satisfied (temporarily), both in contending with the natural world to secure food, clothing, and shelter, and in forging and sustaining social order in and through which to sustain life as shared ventures. (And persistence is a shared venture, beyond the capabilities of any lone human being.) Having dispersed throughout planet earth and, so far, continuing to persist (as a species, particular groupings having come and gone) in and through multiple self-reproducing populations, bio-cultural group-distinguishing differences have emerged and continue to be perpetuated as changing related sets of distinguishing biological and cultural (bio-cultural) characteristics (evolution).

Within these diverse groupings, all involved in cross-generational reproduction and conservation, biologically and culturally, our species-persistence in different and changing environs is enabled, more or less, by developed repertories of learning-enabled capabilities, more or less refined through further learning, and propagated across generations. These repertories are conducive, more or less, to the forging of forms of ordered living-together while satisfying the

necessities of living and reproduction within a variety of forms of life in occupied socialized and politicized environs. In other words, by means of learned bio-culturally reproductive living-together, substantial numbers of our species survive to reproduce and to secure well-being in various forms of associated living, in polities, on various terms of association, aided by the formulation, institutionalization, and propagation of schemes of meaning (ideologies; narrations of origins and missions; religions and theologies; philosophical systems) that are devised to define and guide the construction and maintenance of the forms of life-stabilizing orderliness, synchronically and diachronically, socially and politically. Thus, the *group* continues cross-generationally while individuals constituting each generation subsequently pass away.

The agendas guiding such constructed meaning-schemes are developed within the various forms of life and prove their veracity by the extent to which, beyond sheer chance, individual and shared life is sustained. Accordingly, the meaning-ordering agendas structuring and ordering lives and forms of life are conditioned and conditional, are experimental, though, as is often the case, the agendas tend to be buttressed by ›canopies‹ of meta-meanings, sometimes made sacred, constructed and invoked to provide protection from competitive challenges of other agendas and from various forms of entropy (Berger 1990). These buttressing efforts become even more demanding (and are generally thought to be necessary by those taking responsibility for protecting the form of life) when individuals, and groupings of individuals, who are patriotic to key aspects of an ordered form of life enter into competitive relations with other patriots regarding the terms of order or the guiding agenda of a cultural group or patriotic guardians of a form of life, or when the commanding patriots (leaders) of polities enjoin competitive relations with patriots of other polities. Competition developed into strife, warfare, genocide – such continues to constitute too much of the history of our species-being.

Institutions – institutionalizations of ordering schemes of meaning and life-sustaining modes of praxis, fortified by schemes of conceptualizations and justifying, legitimating, rationalizations that specify the roles, the distribution and filling of roles, thus the distribution of power, in and through which socio-political life is ordered – have emerged from human efforts across centuries as *the* principal resource by which to stave off entropy that would lead to the death of all while sustaining, and even, sometimes, advancing

(i. e., promoting the evolutionary successes of), the longevity and well-being of the group and (at least some of) its members, of those assisted by (at least some of) its members.[1] Through institutionalized constructions of politicized identities and agendas for the making of socialized and politicized histories, agendas, and identities that are incorporated into narrations of histories made and/or fabricated, and incorporated into projections of possible and desired futures, all contingently secured by rationalizations and justifications of prevailing and/or desired forms of individual and shared life along with specifications of which persons and sub-groupings will fulfill roles of superordination and subordination, become characteristically definitive of persistent, politicized forms of life in equally politicized locales. Consequently, the processes, natural and human-made, that condition the forging of the contingent orderliness of existence – of the attempts to impose order and regularity upon cross-generational coming-to-be and passing-away – thus give rise to the myriad forms of diversity *and* similarity of forms of associated life in and through which evolutionary bio-cultural processes provide the means by which always precarious survival is achieved and sustained *in the circumstances*.

Hence, our species' anthropological diversity, micro and macro – that is, regarding each individual relative to other individuals (uniquely different while sharing species-determining characteristics); regarding each bio-cultural self-reproducing group relative to other such groups. (And of particular importance, this same diversity is an important factor that enhances the species' prospects for evolutionary success and persistence.) Thus, the plurality of politicized forms of life, of shared agendas for living in diverse polities, though the sharing tends always to be skewed by unbalanced distributions of power among subgroups within the politicized forms of life, within polities. Sustaining polities as ongoing ordered and stable forms of associated life thus requires strenuous cross-generational efforts. Among other important reasons, because individuals, too, differ. And these differences are marshaled into competing subgroups that become socio-politically ordered by various forms of superordination and subordination that facilitate oppression and exploitation. The hierarchical orderings, and the oppression and exploitation, are always rationalized by naturalizing appeals to distinguishing characteristics of both

[1] For a generalized account of the formation of institutions, of the fortification of institutions conceptually and socially, see Berger, and Luckmann (1967).

oppressors and those oppressed, characteristics that are conscripted into religious, theological, philosophical, socio-anthropological, and political justifications and legitimations of the politicized ordering. Diversity becomes a conscript of injustice.

Still, diversity is definitive of our species-being, and of the particular portion of the known universe that our species inhabits. ›Pluralism,‹ in one sense, is a term we use, when referring to salient differences of various kinds among human individuals and human groupings, to acknowledge and affirm the anthropological facticity of our species-diversities. Among the significant challenges to forging and sustaining forms of associated life inclusive of acknowledged diversities, social and individual, forms that have been ordered on terms that maximize the possibilities for justice in associated living for virtually all without invidious discrimination against particular differences, have been the predominance of persistent failures to learn, or our failure to maximize what has been learned about, how to resolve competitive conflicts that block intra-and inter-group learning that enhance survival and well-being for more than a few who favor themselves and those they regard as ›their own.‹ Of course, there are the challenges imposed by the studied, sometimes murderous determinations of the few within polities in which they exert dominance to preserve their positions of superordination, in some cases through socially organized (and in some instances violence-backed) propagation of ideological predominance, in others through biological succession wedded to political predominance (hereditary regimes). In these instances, the persistence of injustice is not a consequence of ignorance.

Where ignorance is a significant factor, the challenges are generated not only by our not knowing due to having failed to learn, but are compounded by the limits to our knowing, thus our limited knowledges, structured by the limits to our natural and culturally-enhanced capabilities and strategies for coming to know: by the limits to the span of individual lives, and by the natural as well as socio-cultural forms of entropy that have not been (perhaps cannot be) completely eradicated from efforts to preserve through institutionalizations what has been learned (by some) and to mediate the learnings to (some) others of successive generations. Among other things, these limitations leave us without, leave us unable to produce, enduring certainties about our existence beyond the seeming certainty of

the ineradicable radical contingency and uncertainty that define our existence.

Moreover, we have also been left with, and continue to perpetuate, learnings mal-distributed: that is, favoring the existence-enhancing learning of some at the expense of others thereby curtailing, if not endangering, the prospects for success and well-being for virtually all in a polity, more broadly endangering the prospects for well-being for our species *as a whole*. The mal-distributions of learnings and the failures to uptake learnings; that neglect or reject the cultivation of the fullest possible learning by each and all able and willing to learn; that neglect or reject the cultivation of maximum openness of virtually all to the possibility of learning from each and all, individuals and polities, seriously devalue the potential for life-enhancing contributions to prevailing and future forms of life, to our polities, even to the evolutionary successes of our species, that can be had through ever widening distributions and sharings in the riches of the bio-cultural evolutionary successes of our species-diversities already produced, that provide important lessons for how to work at resolving challenges, how to create and enjoy beauty, how to live well so as to enhance the prospects for prolonging our species-being.

III ›Diversity,‹ ›Democracy,‹ ›Limitations‹

Cultivation of openness to and respect for our species-diversities; of openness to entertaining, possibly learning from, ideas regarding, and accomplished living in, various forms of associated life and through diverse individual lives; of openness to the diverse forms of wonder and beauty consequent of unpredictable human creativity giving rise, when socialized, to diverse cultures – these are among the many great possibilities (and many more actualities across the history of our species) of benefits of being oriented by notions of, being committed to valorizations of, and being studiously engaged in practices to effect cooperative *democratic* life, locally, between, and among various persons, groups, and forms of encultured life, various polities. It is toward these benefits that notions of *democracy* continue to be worked at directing us: toward developing and putting into practical effect revised and refined conceptualizations, valorizations, and practices tending toward equalization of respect and regard for persons, groupings of persons, polities of persons, and groupings of polities engaged

in various relations having to do with sharing life within and across polities and locales on our shared and increasingly precarious planet.

Or so this is now what pursuits of *democracy* have come to involve. It was not always so. The range of the denotation of ›democracy‹ from many of its earliest connotations and implementations was far from as extensive as is the case at present. Refining conceptions, broadening the ranges of connotation and denotation, have been hard won efforts across centuries and could only have been conceived and put into play, in political life and in other dimensions, in keeping with successes in battles to gain *freedom and justice* for those kept beyond the valorized and valorizing range of inclusion in the concept's prevailing meanings and practical effects. Conceptions, valorizations, and endeavors conditioned by notions of *democracy* have been forged, continue to be refined and set to practice, in efforts to resolve some of the most vexing challenges to associated life that have to do with injustices. Pertinent in this regard is the difficult work of managing inter-group relations democratically, among polities especially, in order to reduce the prospects of competition and conflict devolving to life-distorting, even life-destroying, conflict. In short, the range of those served well by democratizing conceptions and practices continues to be expanded, with more success in some instances than in others. Diversities condition our species in virtually all respects, micro (individuals) to macro (polities), neither singularity nor unanimity.

Notions of *democracy*, then, continue to be complicated by diverse conceptualizations and reconceptualizations, evaluations and revaluations, implementations and refinements of implementations. Consequently, the term continues to be conditioned by many of the evolutionary developments affecting our species, in political life especially (though the consequences of associated life increasingly ordered democratically go far beyond the realm of politics narrowly conceived). It could not be otherwise, for it is a notion – a diverse family of notions, if you will – born of human fabrication and thus subject to continuing renovations as the notions are taken up in diverse historically conditioned contexts, and as we learn and evolve – and fail to learn or to live the full benefits of learning. Still, *democratic* orientations and practices, I offer, are most fitting for an evolving species conditioned by diversities. The practiced commitment to *equality of regard and respect* at the core of conceptions of *democracy* confers the evolutionary advantage of positioning adherents and

practitioners for cultivated openness to the creative adaptations won in the experiments of living of virtually all surviving persons, groups, and polities and institutionalized in their cultures; opens adherents and practitioners to enhanced prospects of making new, beneficial creative contributions to storehouses of human civilizations while they benefit from withdrawals from the same.

If this be the case: if the core notions, core commitments, of *democratic* associated life include continual refinement of our conceptualizations of the connotations and denotations of this family of concepts as involving *equality of regard and respect* for persons, for culture-making groups, for polities, all of which are both carriers and contributors to the evolutionary successes of our species; if determined, persistent, and just practicing of this *equality of regard and respect* conditions, substantively, our species-efforts to secure, as best we can, enhanced chances for our continued survival and enhanced well-being by giving rise to more and more shared progressive freedom and justice for more and more persons, groupings, and polities from whom both have long been denied; if, in short, *democratically structured relations are the means by which to best take advantage of our species-diversity*, which is the case I offer for consideration, what might occasion the need to impose limits on diversity in cross-cultural contexts? Only in those instances, I offer, in which some idea, creation, prospective intervention into human affairs would, if put into effect, threaten survival and continuing evolution in violation of the core value of *equality of regard and respect* for others.

Who would determine the threat? How? How should such threats be managed? These are critical questions that require answers both appropriate for and adequate to meeting situations that appear to be, are potentially or in reality, threatening. Taking up the questions would propel the discussion into efforts to conceive, identify, study organized practices by which threat-determinations and management might and/or have been, are being, pursued. Such work is beyond the present scope of this exercise. Still, in keeping with the considerations I've offered already, I insist on the consideration that in these instances, as well, the work of threat-determination and management should be conducted *democratically*, and, as fully as possible, in keeping with the core commitment of *equality of regard and respect* for others. Accordingly, if limits need to be imposed, the assessment of the need; the specification of the nature of the limitations; of the forms, modes, and terms of imposition – all of these determination

should be made democratically and, with the imposition of limits, strenuous efforts should be undertaken to avoid diminishing the diversities that are so vital to the continued survival of our species, thus are so vital to our prospects for well-being.

–Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.), Vanderbilt University,
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Responses

Negotiating ›Difference‹ in Indic Thought: Reflections on Lucius Outlaw's Essay

I Introduction

Lucius Outlaw seeks to avoid »universally and necessary true principles« (Outlaw 2015a: 109) that would dictate what limitations, if any, should be imposed on democratic pluralism, proposing that the vital questions are instead how, to what extent, and by whom such limitations may have to be imposed democratically. He emphasises the need to develop forms of associated living within and across various types of political formations that would foster our species-diversity, more specifically by fostering the repertoires that cultures have developed for social existence. As he notes, these repertoires, which provide schemes of meaning to cultural formations, have often been ›sacralised‹ (*ibid*.: 112), through canopies of meanings which seek to provide stability against the possibilities of cosmic and social chaos. These canopies have played an extremely crucial role throughout human history both in institutionalizing the distribution of power within social groups, and in buttressing the competitive relations across these groups. Thus, the institutionalization of politicised identities in this manner both locates individuals in a historical narrative that is projected into the future in order to impose order across generational changes, and regiments power asymmetries by offering rationalizations of relations of superordination and subordination.

In the following, we will respond to Outlaw's reflections on ›the challenging question‹ from a few specifically Indic perspectives with the following points in mind: (a) the interrogation of Eurocentric norms, (b) the necessity, possibility, or redundancy of developing metaphysical groundings for forms of social existence, and (c) the value of diversity.

II Debating Eurocentricism

The debate over Eurocentricism has by now taken several dialectical turns. In the first stage, Eurocentricism was denounced as a form of false ethnocentrism imported, often through colonial violence, by Europe onto its ›Others‹ who were constructed as ›depraved‹, ›barbaric‹, and in need of immediate succour by their imperial conquerors. Outlaw refers to this debate when he notes that abstract philosophical theorizing has often sought to impose universal principles in favour of an essential sameness that would displace »morally irrelevant« diversity (*ibid*.: 110). Indian scholars from various disciplines have pointed out that the so-called neutral, objective, and universal values, beliefs and norms paraded by Europe as the only ›civilized‹ template for the political was in fact a distinctively European version of ordering political space. Further, on closer inspection, this version, namely, early twentieth century liberal democracy, turned out to be based on massive exclusions: women, people of colour, the colonial natives, and others were systematically excluded from its vision. In the second stage, however, some scholars pointed out that the view that British administrators had imposed Eurocentric norms onto colonial India ironically perpetuates the Orientalist stereotype of the ›passive native‹ and instead argued that we should see Indo-British colonial contacts as a series of protracted transactions in the course of which both India and Britain underwent significant political, social, and cultural shifts (Bayly 1996: 371–372). In particular, it has been pointed out that several figures from the lower castes in colonial India appropriated certain key ›Eurocentric‹ elements and creatively adapted them in their struggles against upper-caste oppression (Sarkar 2005: 292–293). That is, instead of a bi-polar contest between the monoliths of ›India‹ and ›Britain‹ over the distribution of resources and the management of social diversity, we should speak of multi-layered contests that were triggered both within India and Britain, and across their boundaries of race, gender, and caste. Therefore, the current third stage of the dialectic is characterized in academic discourse not by explicit rejections of ›Eurocentric‹ values, but by fine-grained micro-studies of everyday postcolonial life that interweaves elements of ›tradition‹ and ›modernity‹ in a work-in-progress that almost defies neat characterizations or polarizations. That is, ›caste‹, ›religion‹, ›community‹, and other such social categories which were denounced as signifiers of Oriental depravity in the first turn, and selectively

appropriated in the second, now exist in an uneasy tension with values, institutions, and norms more readily identifiable as belonging to a European provenance. Thus we arrive at some of the perplexing dilemmas that confront contemporary India: what should be a feminist response if a political party on the right end of the spectrum introduces legislation ensuring a fixed number of seats for women in the houses of parliament, or a secular response if a political party committed to a multicultural ethos introduces a uniform civil code across religious boundaries, or a socialist response to the perpetuation of caste-based competitive acquisition of votes in national elections? The distribution of power and management of social resources both within and across boundaries, which Outlaw notes at several places in his essay (*ibid*.: 112), are therefore complicated by the fact that individuals often dwell on several boundaries simultaneously: for instance, a lower caste Indian woman employed in an industrial outlet suffers multiple violence from the axes of globalization, caste, and gender.

If we view the debate over ›democratic pluralism‹ in contemporary India through the perspective of this discussion, we can therefore see that the jury is still out on the question of whether beliefs, institutions, and values of European origin should be dismantled entirely or whether their ambit needs to be progressively increased in the direction of freedom and justice. The first response risks committing the genetic fallacy of believing that an argument is fallacious entirely because of its disreputable origins, and producing the nativist retreat to a pre-colonial Arcadia supposedly untouched by power asymmetries (Appiah 1991: 146). The second response would seek an alternative ›Europeanization‹ which is based not on the logic of assimilation, which undergirds technocratic modernization, but on the values of freedom, justice, and well-being, which may resonate with indigenous dimensions of non-European cultures. While the second response provides more of promissory notes than realized facts, it is arguable that the modern interventionist Indian nation-state has, for complex historical reasons, adopted the wider European project, but now thoroughly Indianized in some respects. That is, while caste and gender continue to mark, and in some ways fundamentally structure, the bases of Indian social existence, these categories now co-inhabit political spaces that employ the vocabulary of human rights, civil liberties, and social justice. Therefore, Indian political structures are characterised by the as yet unrealised promises of an ›alternative

modernity‹ directed at the progressive extension of the ambit of freedom and justice and the wider maximization of well-being through the erosion of institutions that legitimize discrimination.

III The Politics of Difference

On the basis of the historical discussion in the previous section we can move to a relatively more abstract question that lies at the basis of ›democratic pluralism‹. As Outlaw notes, the key challenge for democratic patterns of existence is to affirm the »anthropological facticity« (*ibid:* 114) of our species-diversity by forging inclusive patterns of social living without invidious discrimination directed at particular differences. The fundamental question, of course, is whether diversity is *intrinsically* valuable, and if so, what *kinds* of diversity should be valued. In keeping with his intention to avoid invariant principles with universal applicability, Outlaw does not recommend our current forms of ›democracy‹ as a timeless solution to the challenge of maximizing well-being, noting that democratic forms of existence have been shaped by numerous historical contexts. Nevertheless, he concludes that cooperative democratic life that is based on »equality of regard and respect for persons« is the most fitting form of existence in the current state of our evolutionary development (*ibid*.: 116). The crucial argument is that such openness confers an evolutionary advantage of enabling us to appropriating the various creative adaptations that human beings have gained in numerous cultural contexts, thereby enriching our stock of resources through which we can creatively contribute to the advance of human evolution in the direction of greater freedom and justice. Thus Outlaw's conclusion: only such ideas or practices which threaten the survival and evolution of the core value of equality of regard and respect should be curbed in cross-cultural contexts.

The key question is whether the value of ›respect for persons‹, which is arguably of Graeco-Christian origins with subsequent liberal Kantian developments, can be translated into Indic vocabulary, and whether such respect requires robustly metaphysical foundations. Some of the most intensely debated topics in cross-cultural political theory revolve precisely around the question of whether it is possible to identify non-western precursors or intimations of the values associated with western liberal democracy. To oversimplify for the purposes of this essay, we may characterise classical Indic thought as shaped by a fundamental tension, polarity or even contradiction between two dimensions: one rigidly hierarchical and the other implicitly egalitarian. Both these dimensions are underpinned by specific metaphysical visions of the nature of the individual and the organization of the social whole. The first can be found in the so-called legal treatises *(Dharma-sastras)*, the most well-known of which is the *Manu–Smriti* (c. 200 CE), which lay down the hierarchical structures of classical Hindu social existence. The groups at the apex of the social pyramid, the Brahmanas, are to be served by those at the bottom, the Shudras, and this is the social template, implemented across large parts of the subcontinent and legitimized through both textual support and notions of kingship, that Bhim Rao Ambedkar (1891–1956), the Chairman of the Indian Constitution Drafting Committee, described as a system of graded inequality. The differentially-structured sets of duties and obligations, refracted through the prisms of gender and caste, are claimed to lead to the functional stability of the ›organic‹ social body. The second is present in the ever-recurring refrain of the Upanishads and Advaita Vedantic thought that all empirical distinctions which are not grounded in the ultimate reality of Brahman are ultimately illusory. Consequently, this metaphysics of identity has the sociological implication that all hierarchical categories are merely conventional designations lacking any substantial reality. The intriguing question, of course, is why Vedantically inflected Hindu thought did not traditionally draw upon this implication to develop ›democratically‹ organised social worlds free from the discriminations of caste, ethnicity, and gender which it declares not to have any deep ontological reality. That is, while mainstream Advaita in classical and medieval India viewed caste and gendered categories as merely useful fictions to be discarded on the path towards liberation, they did not develop programmatic structures of dismantling such categories in the here and now (Ram-Prasad 2000). To use Outlaw's terminology, much of classical Vedantic thought provided a sacred canopy over these social exclusions by consigning them to the ›conventional‹ level which had to be transcended through a liberative insight into the ›ultimate‹ level, but had to be maintained for the sake of social cohesion until that insight was attained.

Nevertheless, the presence of the second strain with the first constituted an uneasy tension at the heart of Indic life-worlds: the second which pointed to the ultimate reality as beyond empirical dis-

tinctions and social exclusivities lingered on as an irritant in a body politic structured by the first. The tension was seized upon in at least two ways in ancient and pre-colonial India. The first was the emergence of movements such as Buddhism and Jainism (c. 500 BCE) which rejected the incipient caste structures of early Vedic India, though the extent to which they succeeded in eradicating caste-based distinctions remains a matter of scholarly dispute. In the case of Buddhism particularly, the doctrine of not-self *(anatman)* was employed in the developments of the tradition such as the Mahayana to emphasise the radical insubstantiality of all caste and gendered exclusivities, though again scholars disagree to what extent such categorisations were systematically undermined in pre-modern Buddhist cultures. The second set of movements that sought to destabilise, if not actually eliminate caste hierarchies, were the devotional *bhakti* movements, centred around the personal Lord, which spoke of the equality of all individuals. However, the equality in question was predicated on the transcendental relations of the spiritual community of devotees; these movements, with some major exceptions, usually lacked a programmatic framework for systematically eradicating worldly discrimination (Lorenzen 2004). Therefore the question whether contemporary liberal democratic notions of equality and social justice were present in classical and medieval Indic thought can only receive a qualified affirmative – the traditions contain themes which often were employed in the direction of ›respect for persons‹, though these socially egalitarian strands were usually rewoven back into the tapestry of caste hierarchy.

As this survey of some of the classical and medieval Indian attempts to subvert caste-based forms of oppression indicates, the traditional Indian responses to the question ›which kinds of diversity should be accepted or valorized‹ ? have been articulated from within a metaphysical framework that is distinct from Outlaw's broadly evolutionary metaphysic. These attempts to locate social ethics on metaphysical horizons have been carried out also by key figures of modern Hinduism such as Swami Vivekananda (the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission; 1863–1902), S. Radhakrishnan (the second President of independent India; 1888–1975) and others have sought to develop an ethical core out of the metaphysics of the Upanishads in the following manner. Taking as their point of departure the Upanishadic dictum ›thou art that‹, they have argued that the justification for ethical concern for the neighbour is the transcendental unity of all

human beings. That is, the reason why I should develop other-regarding behaviour is because the other is, in a deep metaphysical sense, akin to my-self (Beckerlegge 2006). In particular, Radhakrishnan sought to develop the nation-state's foundational commitments to liberal democracy, social justice, universal education, secularism, and scientific modernization through the lens of this Vedantic metaphysic of the basic ontological affinity of all beings. Radhakrishnan's neo-Advaita Vedanta was a highly creative formulation in which he interwove the classical Upanishadic material with contemporary European theories of creative evolution, axiology, and spiritual progress. These metaphysical foundations provided the basis for Radhakrishnan's understanding of ›toleration‹ : the religious traditions of the world are to be ›tolerated‹ because they are, according to Radhakrishnan, diverse historically-shaped intimations of the truth of Advaita. In other words, underlying the cultic-ritual differences that characterise religions such as Judaism, Hinduism, and Christianity lies an ›essential unity‹, for they are all, Radhakrishnan claimed, phenomenal expressions of the transcendental ›experience‹ of Advaitic realization. While Ambedkar rejected the foundational presuppositions of Vedantic thought during his conversion to Buddhism, his own appropriation of classical Buddhism sought to provide distinctively Buddhist foundations for the Indian nation's commitment to social democracy (Fitzgerald 1999). The Buddhism that Ambedkar put forward to his followers was not any of the familiar historical varieties such as Theravada, Mahayana or Vajrayana, but was a new path, a Navayana (›Neo-Buddhism‹) whose goals are more specifically material than ›spiritual‹ and emphasises the establishment of social equality rather than the attainment of individual liberation. Ambedkar re-contextualized certain key Buddhist notions: ›wisdom‹ is the ability to think rationally without any demystification, ›compassion‹ becomes the love of fellow-beings expressed through activities directed towards social justice, and the monk is simultaneously the social worker and the seeker after personal freedom.

Our discussion highlights a crucial distinction between, on the one hand, some strands of classical and contemporary Indic engagement with social difference, and, on the other, western academic valorisations of plurality. The former are underpinned by specific metaphysical bases, whether the *atman*-doctrine in Sanskrit-based Hinduism or the *anatman*-doctrine in Buddhist thought, whereas the latter either eschew any metaphysical claims or keep the meta-

physical bases implicit in the background. The question whether the theorization of themes such as the limits of the political, the patterns of distributive justice, and regard for the human person, needs to be guided by metaphysical commitments has usually been answered in the negative in western academic circles. As a broad generalization, we may note that the term ›metaphysics‹ continues to be associated in some academic sectors with the search for abstract essences that are associated with the Eurocentric imperatives of imperial conquest. Without entering into this vexed question of whether political theory can proceed without metaphysical foundations, we note that it is precisely these ›abstract‹ notions of universal humanity that have been appropriated by some leaders of the lower castes in colonial India for their liberative potential against the hegemonic structures of caste.

IV Is ›Difference‹ Dignified?

The question of universals raises a host of intensely debated issues in contemporary western political theory as well as in classical India. To begin with the former, modernity is often charged with being difference-blind, and the emphasis falls squarely on difference, locality, heterogeneity, multiplicity, fragmentation, deconstruction, and decentering. Several influential political theorists have criticised the ›abstract neutrality‹ of the liberal nation-state and proposed group-differentiated rights as the solution for overcoming historical forms of oppression. However, it is precisely over the question of *which* differences are to be sustained by the state that various perplexities begin to emerge: a classic point of dispute is how the ›difference-sensitive‹ state should respond to groups which maintain, as part of their distinctive ways of life, ethnic forms of discrimination. To move on to the classical Indic perspectives, such debates over the significance of ›difference‹ often receive an explicit metaphysical grounding, as we should expect by now. We may summarise a complex conversation that spanned several centuries of classical Indic debate by pointing to the views of two opponents on the question of the metaphysical status of difference. Dharmakirti (c. 700 CE) represents the Buddhist perspective when he claims that universals, while pragmatically convenient, are not brute features of the universe but ultimately mental fictions (Dunne 2011: 105). Mandana Misra (c. 800 CE) represents the diametrically opposed Advaita Vedanta view that we have a constant awareness of unchanging, featureless Brahman which is the supreme universal perceived everywhere, and specific particulars are in fact abstracted out of this universal (Thrasher 1993). Difference *(bheda)*, for the Advaitin, then, is a construct, unlike for the Buddhists who argue that it is a fundamental aspect of the universe. While thinkers such as Dharmakirti and Mandana did not directly apply these metaphysical questions to political theory, we can see that they bear on contemporary debates over whether difference, and of which kinds, should be sustained within the horizons of liberal democracy. The Advaitin claim that ›difference‹ is ultimately an insubstantial illusion would move political theory towards underlying commonalities across cultural boundaries, while the postmodern-style Buddhist affirmation of metaphysical ›difference‹ would be more hospitable to a ›multiculturalist‹ ethos of deep diversity. To restate the contrast in another way: the Advaitin view has a greater degree of elective affinity with the standpoint of classical liberalism that citizens should be treated equally *regardless* of their differences, and the Buddhist view with that of multiculturalism that citizens should receive differential treatment *in virtue* of their differences.

Contemporary political theory, as these contrasts indicate, is structured by a fundamental tension over the status of ›difference‹: on the one hand, ›difference‹ is to be negated when it appears in forms of racial, ethnic, and gendered based forms of discrimination, but, on the other hand, ›difference‹ is to be affirmed in contexts of identity-based politics. Our discussion has shown that this tension appears in the Indic traditions too, for the classical Advaitin view that ›difference‹ is only conventionally valid and transcendentally illusory has been appropriated by some Hindu thinkers in modern India to ground egalitarian social structures in a spiritual egalitarianism. We can therefore see that the precise nature of the change instigated in Hindu life-worlds by the British colonial intrusions needs to be carefully qualified. On the one hand, one should not overemphasise the discontinuities between pre-colonial and postcolonial Hindu worlds to suggest that ›European‹ notions of liberty, respect for persons, equality and so on are alien grafts onto Hindu soil, for, as we have noted, the Kantian notion of regard for persons has indigenous analogues in the forms of spiritual equality articulated in Hindu thought. On the other hand, pre-colonial India, and for that matter early modern Europe, did not possess the modernist apparatus of addressing social injustices at a systemic nation-wide level through forms of representa-

tive democracy, a free press, distributive justice, and so on. The development of institutions grounded in liberal values was therefore indeed a decisive transformation, altering the shape of Hindu social spaces and forms of subjectivity inflected by caste, region, and gender.

The vital question, of course, again is whether all difference is intrinsically dignified, or whether there are any moral limits to what sorts of difference can be accepted. The predominant response to this question in western political theory suggests that any form of *modus vivendi* is acceptable, provided it allows for spaces where differences can be celebrated. However, the momentous question returns: ›*which* differences?‹

Paradoxically, while lived Hinduism would seem to be encumbered by a panoply of minutely detailed duties that are differentially articulated across genders and castes, the theological foundations of Advaita Vedantic Hinduism point to the trans-categorical ultimate reality beyond distinctions. A reformulation of Advaitic Hinduism, to be consistent with its textual sources, would have to argue that social differences are dignified only insofar as one is able to use the differences to transcend them to the ineffable ultimate. While classical Advaita and its modern articulations are only one strand of Vedantic thought, and do not exhaust the whole of multi-layered Hindu spirituality, they have, for complex historical reasons we cannot recount in this essay, exerted a profound influence on the self-understanding of many Hindus themselves and the reception of ›Hinduism‹ in the west. We can now locate the difference between classical and modern forms of Advaitic Hinduism vis-à-vis the possibility of a ›democratic pluralism‹ in this manner: while for the former the spiritual egalitarianism of all beings was to be realised through a contemplative process that was usually kept distinct from direct engagement with social inequalities, the latter places the emphasis more on an active confrontation with these inequalities as a mediate process through which to attain spiritual perfection. In the end, then, this strand of an Advaitic Vedantic Hindu articulation of ›democratic pluralism‹ is based on a ›transcendental‹ metaphysic shaped from Upanishadic sources while Outlaw's respect for the other is grounded in an implicit ›naturalist‹ metaphysic of our common participation in an evolutionary narrative.

V Conclusion

Outlaw provides an implicit evolutionary metaphysic for justifying and promoting difference: those differences are to be valued which do not negate our evolutionarily acquired capabilities of cooperative existence, and which rather sustain the value of equality and regard for persons across cross-cultural boundaries. The implicit argument runs as follows: *Because* we are parts of a common evolutionary matrix, *therefore* we should contribute to its further development through cooperative democratic life that will further confer upon us evolutionary advantages. The classical Indic arguments for negotiating difference operate within distinctively Vedantic or Buddhist metaphysical frameworks, even if these horizons have in recent decades incorporated evolutionary metaphors. However, both western political affirmations of diversity, as in the case of Outlaw, and Indic engagements with social inequality have to deal with certain ›dilemmas of difference‹ that we have outlined. We may need more refined theoretical tools to explain why, say, *cultural* difference is valorised on the horizons of social democracy but not, say, *racial, ethnic* or *caste* difference, and how, if the latter are indeed accepted within the context of affirmative action, such a politics of recognition furthers the liberal values of equality, freedom, and justice. We may then end our reflections on Outlaw's essay with the observation that political engagement with ›deep diversity‹ may have to directly confront the metaphysical question of precisely what ›difference‹ is and why such ›difference‹ should be valued.

–Ankur Barua, University of Cambridge, UK

Not a Flower of Equal Petals, But One of Distorted Growth

I The Challenge

Dr. Lucius Outlaw's original question, »What (if any) limits ought democratic pluralism impose on diversity within a cross-cultural context?« (Outlaw 2015a: 109) *is translated into the question:* How can *we* best resolve vexing conditions that affect associated living (political life) within, between, and among groupings of persons, who already operate within a variety of socio-political formations (organizations, institutions, polities, from villages to nation-states), that are conditioned (internally and/or through external relations) by significant cultural (and other) diversities? (*cf. ibid.*) The answer supports a ›*Principles of Ordering Theory*‹ (rather than a ›universal‹ (logical) or ›right‹ (value) principle), that is to explain the ontology of interstices of social interaction. Outlaw proposes that a principle of diversity (rather than of sameness) operates to sustain the evolution of our human species, and suggests that this principle enables an undermining of any pluralist democracy that purports to be true universally, and thus sanctioned by authority, because grounded in an essential sameness of persons.

II Parsing Diversity and Pluralism

Parsing ›Diversity‹

In the first section of this paper Outlaw parses the question by challenging the meaning of »diversity« (*ibid.:* 111), and subsequently »pluralism« (*ibid.:* 113). He offers three contextual analyses to understand diversity terms as used in this paper: (1) ›Humans Lack Control Over Dynamism (Astronomical and Ideological Shifts)‹; (2) ›Competitive Ventures Surround Embodiment Contingency (Scarcity Creates Physical/Psychic Invasion)‹; and (3) ›Schemes of Meaning Create/Maintain Cross Generational Orderliness (Orderings) *For Us.*‹

In other words, to understand the context of ›diversity‹ (and later ›pluralism‹) one must examine concrete instantiations of diversity. *First*, to experience ›diversity‹ of life means to be engaged in a life where one lacks any control over the processes of that life. The universe, as seemingly immeasurably diverse to us, appears dynamic, and far exceeds our efforts to control any aspect of ›it‹ – including that which we perceive to be a universe »beyond planet earth« (*ibid.*: 111). We see things coming-to-be and passing-away, processes of emergence and decay, in our embodiment and in our environment, but they are beyond our control. We stand in awe and fear of these things.[1]

Second, to experience ›diversity‹ of life means to recognize ourselves as contingent being(s) with survival needs. Our embodiment is environmentally bounded by scarce resources and requires ventures of persistence. We must share competitive ventures to acquire food, clothing, and shelter. In these shared competitive ventures, as contingent human beings, we reproduce, and thereby create, and perpetuate bio-cultural group-distinguishing differences that emerge (evolution) (*ibid.*).[2]

Third, to experience ›diversity‹ of life means we humans develop ›schemes of meaning‹ that devise life-stabilizing orderliness. These include ideologies, narrations of origin and purpose, religion, theology, and philosophical systems. These ideologies define, guide, construct, and maintain a social-political organization (ordering) bequeathed to each new generation for survival.[3] »*Thus, the group continues cross-generationally while individuals constituting each generation subsequently pass away*« (*ibid.:* 112; my emphasis) as life ›goes on‹ reconstituting itself (*ibid.*).[4]

[1] These experiences of living in a universe without control, mirrors articulations of experiences when cultural upheaval, is caused, for example, by colonization. The sense of having no control over earthly or galactic movement, can be analogized to a sense of having no control over ideological beliefs of conquerors.

[2] I would add that in the same way as there are food competitions, for example, there are job-role contingencies.

[3] I would analogize that just as origin stories define boundaries, for example, to create order schemes, the process of networking (akin to giving of military orders), that organizes opportunity by defining, guiding, and constructing orderliness (as a system) of group interaction operates as an institutional scheme.

[4] »Accordingly, the meaning-ordering agendas structuring and ordering lives and

When the guiding ordering principles of one group come into competition with others, such as in colonization (or when ordering principles of gatekeepers are challenged), strife, warfare, and genocide can follow. By example, consider the Seminole during and after the three major ›Seminole Wars‹ of the nineteenth century in Florida, USA (1816, 1835, and 1855).[5] Political and economic social ordering removed us from homelands, stretched our people from Florida to Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas, and eventually Mexico. In Oklahoma, after the ›Trail of Tears‹ removals devastated our elders, who held ›sacred survival knowledge,‹ the imposition of ›farming plots‹ yet further separated and divided our communities, forcing climate adaptations such that the old ways of farming and community were no longer applicable. Origin stories became separated from their original geographical meanings, and forced ideologies of religion drove our own ›religious practices‹ underground. Such is human history (*ibid.*). Thus the development of socially ordering principles leads to the development of *protective measures* to maintain the status quo, that, without institutional control mechanisms, leads to competition of resources, institutions, and ideologies.

Institutions, fortified by conceptual schemes, justify, legitimate, and rationalize role playing of (ordered) power distributions. Institutions emerge within a group and function as principal resources. Participation in the life-world of these institutions demands that individuals buttress and *protect* these life-ordering schemes. These institutions, as principal resources, distribute the social power of political life (of bio-cultural self-reproducing groups), stave off stagnation,

forms of life are conditioned and conditional, are experimental, though, as is often the case, the agendas tend to be buttressed by ›canopies‹ of meta-meanings, sometimes made sacred, constructed and invoked to provide protection from competitive challenges of other agendas and from various forms of entropy.« (*ibid.*)

[5] The Seminole were not unique in experiencing the imposition of ›meaning stories‹ by settler colonial people. The political ramifications of settler strategies to maintain the status quo of the settler regime is articulated by Kyle Powys Whyte: »Or take groups like the Three Fires peoples, so Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi in Michigan and Ontario – we are now divided up into hundreds of groups that the US and Canadian federal governments see as separate« (personal correspondence with Waters, July 2014). Kyle's comment shows the imposition of meaning making by the superordinate group; in this case the ›fractionation‹ operating against unity, and imposing limits upon what had been a successfully organized political group, thereby creating further strife and suffering toward purpose of colonial land acquisition, resource, and ideological control.

and self-sustain via memberships of, and within, these politicized identities. These identities (as *protected by individuals* following the demanded ordering rules) sustain life among subgroups hierarchically and futuristically. These schemes of ordering permit value judgments consonant with those identities that arise from particular circumstances, such as unequal power distribution (in accord with a schematic ordered identity), and roles of subordination. Such ›natural‹ and ›man-made‹ institutional processes condition something, namely the imposition of schematic order. They *protect* diverse and similar forms of life, whereby survival is achieved in particular circumstance (*ibid.:* 113). Thus diversity enhances evolutionary success and persistence of politicized forms and subgroups with an *unbalanced distribution of power (ibid.*).

These sites of opportunity create circumstances that *exploit* any particular group, when one group acts in accord with historical-identity agendas that assume a *right to self-preservation*, and in so doing, act so as to subordinate ›other‹ subgroups. Thus bicultural (dual meaning) diversity (dynamism, embodiment, and cross-generational schemes of meaning) sustains evolutionary success and persistence, and rewards subordination of others. Rewards are fruits of competition, ever encouraging the passing on of schemes to the next generation.

These (competitively acquired) hierarchical orderings facilitate exploitation and oppression, and are rationalized (and in tandem legitimized) by those in power through philosophies that ›naturalize‹ religious and political divisions. Moreover, these politics require and demand *cross-generational* effort and *cooperation* to continue because individuals become socio-politically ordered by super-ordination (giving orders to) and sub-ordination (execution of orders) that facilitates oppression and exploitation (*ibid.*).

Does a unilateral institutional inter-generational distribution of power tend to exclude marginalized minorities regardless of where it is found? Outlaw seems to suggest as much. And I would agree. Such developments should be relevant to readers situated everywhere, because they articulate a common template that can be reproduced internationally. One example of such an institution is the *American Philosophical Association* (APA) in the United States of America (USA).[6] This association carries on generational political activities,

[6] The following quotation can be found online. It articulates the origin, purpose, and

where the generations are sometimes blood-related, but more commonly ideologically group-related (frequently by colleges/universities who declare themselves superior by use of a ›fixed‹ assessment of merit). Social order and control are maintained by superordinates over such things as religion or cultural politics of economy, and by practices of different superordinate and subordinate groups within the USA. These groups are already crystallized contextually in the embedding culture, as particular groups, usually identifying themselves as superior and ›others‹ inferior by nature. If this were not so, there would not have been a proliferation in the 1980's of so many ›minority committees‹ put together within the APA, so that minority groups might have voice within the organization. The ›carrots‹ of behavior control, of course, are career-oriented privileges that can make, or break, a minority career.

These hierarchical orderings, and their concomitant oppression and exploitation of ›not our own‹ are *rationalized* by ›naturalizing‹ appeals that distinguish bio-social characteristics of oppressors and oppressed. These characteristics are conscripted into institutions of religion, theology, philosophy, socio-anthropology and politics, thereby legitimizing the politicized ordering (and creating a ›glass ceiling‹ within the organization). Thus »*[d]iversity becomes a conscript [and handmaiden] of injustice* […]« (*ibid*.: 114; my emphasis).[7]

institutional structure of the APA (but not its funding): »The American Philosophical Association was founded in 1900 to promote the exchange of ideas among philosophers, to encourage creative and scholarly activity in philosophy, to facilitate the professional work and teaching of philosophers, and to represent philosophy as a discipline. Having grown from a few hundred members to over 10,000, the American Philosophical Association is one of the largest philosophical societies in the world and the only philosophical society in the United States not devoted to a particular field, school, or philosophical approach. The APA's three divisions, the Central, Eastern, and Pacific, founded in 1900, 1901, and 1924, respectively, conduct annual meetings at which philosophers present research and exchange ideas. Since 1927, the American Philosophical Association has functioned under a constitution providing for a national board of officers. The APA's partner organizations include the American Association of University Professors, the American Council of Learned Societies, the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Humanities Alliance. Since 1975, the national office of the American Philosophical Association has been located at the University of Delaware – an arrangement made possible through the generosity of the University of Delaware« (http://www.apaonline.org/?page=history; last accessed on 25 August 2014).

[7] And I would add, for example knowingly, by some, within our own APA.

If this be so, we must ask, as philosophical truth-seekers, ›What would the discipline of philosophy in America look like from a perspective of a non-power-conscripted diverse creativity?‹

Parsing ›Pluralism‹

Outlaw claims »[…] *diversity is definitive of our species-being, and of the particular portion of the known universe that our species inhabits*« (*ibid*.). Humans simply are ›diverse.‹ Astronomy and microbiology tell us diversity is definitive of the changing nature of our universe itself, and this is how humans experience our universe.

›Pluralism‹ for Outlaw, refers to human difference among humans and human groups that affirms the anthropological facticity of our species diversity (*ibid*.). But what happens when diversity, rather than operating as a principle of equality favoring pluralism, operates, as Outlaw notes, as a *conscript of injustice?* We are told that »[…]. *challenges to forging and sustaining forms of associated life inclusive of acknowledged diversities* […] *forms that are ordered to maximize the possibilities of justice* […] *for all without invidious discrimination against particular differences* […]« (*ibid*.; my emphasis), persistently *fail*. Outlaw holds that this system of pluralism fails to learn how to resolve competitive conflicts that block intra- and inter-group survival. As such, this system fails to enhance survival and well-being for more than a few who favor themselves. Such a pluralism enhances only for those it regards as *›its own.‹* This occurs throughout successive generations. But does Outlaw hold that this is a necessary condition inherent to pluralism itself? It is not clear.[8]

These (pluralist) forms have fallen upon a human failure (by individuals and groups) to learn conflict resolution that favors any but the perpetrators of injustice – again, they operate only on behalf

[8] What role individuals play in institutional actions of discrimination is not clear here. But it is noted that as of this date only three American Indians have positions within a tenure track system in philosophy: Shay Welch, Cherokee, Spelman College, Georgia; Thomas Norton Smith, Shawnee, Kent State, Stark Campus; and Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomie, Michigan State, East Lansing. Unlike Kyle, neither Shay nor Thomas are at institutions granting a Ph.D. degree in philosophy. Of the remaining number of American Indians with a Ph.D. in philosophy (nineteen), none have been hired in philosophy departments. Because this committee has been in existence since 2000, that is little progress in fourteen years.

of »*their own*« (*ibid.*). Thus when challenged, the superordinates cause »[…] *murderous determinations of the few within polities in which they exert dominance* […]« (*ibid.*; my emphasis). In short, they function to preserve their position of dominance over others. This is done through a socially organized (sometimes violently backed by militarization, at other times backed by economic deprivation) propaganda of ideological predominance, and heredity regimes. For Outlaw this naturalized ideology of bio-social Darwinian superiority is *neither value nor knowledge neutral*. Rather, it is a competitive persistence of injustice over the subordinated. One smells the articulation of philosophical roots of totalitarianism and authoritarianism in Outlaw's painted scenario. Does Outlaw mean to say this persistent failure and conscription of injustice is a necessary condition of pluralism?

Outlaw holds that because power in such a system is distributed via generation and heredity, there is *not an ignorance* of the injustice (*ibid.:* 114). Because knowledge of the ›passing of the power and position‹ is recognized and demanded by those in power, no innocent ›not-knowing‹ occurs. Indeed motive continues to be present. And if American institutions have an air of totalitarianism and authoritarianism, this might explain some contemporary exclusionism against US-born American Indians in our own philosophical profession. The philosophical profession announces, and practices, in much of its work, an hegemony of racism, sexism, classism, and unreasoned selective privileging of some (›their own‹), that militates against the presence of American Indian philosophers (and others) in terms of key academic positions of power and authority[9].

American Indians have received Ph.D.'s in philosophy. Anne

[9] Although Blacks have fared much better than American Indians in professional philosophy (and I stand as a prime example, as told to me by Vine Deloria many years ago), racism against Blacks in philosophy, given the constituency of the African American population, continues as a stronghold. As recently as 2011, in the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* Leonard Harris points out that »There are two African American distinguished philosophy professors (named, endowed) in Pennsylvania (Lewis Gordon, Anita Allen) and New Jersey (Howard McGary, Anthony Appiah); one in New York (Michele Moody-Adams) and Illinois (Charles Mills); two in southern states (Bernard Boxill, North Carolina; Bill Lawson, Tennessee); and none west of the Mississippi. The most well-known and influential African American philosophers, Angela Davis and Cornel West, do not hold positions housed in a department of philosophy. All appointments except for Boxill's were made in the last twenty years (Harris 2011: 3).«

Waters (J. D. [Law], and Ph. D.[Philosophy], May 1992), Seminole, of Florida and Oklahoma, and Viola Cordova (Ph. D. [Philosophy], May 1992), Apache, of New Mexico (deceased), both entered the academic job market in 1992; and several American Indian professional philosophers came upon the scene shortly thereafter. Although some of us are known outside our profession for numerous ›classic‹ philosophical publications, we hold only one position in a philosophy department where a terminal degree (doctorate) is granted: (Kyle Powys Whyte, citizen, Potawatomie Nation, Shawnee, Oklahoma, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan).[10]

No American Indians are on any decision-making bodies of the APA, other than our own American Indian (now ›Indigenous‹) subordinate committee (glass ceiling).[11]

To continue then, Outlaw holds strong to his position, that when the dominated challenge the (status quo) order, conflicts are resolved by the dominators who press to protect »*their own*« (*ibid.*). This is accomplished with propaganda of ideological predominance of biological succession. »*In these instances, the persistence of injustice is not a consequence of ignorance* […]« (*ibid.*). Indeed the opposite: existence-enhancing learning institutions favor the dominators (*ibid.*). In the USA dominators create biological *family* succession, because one is ›born into‹ class privilege enabling the having of *funds or influence*, requisite to receive an education (just as other class privileges).

This favoring of ›their own‹ fails to engender the prospects of well-being for all. The super-ordinates' desire to continue privilege for ›their own‹ under the guise of democracy can press down upon any meaningful diversity. Thus Outlaw claims institutional policies devalue and deny diversity of contribution, to both prevailing and future forms of life and polities, including forms of evolutionary suc-

[10] Given this example of historical discrimination against American Indians in philosophy, perhaps it is time for an apology, and for the APA to embrace, rectify, and repatriate our name as it was originally known, the *Committee on American Indians in Philosophy* accompanied by its original mandate, and, to make space for our senior distinguished philosophers, in decision-making bodies of the ›association,‹ such places having been historically denied when the chair of the committee requested them over ten years ago.

[11] Formally, this is called the *Committee on the Status of Indigenous Philosophers.*

cess of survival of our species (*ibid.*: 115). They deny creative resolution, the creative beauty of living well, and thereby deny the creative prolonging of our species (*ibid.*). In this way the knowledge and life spans of individuals are »as limited,« just as, the »[…] *ineradicable radical contingency and uncertainty that define our existence*« (*ibid.*; my emphasis).

Thus, enhancing the learning of ›how to survive/exist well‹ for some can endanger the prospects of the well-being of the entire human species as a whole, and thereby devalue potential contributions to human polities and species evolutionary survival. In consonance with our APA example, benefitting the status quo, to the exclusion of a subordinated distinct and different minority, threatens the entire human species as a whole, devaluing potential contributions to human polities and species evolutionary survival.

Recall that pluralism refers to human difference, and affirms the facticity of species diversities (*ibid.*: 114). *Pluralism can thus fail to use the bouquet of species-diversity talents* of humans to resolve challenges of living well and prolonging our species survival (*ibid.*: 117). And when it fails under a democracy intended for equality of respect for all, it cuts off survival-knowledge held by differing groups. Enhancing the learning of some over others simply fails our creative survival potential. And yet refer back to footnote 6 herein, to recall the purpose of the APA, namely to facilitate (control?) teaching and represent (define?) the discipline, to promote the exchange of ideas (their own) and encourage creative activity.

Again, as a particular example of instantiation of these principles one need look no further than home, the APA, as discussed herein. As a philosophical institution in America, it operates as a tool of social engineering to maintain the status quo. But does it hold back the creative potential of individuals not maintaining the status quo dogma? In essence this appears to be what happens. Whereas committees *make* decisions (operating as a quasi-senate), and a Board of Officers *interprets* and approves those decisions (operating as a quasi-judiciary), standards of ›their own‹ (forefathers) are perpetuated (e.g. Harvard and others). Thus dominating institutional schemes are put in place and maintained. They are then acted upon by the Executive Director, who *carries out* policies and *executes* decisions of the Officers. If Outlaw is right, such duties *conveniently and knowingly exclude* some members from full participation in the philosophical community. Thus although lip service is usually paid to the APA operating in the context of a purported American, pluralist, and democratic institution, that exclusion of human creativity has been denied to American Indians, at least, and others as well. And with that denial, according to Outlaw, a denial of survival education, and advancement of our human species (in the instant case study, of American Indians) is pursued.

In the case of the APA, American Indians are denied the opportunity of educational survival and advancement in the philosophical profession, and of making contributions toward advancement of species survival. In essence, what appears to be a pluralist democracy, operates as an oligarchy, where people are privilege-distinguished according to race, sex, wealth, family ties, corporate, religious, or military status. And each privileged group supports the others in order to sanction and continue the domination.

This organization thus knowingly operates as a death knell to the flourishing of democratic diversity, to creativity, and to American Indian, at least, if not human species, survival. Operating as a pluralist democracy the APA can disrespect significant differences of minorities, and those born into less privilege. Most important, it is antagonistic and repugnant to our calling as philosophers, as seekers of truth.

III Diversity, Democracy, Limitations, and Their Own: or Threat Determination and Management

Equality of Respect and Regard

We saw earlier that Outlaw raised the question: Under what circumstances might limiting the survival education of one or more groups be justified and imposed democratically? Recall that democracy in Outlaw's theory means an open exchange of human ideas that creates a democratic life of equality of respect for persons and groups of persons, polities, and groups of polities, across localities, on our shared and precarious planet. And that such ideas are positively and negatively affected by shared conditions that encompass our planet (*ibid.*: 117). Further, Outlaw holds that *practiced commitment to an equality of regard and respect,* at the core of conceptions of democracy, *opens the possibility for societal contribution* (after individuals withdraw its education). The sine qua non of democratic purpose is for

persons to make beneficial societal contributions (*ibid*.: 117), just as the core of species survival is diversity. Democracy is most fitting for diversity when it permits renovation of itself, when societal contributions to its renovations create struggles toward freedom and justice (*ibid*.).

If Outlaw is right, democratically structured relations may be the best way for our species to take advantage of species-diversity to enhance species survival, because democracies can be reconstructed according to social need in pursuit of freedom and justice (*ibid*.). And yet, this is only possible if democracies limit institutional practices to those that enact ›equal respect and regard.‹ And in this context, if the goal is equal respect and regard for freedom, diversities should be limited only for species survival reasons (benefit of all).

Even with equal participation, democracy itself seems to require rights of minorities be protected, from inequalities that arise, as it is being renovated. Human limitations on genetics, for example, could be imposed, only if they enhance our species survival and portray equality of regard and respect for persons. For example in genetic engineering, what ought to matter in limiting any genetics is that we have values of health and survival, similar moral values. Behind decisions related to diversity should be common value of *equal respect and regard*. And behind equal respect and regard ought to be character value. This was the point of Martin Luther King's request in the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, that our children be valued ›not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character‹ (King's speech given at the Lincoln Memorial during the US Civil Rights ›Poor People's‹ March, Washington, DC, May, 1967). For limiting diversity decisions are value laden. We would not want a majority in a democracy of equality to give reason to eliminate genetics of some *undesirable* minority group, *simply* because that group was an inconvenient minority voice in decision making, while the democracy was undergoing renovation. Equally we would not want reason given *simply* because that group was a minority group. Indeed Outlaw tells us, these decisions ought to be limited.

What Outlaw seems to be saying here is that we ought to use health, or diversity for survival, as a moral compass, that is, the value of equality of respect and regard must be implemented in renovating a democracy. Equality of regard and respect is about having an equal, *moral weight* in decision making, not merely numbers, or power. A decision of a few, or of those in power, may be equally undesirable for

similar reasons: moral decisions, even when decisions of a government, ought not to be made according to numbers, or power, but according to value, according to principles held. For it is principles held, or moral character, that makes good democratic decisions. There may be other good reasons to limit diversity, to eliminate polio, for instance, or miseducation, but these are value decisions, not decisions made merely by numbers or power.

Historical Democracy

The only historical democracies of which I am aware that incorporate moral value into organizational schemes of government are the American Indian Confederacies, and the government similarly modeled after them, American democracy[12]. The problem with American democracy is that the things valued, called ›rights‹ were applicable to only a few, namely male property owners of age. Hence although values of the *Declaration of Independence* were, *by lip service*, incorporated into the US Constitution, persons were not ›equally regarded

[12] Some American Indian confederacies lay out a constitutional framework of purpose (leadership from the ground up closely tied to values) and responsibilities (method of impeachment if duties not performed) of the united confederacy members. Some say these types of confederate-governing relations may be the longest operating democracies in the world. These systems are believed to be a model for the American Constitution. (See Pratt 2002.) What makes these confederacies stand out as unique among other legal systems around the world is the blending of law alongside values. Core values are said to be peace, power, and righteousness; law, society, and nature are equal partners. Each nation maintained its own council, with chiefs chosen by clan mothers, whose responsibility was to see that moral obligations are lived. It is said that around 1730 certain confederacies refused to cement a union with colonists because they had no centralized government. Benjamin Franklin, in Europe, owned a printing company, and he is said to have received treaty council proceedings, and the idea of a society free of oppression and definition of class so intrigued him he took the position of Indian Commissioner for Pennsylvania. In 1754 the Albany Congress, with members from each colony, discussed a plan of union, to handle logistics of trade, alliances, etc. with, e.g., the Haudenosaunee, and to ally against the French. Franklin drew up a plan, with a president-general to be appointed by the Crown. Colonies were not ready for unification, however, and the Crown disapproved of such freedom. By 1776 it was inevitable that the colonies would be united, and Franklin chose Thomas Jefferson to draft the Declaration of Independence, with himself editing it. Thus America claimed its independence at least partly through the admiration and respect of the American Indian confederacies' forms of government, way of life, ways of horticulture, striving for freedom, and peace.

with respect.‹ Hence, renovations continue endlessly to gain freedoms that should have been granted initially.

I think Outlaw is correct to say that these diversities condition our species, merely as individuals and polities, neither in singularity nor unanimity. We are not conditioned as individuals, but as groups of individuals; and history shows there is always some preclusion of unanimity of conditioning: thus the opening for diversity required in creativity.

One thing I do not understand is Outlaw's claim that the sine qua non of ›historical democracy‹ holds an equality of regard and respect for persons. This is simply wrong. Although not clear ›whose history‹ Outlaw refers to, if he means to be talking about what is commonly taught to be ›Western Thought,‹ then from the perspective of the Western canon of political theory, I don't see much equality in Western Thought, at least if we are talking about a lived fairness respecting different abilities and talents of the populace. Reality seems very different from what Outlaw suggests. There are many types of democracies, holding different ideas about what ›equality‹ means. Equality in democracy might mean each person counts for one (or in some cases, each group counts for one), toward effect of fair representation or equal influence. In the USA where elections can be ›bought,‹ this is a different type democracy. So lofty goals not always achieved, hence renovations.

Historically, most people across the globe did not have voting rights. Decisions were made by those having social and economic privilege. In Athens, for instance, only about twenty per cent, the sons of Athenian fathers, could vote. They spent days discussing politics, being educated how to vote for the status quo, for their own. The other eighty per cent of the populace had to keep busy working to support the polis. Merchants and slaves (and their progeny) were fodder for the military, and were conscripted to do the *physical work* of the polis. One was born into position. Those privileged by class voted by that position of birthright. The majority had no say in the goings on of the polis. In Athens, anyone who challenged the status quo, or *spoke against the state* could minimally be ostracized by those in power for ten years.[13] History tells us that most ›democracies‹ were and are still forms of oligarchies, superordinates pressing down upon

[13] See Cartledge (2006).

subordinates, decisions being made by only a few. Some believe this description includes the USA.

Diversities are the voice of human success and survival. »*They condition our species*« (*ibid*.: 116; my emphasis). Because required for human species survival, they *should not be limited*. Diversities enhance our freedom to survive, and demand, for Outlaw, a justice of equality and respect for diversities of all persons.

Outlaw's Notions About ›Democracy‹

Return to the central question Outlaw raises, »What (if any) limits ought democratic pluralism impose on diversity within a cross-cultural context?« (*ibid*.: 109) Or again, »[…] *if, in short, democratically structured relations are the means by which to best take advantage of our species-diversity, which is the case I offer for consideration,* what might occasion the need to impose limits on diversity in cross-cultural contexts?« (*ibid*.: 117). Outlaw concludes that it is only in those instances when »[…] some idea, creation, prospective intervention into human affairs would, if put into effect, threaten survival and continuing evolution in violation of the core value of *equality* of *regard and respect* for others« (*ibid*.). Thus we have a principle of justice articulated. But what role would ›democratically structured relations‹ play in this principle of justice? What Outlaw means by ›democratically structured relations‹ remains unclear. More importantly, is it fair to be equally regarded when species survival is at issue, and the superordinated are free to act as an oligarchy in all other ways?

Are »*democratically structured relations* […] *the means by which to best take advantage of our species diversity* […]« (*ibid*.) as Outlaw urges? And if so, is it a good idea to not limit decisions about anything, unless species survival is at issue? An important question Outlaw does not answer is what decisions should be limited decisions. Decisions affecting minority groups' daily living, perhaps, might be an answer. But Outlaw does not go there.

As well, what type of relations does Outlaw mean to say are democratically structured relations? American Indians, as far as I know, are the originators of ›democratically structured institutions‹ in the Americas: democratically structured because they join together law and values of individuals in nations, as well as law and the value

of individuals as nations. This is true in the formation and institution of the American Indian confederacies, upon which some say the US system of government was grounded, through the work of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.[14] Materials describing this democratic confederacy were circulated in Europe, and recirculated in the forming states on this continent, long prior to the construction of the federal government here in the USA (see footnote 12 herein).

What type of situation would threaten the survival of evolution in violation of these principles of equality of regard and respect for others, or, in violation of justice? One answer might be when organized practices have been or are being pursued by management in a non-democratic way, thus limiting diversity vital to the survival of our species, and hence our species prospects for well-being. Two problems here: Outlaw does not speak to the benefits of limiting diversity for good reasons, like, genetic engineering, where we can limit debilitating disease. And, he still circles around the question of ›democracy.‹

In a democratic process, which Outlaw seems to want to assume in his theory, justice of an equality of regard and respect for others requires that actions of management be made with clarity of *transparency*. Is this possible with our own example organization, the APA? Can we use this organization as an example to examine ›diversity,‹ ›pluralism,‹ ›democracy,‹ and ›limitations‹ ? Thus far it seems to have worked. But what can it tell us about democracy and transparency, if anything? Let's go back to our example, or case study.

Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy

In 2009 the *Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy*, via a name change approved by the Executive Board, became the *Committee on the Status of Indigenous Philosophers*. I originated the *Committee on American Indians in Philosophy* toward the purpose of acting upon and preventing discrimination against American Indians holding professional degrees in the field of philosophy. The naming of the committee, in the context of the APA, originally denoted American Indians in the USA, as this association had US jurisdiction (an Eastern, Midwest, and Pacific Division). American Indians south of the USA border at that time identified with the Hispanic/Latino Committee. Those north of the USA border were considered First Nations (with a few exceptions). The latter could either have had their own committee within the APA, or have had a committee within the Canadian Philosophical Association. At any rate, Canadian First Nations were not present for the origination of the American Indian committee. Members of these groups were also members of nations extending boundaries beyond the USA, but the APA itself was concerned with American-born philosophers discriminated against, and philosophies affecting the USA, and such was its jurisdiction with the three named Divisions.

The Committee on American Indians in Philosophy originated because there existed extreme discrimination within the profession that denied *equality of regard and respect for American Indians in philosophy*. This denial of equality *denied freedom of thought and practice* in our profession. The committee, with the assistance of the APA, was charged to identify and bring to the attention of the APA institution, discrimination against American Indians in the USA. Pivotal to this task was to identify why American Indians had no participation in the discipline. If any individual American Indians had attempted to participate, but were denied full participation, including participation on decision-making bodies (by whatever means, whether by current members, students or faculty), and were being confronted with discrimination, in access and success of education, research, jobs, publications, or participation in the APA itself, it was to be brought to the attention of the APA decision-making bodies for rectification. (This was frequently done, but there was no rectification.)

Drafting work creating this committee actually began around 1996 by myself, and finalized in committee recognition and mandate by the APA sometime around 2000. This committee addressed issues and philosophical work of professional American Indians in philosophy. Another institution was created that sponsored this committee, named the *American Indian Philosophy Association*. Together these two groups initiated, as sanctioned by the APA, a *Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*, with the inaugural edition in the fall of 2001. (I also made reports to the Executive Committee.) From Fall 2001 through Spring 2005, all articles and book reviews published

[14] See Holmes Pearson (n. d.).

were the work of, or about the work of, American Indians in professional philosophy, and were refereed.[15]

Both, the chair of the committee (myself) and the name of the committee's newsletter, changed in 2005. Subsequently, the committee's name and that of the newsletter changed to the *Committee on the Status of Indigenous Philosophers* and to the *Newsletter on Indigenous Philosophy* respectively. This formal name change was announced in the spring of 2011, and affected the lives and dynamics of American Indians working in the discipline of philosophy. No longer about American Indians in the USA, the newly published editions of the newsletter (under a new indigenous Canadian editor) and a new chair of the committee (having a degree from a Canadian educational institution) opened dialogue to Native Canadian issues. Some of these issues were also relevant to American Indians (as our lands and governments stretched across US borders), but they were contextualized and problematized in the context of a Canadian parliamentary government. This created problematics. One of our authors of Canadian philosophical thought at the time (Dale Turner, Anishnabai), who had been hired in 1997 to teach Native American Studies at Dartmouth, was deeply committed to sovereign nations' relations. Serious questions were raised about his Canadian politics, and the hiring of a Canadian philosopher at a US academic institution (as if we did not have US-born Ph.D. American Indian philosophers available to be hired.) Coming from a parliamentary Canadian government (and degreed at McGill University in Canada), he had prescriptive conservative ideas about how indigenous people ought to best operate within representative ideologies of liberalism, pluralism, and democracy.[16] (Moreover, further philosophical dissonance ensued behind the ›veiled curtain‹ due to an already existing cognitive dissonance between Canadian and US indigenous persons, as well as to conflicting problematics of conservatism and liberalism.)

Pluralism seems to require a principle of inclusion, or ›democracy of participation.‹ Put questions of democracy aside for a moment,

[15] There was an exception to this policy. Editors were »struck by the similarity of Chinese thought with what American Indian philosophers were talking about regarding native languages embracing an animism and a crossing-over of conceptual categories […], transformation from matriarchal (lineal) to patriarchal (lineal) society […],« a non-hierarchic, dynamic, interchanging, and non-teleological ontology (Waters 2003: 1). See Yunxiang Liang (2003).

[16] Turner (2007).

and return to the APA example. Some people desire ›inclusion‹ of everyone for ›equal opportunity.‹ Yet sometimes, opening up a minority group for greater inclusion, systematically marginalizes and thus penalizes a group already undergoing discrimination within a larger association (which is why a ›minority‹ committee may have been created in the first place). For example, when the APA renamed the *Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy*, (of the Americas, and indigenous to the Americas) to *Committee on the Status of Indigenous Philosophers*, and thus expanded the committee's mission (apparently to cover a global population of ›indigenous philosophers‹), it was no longer protecting the individuals and groups it was created to protect. Thus (liberal pluralist) action intended for good ends, inclusion for protection, operated to create more harm to individuals and groups of American Indians, who were supposed to be protected from this very discrimination. American Indians were the individuals (and groups) originally intended to be protected against discrimination by the APA (and in the profession). Yet the end result of the ›name change‹ is that nobody knows who or what these ›indigenous‹ persons are, either in social construct or reality, either individually, or as a group. Thus under the guise of ›their own ignorance‹ the APA stretched out the original group, thus failing to protect us, American Indians (including Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians), and made it unwieldy and confused toward purpose. How can an individual or group prevent discrimination against individuals or a group, if one does not know who or what they are, or to whom the name refers? Gathering such unarticulated ideas together, and forcing a small committee to articulate these ideas of identity, was wrong. Further, it discriminated against American Indians, froze action, and created inability to perform regular committee functions to protect American Indian philosophers.

This burden, then, of placing the obligation to articulate this individual and group identity should not been placed upon the shoulders of this original committee. In doing so, the APA violated its own mandate, to not discriminate against a small minority group, who, although small, can do outstanding philosophy (as evidenced herein and elsewhere). Hence pluralism can be plagued by its own inability to place limits upon inclusion. And while ›competitive conflicts‹ ensued within the *Indigenous Committee* and the APA, other committees and individuals of the APA's ›their own‹ advanced, with careers, positions, funding, and respect. These are facts of the past ten

years, as can be well documented in the APA records of comparative progress of each of these committees and individuals. Things of ›personhood‹ and ›collegial respect‹ were denied American Indian philosophers through this discriminatory action, with the *Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession* involved, and as permitted by the APA Executive Board of Officers. And the APA Legal Committee set up to attend to discrimination against philosophers, stood by, doing nothing, as though we did not exist.

But what can be made of this? Does Outlaw's principled understanding of limitations upon diversity enable us to make sense of what happened? Would it have changed the situation if his principle had been employed? Would it have maintained more freedom for American Indians to practice our professional trade, as the original committee was set up to ensure? Or that made a difference that mattered vis-à-vis Outlaw's principle of justice: equal regard and respect for all?

Limitations and Values

If we take Outlaw's thesis seriously, at least some folks would agree that diversities are the voice of human success and survival. »*They condition our species*« (*ibid*.: 116; my emphasis). Because diversity is required for human species survival, we should be careful that it not be limited. A strong preference for the values of liberalism is engraved in our US Constitution and in the Lockean American mind. From this vantage point we entertain our notions of individual freedoms within a democracy, and in the USA we do not have a parliamentary type of government. It is one at least partly grounded in, and situated in, the context of the American Indian Confederacies. As such it is one that employs both value (individual rights) and structure (organizational form) as one unity (the *Declaration of Independence*, and *Bill of Rights*, alongside the US Constitution.) But sometimes, diversity, when accompanied with ignorance of the concrete differences between American Indians and other indigenous peoples, or activity behind the ›curtain‹ can substantially and radically change, and up-end the world as we know it.

What happened in the APA with regard to American Indians is still having reverberations among our nations and among our scholars. How could such a thing happen, people ask, in an association

alleging liberalism and opportunity? How could the APA have allowed such an institutional structure to appear on the scene, particularly an ›indigenous‹ committee to usurp the American Indian committee?

These questions raise an important consideration. Are liberalism, pluralism, and democracy enough to protect minority interests? Are there not some limits to pluralism? Outlaw provides the answer »*If limits need to be imposed, the assessment of the need; the specification of the nature of the limitations; of the forms, modes, and terms of imposition – all of these determinations should be made democratically and, with the imposition of limits, strenuous efforts should be undertaken to avoid diminishing the diversities that are so vital to the continued survival of our species, thus are so vital to our prospects for well-being.*« (*ibid*.: 117–118; my emphasis)

And I would add here, to avoid a Hobbesian approach to philosophical terrain within institutions such as the APA, protecting of minority diversity must be built into institutions, and cannot be left to ›interpretations‹ of a quasi-judicial branch, in this instance, the APA Executive Board (or its *Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession*). Elsewise, limitations may be a facade or portend to diversity. Yet the harm has been done. We know that protecting the rights of American Indians does contribute to our species survival. A core value of equality of regard and respect for others can be crystallized if participation is full. This can still be done by the Executive Board. It might have been done *if* there had been proper American Indian institutional representation. Yet there was not, over the objections, in 2005, of the chair of the *Committee on American Indians in Philosophy*, and the President of the *American Indian Philosophy Association*. A glass wall was presented to us, that at that time could not be broken by us.

I finish this response by noting that as of the writing of this paper, since the change of the *Committee on American Indians in Philosophy* to the *Committee on Indigenous Philosophy*, as approved by the Executive Board, we have been able to achieve placing only *one* American Indian in an academic institution that grants a Ph.D. in philosophy,[17] and leaving many other US-born American Indians *along the roadside. Inclusion, for us, has meant exclusion*. We are still

[17] As of the writing of this paper, Kyle Whyte, Citizen Potawatomie Nation, Shawnee, Oklahoma, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, is

looking at a *glass ceiling*. Diversity has conscripted injustice. I hold the APA accountable for this disaster. There is no innocent not-knowing. I thank Lou Outlaw for leading the way to opening our understanding of the dynamics of how these things happen in America, in a land of diversity, liberalism, and democracy. For although we know that these types of limitations on diversity are not justified, and should not happen, they do occur ›behind the curtain,‹ as well as in open view, as proceedings are public.

I and others live within the confines of the APA exclusion by the Executive Board for ten years. Under the guise of inclusion, we were excluded. Kyle Powys Whyte now asks me if we can break the glass ceiling. I ponder, quietly at first, and then I answer yes, but I do not know when. In the context of threat management, I ask: Is it time to repatriate our name to our committee? Or to clarify our mission? And remove the glass ceiling to permit entry to management positions? Is it time to grant reparations for discriminatory harm done? It is past time for the APA to realize we are part of *their own*, in the spirit of equal respect and regard for all. When management is threatened, it is best to look to association values. Developments in the USA are relevant to those situated elsewhere; intergenerational inheritance of power tends to lead to an exclusion of vulnerable minorities in other contexts too. In contexts of liberalism, pluralism, and democracy, individual and institutional values and practices brought this threat to the fore. I have spent many years in the APA. I have hope for this organization. And that hope is that We, American Indians, will be brought back to the APA, and receive full participation as *our own*. We await, and we, the American Indian indigenous philosophers, look to the horizon for change.[18] Thank you Lou!

–Anne Schulherr Waters,
Independent Scholar and Editor,
California, USA

the only American Indian with a Ph.D. in philosophy currently teaching in a Ph.D. granting institution.

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Whose Equality? Response to Lucius Outlaw

Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.) takes up the challenging task of reflecting on potential impositions on diversity in democratic societies. The question of whether or not to impose democratically sanctioned limitations on diversity in cross-cultural contexts is both ambiguous and complex. As the author points out, it is ambiguous because notions of democracy, pluralism, and cross-cultural diversity are rather problematic umbrella concepts. These concepts refer to a wide range of empirical phenomena such as the cohabitation of members of different linguistic, ethnic, or religious backgrounds within the same political community. To add to this empirical complexity, an appeal to democracy and pluralism invokes a variety of competing conceptions of democracy and plurality. Most problematically, perhaps, the question provokes a commitment to the implicit assumption that diversity poses a real or potential threat to a well-ordered society, which should be confronted, for either normative or pragmatic reasons, by specifying democratic limitations. In short, the question is a charged question in that it commits the person who takes it up to assumptions that he or she might not have subscribed to independently. To suggest the (potential) need for democratic limitations on diversity presumes a skepticism. The call for limitations to diversity further suggests that a community that cherishes pluralism has to protect from violation and corruption those principles of equality and mutual respect that allow its style of cohabitation. The assumption underlying the question is that it would be possible to distinguish the procedurally higher value of democracy and its jurisdiction over, we may infer, potentially threatening dimensions connected to an increasingly diverse population. In short, the concepts employed in the question as well as the implicit assumptions invoked are far from self-evident and would require further clarification.

I thus share Outlaw's unease concerning the question posed and follow him in taking democratic and pluralistically ordered societies

to be those committed to the largest possible level of equality and mutual respect. Emancipatory movements in the past decades (especially feminism and postcolonialism) have challenged conceptions of established homogeneity and expanded the scope of an appreciation of diversity with a simultaneous emphasis on equality. The advances reached constitute a significant achievement. Through practices of resistance the scope of which forms of life are valuable was significantly broadened. Democratic pluralism embraces diversity as the precondition of and driving force in a flourishing democratic society. The author's insistence on the primacy of plurality over homogeneity as well as the priority of democracy over philosophy (understood as ideal theory) operates as a crucial preventative against those who might imagine that they have discovered the one true conception of life or one true set of guiding principles from imposing them on others without going through democratic decision-making processes.

As a democrat, a radical democrat perhaps, Outlaw naturally expresses a certain uneasiness about formulating any form of imposition that would not need to be first legitimated through democratic deliberation and decision-making processes. As stated, I share Outlaw's reservation in taking up the given question directly by spelling out limits to diversity. The following comments are thus written in a spirit of general agreement and are meant to evoke further deliberation on what a commitment to democratic values in cross-cultural contexts entails. In what follows I shall consider two issues raised by the metatheoretical observations developed by Outlaw. The points in these reflections that seem particularly salient for further discussion are 1) the coupling of an evolutionary and a democratic perspective, and 2) the value and scope of equality in relationship to human finitude. At the end of this response, I shall draw on recent interventions by two political philosophers working in a Chinese context to suggest a direction in which the issue of diversity could be explored further beyond the confines of Western democratic theory.

I Evolution and Democratic Legitimacy

The first part of Outlaw's article emphasizes human finitude within the larger context of cosmic processes of generation and decline. Human beings are finite in terms of their capacity to know as well as to master the cosmos or even the, by comparison, tiny niche they inhabit within the cosmos (Outlaw 2015a: 111). Recognition of human finitude does not, of course, mean that humans do not have any reliable knowledge, nor does it preclude the possibility of consciously bringing about some meaningful change. In terms of epistemic capacities and the range of practical powers, human finitude is importantly a matter of degree: humans can devise better or worse theories and practices with which to situate themselves in a cosmos in which they are just small parts. What is meant by ›better or worse‹ depends on highly contextual goals and aspirations. The inherent intransparency and exposure at the root of the human condition has been far too little acknowledged in political philosophy and ethics.[1] Acknowledging human finitude contradicts the pervasive attempt Outlaw mentions at the end of his paper: the attempt to perceive of society as an entity in which threats could be determined and controlled independent of democratic deliberation (*ibid.*: 117).

Before returning to the implications of gradual finitude of human forms of life, let me turn to the construction and propagation of what the author refers to as »schemes of meaning« (*ibid.*: 112) which serve to foster, as he puts it, »life-stabilizing orderliness« (*ibid.*) over various generations. According to this evolutionary conception of the emergence of »developed repertories of learning-enabled capabilities« (*ibid.*: 111), theory is an attempt by which the species Homo sapiens organizes its modes of social cohabitation through individual, intra- and inter-group competition. My worry here, however, is that the adoption of an evolutionary framework threatens to commit Outlaw to a detached third-person perspective when it comes to engaging with what he refers to as the mechanisms of social reproduction (*ibid.:* 112) through individual and group competition (*ibid.*: 116). Such a stance would be at odds with the democratic spirit evoked by Outlaw. And yet, Outlaw sees strategies of survival from the third-person perspective of an evolutionary theorist or social anthropologist rather than as a member of a society engaged in the democratic exchange about ideas based on more or less convincing reasons within democratic public spheres.

This adoption of an evolutionary outlook raises a number of interrelated questions: How does the evolutionary perspective relate to the practices of citizens within democratic orders who have to, again

[1] Important exceptions to this general omission are Butler (2005) as well as Nussbaum (2001).

and again, renegotiate their communal lives? What is the relationship between democratic decision-making processes conducted by free and equal individuals and the distant observation of the evolution of social arrangements? What is at stake in coordinating social arrangements so that it is possible »to live well so as to enhance the prospects for prolonging our species-being« (*ibid.*: 115)? Is the prolonging of the species taken to be a precondition that needs to be safeguarded in an evolutionary struggle between individuals, groups and species, or is it an end in itself? It will be impossible to address these major questions in a short space. Nevertheless, an engagement with them would be helpful to better understand the relationship between the democratic and the evolutionary perspective.

An evolutionary conception of the social, in which self-preservation of individuals, groups, and species is the main motivation for interaction, does not, it seems to me, provide the resources necessary for a model capable of confronting the challenge of diversity *from the perspective of participants* in a democratic society. It is granted that an evolutionary account might shed light on the development of repertories of learning-enabled capabilities. It might also explain the emergence of basic institutions of conflict resolution necessary to create some level of stability in a world of competing claims to survival. It cannot, however, account for the dimension of legitimacy claims that is being raised within democratic institutions and processes of deliberation among equals. The normative dimension goes beyond contexts of securing self-preservation and orderliness. If one is willing to adopt an evolutionary outlook, as Outlaw does, it would be helpful to complement this perspective with an account detailing the civilizational breakthrough that occurs once the question of *how to survive* is superseded by the question of *how to live well*. In democracies, the latter question is raised in a community of free and equal human beings who are significantly different from each other, but are, at least in principle, equal in terms of their capacity to partake in and contribute to decision-making processes. Through acts of collective deliberation, they structure their relationships to themselves, each other, and the cosmos. The manifold ways in which these subjective, intersubjective and world relationships are debated and transformed again and again in the private as well as public realms of modern democracies seems to be *different in kind* from the unreflective process of securing species survival as seen either from the agent fighting for his or her survival or from the distant perspective of an

evolutionary spectator of the social. Democratic processes draw on reasons that go well beyond imperatives related to finding the best, in the sense of the most useful strategy to survive in that they replace instrumental calculation and contestation with deliberation. They go beyond detached spectatorship in that they involve the giving and taking of reasons among equals. Thus they are expressed in terms of an I and Thou encounter rather than from a third-person perspective.

There can be little doubt that deliberation retains moments of contestation. And yet, democratic contestation among free and equal individuals and group members can hardly be reduced to questions of species preservation as much as this preservation is a necessary precondition for asking the more complex normative questions. Once evolutionary competition is replaced by practices of what the author refers to as »cooperative *democratic* life« (*ibid.*), it becomes possible to increasingly broaden the scope of forms of life included in the deliberation and decision-making processes. What is the role of the individual and his or her capacity to reason reflectively and, to some degree, disinterestedly in this evolutionary picture? Outlaw conceives of humans as being »both carriers and contributors to the evolutionary successes of our species« (*ibid.*: 117) but does not indicate how these dimensions, or the tension between them, are to be reconciled (*ibid.:* 114).[2] By subsuming reflective and creative acts of deliberation to strategies of evolutionary success, he fails to acknowledge the normative achievement of practices of intersubjective legitimation. Whereas the evolutionary picture explains the emergence of an ordering mechanism in terms of the struggle for mere survival and the passing on of genes, the democratic perspective conceives of individuals as making decisions based on reflective choices within processes of reasoned contestation and deliberation.

Another dimension where the evolutionary perspective and the democratic perspective part ways is that of time-consciousness. While evolution is premised on the assumption of development through learning processes, this is not self-evidently true for processes of his-

[2] A related tension emerges in the discussion of the concept of diversity. On the one hand, diversity is introduced by Outlaw as an anthropological constant, one that is part of the species being of humans. Humans have in common that they are all unique (different from one another). On the other hand, diversity is considered as a political category, one that can be defended or misused as a tool for exploitation and oppression when »diversity becomes a conscript of injustice« in the process of naturalizing distinction in order to legitimate forms of inequality.

torical development. While it would be dogmatic to deny the possibility of historical learning processes in general, we should be careful not to take an evolutionary perspective on the emergence of democratic structures for granted. Learning to unlearn the desire for development is also a lesson learned from the insight into human finitude. A linear conception of time according to which later generations are considered to be more advanced and enlightened in their self-, other- and world relationships has been disproven again and again in history. This is not only an empirical observation necessitated by a century of humanitarian and environmental catastrophes, but points to a normative ambivalence at the heart of the concept of progress. We might not even consider progress to be a desirable goal, unless we specify what kind of progress we are talking about, who is steering it, and whose interests it benefits (*cf*. Adorno 1998: 143–160). Outlaw, to be sure, has a nuanced view about which forms of democratic development are desirable and which ones are objectionable. Here, too, it would be interesting to hear whether his conception of learning is based on the prospects of species survival or a reflective conception of the good life in a well-ordered society. Furthermore, there might be room to include relationships to the cosmos, including nonhuman forms of life, as potential dimensions where learning can take place. This leads me to the second issue.

II Human Finitude and the Equality of All Things

The second point in Outlaw's article I would like to focus on concerns the scope and interpretation of equality of regard and respect, which the author picks out as being the core of democratic order (*ibid*.: 117). Negatively stated, the emphasis on equality of regard and respect protects individuals from disadvantagement and discrimination on religious, cultural, or racial grounds. It is intended to curtail the arbitrary imposition of power by the state, individuals, or groups of individuals. Positively stated, equally recognized and recognizing individuals as well as groups can make their diverse voices heard within the limits of democratic deliberation. Democratic deliberation takes place not only at the level of policy decisions and policy implementation, but also at that of determining how policies are to be decided upon and who will have a say in the decision-making process. This process of deliberatively contesting the rules, the actors as well as the

contents of the democratic inquiry is never complete. It is fallible and subject to revisions and might suffer significant setbacks. Especially during times of a pervasive crisis of political representation – as it is currently faced in the European Union – democracy requires to rethink the nature of political representation beyond traditional conceptions of homogeneous peoples and nation-states.

A critical self-reflection of the tradition of democratic liberalism shows that, while liberalism does not explicitly privilege certain forms of life and the values affirmed by them, it nevertheless is far from value neutral. Liberal democratic discourse implicitly encourages certain modes of conducting one's affairs and promotes certain models of identity formation. For example, liberal democratic regimes implicitly privilege modes of life that agree to the division of church and state as well as a corresponding conception of religious commitments as belonging to the private rather than public realm.[3] While the early proponents of liberalism, such as John Stuart Mill, emphasized liberalism's negative protective dimension, the toleration of diversity increasingly transformed into a doctrine involving a positive commitment to heterogeneity in which the plurality of forms of life was considered to be an intrinsic good. The optimal society thus becomes one with the maximum level of individual and group diversity in line with the maximum toleration of such diversity by equal individuals (Geuss 2001: 80). The inherent paradox of liberalism, thus conceived, is that it claims to be value neutral while in fact maintaining a positive conception of certain forms of institutional arrangements and forms of life. At the very least, it fosters conceptions of life and acknowledges societies in which human diversity is taken to be a core value. By extension, liberal democratic discourse and the political formation in which it flourishes subvert conceptions of life according to which substantive conceptions of the good are not open to constant deliberation.

The emphasis on democratic values, especially that of equality, is in danger of losing its emancipatory force, as well as its capacity to sustain, integrate, and foster significantly different life forms, just at the moment when the politics of appealing to these values are being reduced to a mechanism of self-preservation (at the species, the group, or the individual level). If these values are interpreted as an

[3] Outlaw does not explicitly mention whether the version of democracy he has in mind is in fact liberal democracy.

extension of the evolutionary drive to gain competitive advantage over other individuals, groups or species, it would simply ignore the universalistic dimension of equality. Appealing to the value of the most extensive level of equality of respect means to transcend local cultural boundaries.

Under conditions of a global neoliberal economy, which expands free trade and open markets, we do not only witness an increasing flow of goods and information, but also an exponential increase of human migration across borders as well as within borders. As a consequence of these migration movements, human identities become increasingly fluid and fail to form narratively coherent identities (Baumann 2006; Sennett 1998). The new economy supports certain modes of life that center around mobility and flexibility. It supports the increase of fractured, patchwork identities in a world which is becoming increasingly less equal between forms of life, and more homogeneous within forms of life. In spite of the liberal democratic praise of plurality, one can observe an increasing homogenization of elements within and across cultures in terms of ritual practices, political institutions, and forms of life. The seemingly contradictory trend of homogenization and a return to traditional cultural values and religions needs to be interpreted as two sides of the same neoliberal coin. As Benjamin Barber observed already two and a half decades ago, neoliberal globalization threatens democratic values by imposing itself and uprooting populations through a homogeneous McDonald's culture. These uprooted populations then draw on radicalized conceptions of traditional values as defense mechanisms (Barber 1995). Integration of such groups within democratic orders of equality becomes increasingly difficult.

Let us look at one instance of an increasing failure of integrating diverse forms of life into structures of equal recognition. The emergence of unprecedented levels of cohabitation of people with diverse cultural backgrounds and the discourse surrounding multiculturalism seems to increase diversity of life forms. On the other hand, new forms of global migration movements also document the failure of integrating diversity. In the case of migrant workers, for example, narratives of distinct cultural identities are reinvented by migrant communities as a reactive mechanism against dislocation and the impossibility of integration. The nation-state, that traditional motor which had increased internal equality, attracts foreign workers now to boost its labor force. At the same time, the nation-state has not

been transformed into a democratic melting pot that would open up realistic prospects for migrants becoming equal members of society. Consequently, the majority of its citizens are not willing to give up their prevalent essentialist narratives of identity centered around exclusive conceptions of language use, ethnicity, and cultural heritage. Under conditions that present migrants as potential threats to the order of society, exclusivist narratives of linguistic, ethnic, ritual and cultural identity gain importance. These narratives and the prejudices they foster prevent migrants from gaining equal access to participating in a society's spheres of economic and symbolic reproduction. As a consequence, migrants enter into a state of permanent diaspora while trying to retain and strengthen their own cultural identity by constructing competing narratives. These lead to further impediments to integration and further contribute to their marginalization as cultural and economic members of the host society. An equal right to respect and access to economic opportunity thus remains a distant dream. Seen from the perspective of the migrant, the persistently foreign host society at best pays lip service to the ideal of true equality. We witness the global emergence of what Doug Saunder has called »arrival cities« (Saunders 2011). In the largest global migration wave in history, immigrant neighborhoods grow around major cities in the form of, to name just a few, banlieues, Plattenbau developments, Chinatowns, Little Indias, and Hispanic barrios. Rather than providing their inhabitants with the possibility of truly arriving in the sense of becoming equally respected members of the host countries, the new global class of migrant workers remains in the limbo of being in the diaspora of eternal arrivers who are prevented from realizing the promise of fully arriving. The potential integration of diverse populations within democratic institutions is thereby kept at the level of a mere formal promise. The apparently increased social diversity presents a contradiction that actually proves, as it were, a shift towards an increased pressure towards a homogeneity the nation-state is nevertheless no longer capable of or willing to provide.

Insofar as this diagnosis of a growing pressure for homogeneity and reactive cultural differentiation is correct, the question of a democratic commitment to diversity needs to be rephrased: how is it possible to reconstitute spaces for generating and sustaining true diversity and plurality alongside the most extensive degree of equality and respect? There is a danger that democratic values – especially that of equality, but also that of freedom – remain empty if they are being

invoked without being contextualized. They need to be filled by concrete associations, either positive or negative, within specific cultural narratives to retain any emancipatory force. The very concern for democratic values needs to be contextualized in order to prevent it from becoming shallow. Such a contextualization would, for example, reveal that concepts of equality and respect belongs to a certain Judeo-Christian tradition and its continuation in secular humanism and, eventually, liberal democratic traditions. This lineage established the standard of equal individual subjects and their capacity to choose between competing conceptions of how to live well.

Such an attempt at a self-contextualization of core democratic commitments could take a variety of forms and looks back on a long tradition. A critical self-reflection of the values of democracy, and especially that of equality, has accompanied the Western tradition from Plato through Benjamin Constant, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Max Weber. In the current context, one can draw on these attempts not so much to think of an alternative to democratic rule as to expose the danger of democratic discourse of succumbing to the rule of the masses, partisan politics, and increasing bureaucratization (*cf.* Geuss 2001: 110–128). Self-reflection on the core values employed in organizing human cohabitation could be conducted in terms of a genealogical critique. By tracing the emergence of the core value of democracy, namely, equality of respect for the freedom of others, it is possible to become aware of their contingency and historical association not only with struggles for emancipation, but also with forms of suppression and exclusion. Such a genealogical critique would have to address the concepts employed as well as the vocabulary used to express these concepts. To take one of the concepts employed by Outlaw as an example, the term »species-being« (Outlaw 2015a: 114) would need to be critically reconstructed by way of tracing its origin in Darwin as a biological unit of self-preservation. The genealogist would then have to critically reconstruct Marx's employment of the concept of species-being, *Gattungswesen* (literally, species essence), as a court of ethical appeal to expose forms of alienation. The critical self-examination of this concept would then also trace how Marx used the concept to establish a conception of humans as being radically and essentially distinct from other animals. Moreover, it could then show how Marx thought that humans could not realize the potential of their species distinction under conditions of capitalism and so on.

A critical genealogical account of the emergence of the core value

of democracy employing species-being would prevent this value from becoming empty. In combination with an updated version of ideology critique, genealogical critique of normatively charged concepts would help to prevent the justification of political systems where some are more equal than others. Promoting awareness of the contingent socio-historical conditions under which these liberal-democratic categories and adjacent commitments to individual property rights, for example, emerged presents an effective model of preventing normative concepts from carrying along an ambivalent history in which they played both emancipatory as well as regressive roles. In the current increasingly globalized world, there is also a growing need to contrast the value framework undergirding liberal democratic traditions in Europe and America and their specific institutional realizations with the alternatives that have emerged in other socio-historical contexts and reflect different historical experiences and practical concerns from those which have shaped the Western imaginary.

Returning to the example of the ever-widening inflow and outflow of migrant populations in the global labor market (and the growing diaspora of asylum seekers), there is a need to rethink what a pluralistically structured democracy could mean for members of traditions where equality and respect have not been the most prevalent concepts employed in deliberating on how to best organize individual and communal self-, other- and world-relationships. In other words, if one's normative commitments are not to be parochial, it is helpful to decenter and, as it were, ›decolonize‹ conceptions of equality and respect that have emerged in a specific history in Europe and America. These conceptions cannot be limited to, but continue to reflect concerns that are specific to these parts of the world but might not be expressions of our universal species-being. Any theory of equality, if it is to be a reflective conception, should ask itself not only the question ›Equality of what?‹ but also, and more importantly, ›Whose equality?‹

Certainly, a liberal democratic regime, which imposes limits on the scope of who counts as worthy of which form of respect, can be challenged both from within Western cultures as well as by alternative conceptions from non-Western cultures. A transnationalization and cross-culturalization of the democratic imaginary would be helpful to expand the range of democratic contestation beyond the realm of the nation-state as well as beyond the realm of specific cultures and their always one-sided narratives of identity. In a transnational and

cross-cultural context it is increasingly important to understand how diversity is addressed in non-Euroamerican traditions of thought, vocabularies, and political arrangements. This step beyond the limits of Western theorizing is not only based on an extension of the concept of equality of respect to different and, at times, radically different others (others that have not only dissimilar linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds but also experiences of individually unique histories of degradation as well as flourishing). It may also throw a critical light on the normative ambivalence and blind-spots of those conceptions of equality and plurality that have historically emerged in Europe and further developed in North America.

A certain understanding of democracy and basic democratic values is contested not only within modern Western societies but increasingly at a global level. The political philosopher Zhao Tingyang (趙汀陽), to take one influential example, has drawn on Chinese tradition in general and the concept of »all-under-heaven« (天下 *tianxia*) in particular to juxtapose what he identifies as specifically European conceptions of universal and equal human rights (Zhao 2009).[4] In contrast to the exclusionary tendency of specific categorizations of who counts as valuable, usually in the context of nation-states, Zhao calls for a conception of global governance, which transcends the boundary of nation-states. The concept of *tianxia* undermines the dogmatic assumption that the individual is the primary unit of political legitimacy and the nation-state is the category of international political philosophy. By extension, rather than focusing on equality and freedom among citizens within nation-states, Zhao proposes to ask which kind of arrangement of our cohabitation in a shared cosmos would be harmonious (和 *he*) at a global level. While such conceptions as all-under-heaven are of course also subject to criticism through democratic contestation within and between cultures,[5] they present a contrast to Western appeals to the universality of equal human rights. These contrasting concepts could, when related in an intercultural dialogue, have the function of providing a corrective to certain pathological dimensions of the respective other concept.

Wang Hui (王暉) is a second example of a scholar who is contesting the claims to hegemony and the anthropocentric bias implicit in Western conceptions of democratic rule and its focus on human

[4] See also the Confucian reformulation of his position by Angle (2012: 74–90).
[5] Kerr (2011).

equality (Wang 2012). Recently he has suggested rethinking the concept of equality beyond the scope of Western political thought by drawing on the Daoist discussion on ›equality of all things.‹ This concept, Wang Hui maintains, presents an antidote to a conception of equal autonomous subjects, which reduces equality to a sameness, »beneath which a hierarchically structured differentiation lurks« (*ibid.*: 56). Whereas the anthropocentric standpoint common to political philosophy in the West reduces nonhuman animals, organic life and nonorganic objects to their serviceability in an evolutionary history of human self-preservation, the equality of all things situates humans within natural history. In such a history they are not masters, but simply finite members of the order of things. It thereby acknowledges the concrete singularity in which each thing, including humans and other animals, ought to be respected. The equality is then no longer an equality of subjects of the same kind, which has been the common denominator of the politics of identity and recognition in Western academia. Wang Hui summarizes the uniqueness of this radical proposal to rethink the universality of Western concepts of political theorizing centered around the concept of equality as follows:

> In contrast to a homogeneity within species, the ›equality of all things‹ presupposes their difference. But difference as the bearer of infinite diversity and uniqueness is not characterized by self-identity, which would be synonymous with one-dimensionality. Identity always connotes some kind of exclusion, and what is excluded in identity-formation is not just the other, but also one's own internal diversity. Recognition, which rests on identity, belongs to the world of naming and appearances (*ibid.*: 51).

For Wang Hui, as well as for the ancient Chinese thinkers he draws on, the politics of equal recognition is proclaiming to be universal, while in fact being based on arbitrary distinctions by humans who take themselves too important. Human categories of their various others are taken as fixed identities within a hierarchical structured order of assigned names and corresponding hierarchies (citizen-migrant, human-animal, etc.). The tendency of human beings to take themselves too important ignores the contingency at the basis of their specific life form and fails to acknowledge other things but themselves as real equals who make a claim to be respected.

Like Wang Hui, Outlaw also stresses that »our species is but one among many that currently persists on planet earth« (*ibid.*: 111). Our

species-being is contingent and our knowledge and capacity for technical mastery irreducibly finite in a cosmos that, in varying degrees, exceeds our conceptual grasp and practical attempts at mastery. Incorporating this insight concerning the limits of human forms of life and action into democratic theory is an important task that far exceeds the context of this discussion. If one were to engage it further, the conception of ›the equality of all things‹ could provide a promising starting point in opening up new perspectives on how to rethink the claims of humans in a cosmos in which any entity is equal in terms of being unique and thereby also different from each other. It could contribute to an expansion of the capacity of the imagination to better allow humans to not stop at the level of protecting existing regimes of equality and combatting known forms of inequality. This would mean an imagination of other forms of being as both equal and different.

–Mario Wenning, University of Macau, China (SAR)
and Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany

Reply

Response to Commentators

Those who invested in conceiving, developing, and launching *Confluence* are to be commended, highly. It is a historic and promising venture. Accordingly, it is an honor to have been asked to contribute to an international dialogue focused on the question »What (if any) limits ought democratic pluralism impose on diversity within a cross-cultural context?« Developing a response to the query was quite challenging.

So, too, considering and responding to the very thoughtful and thought-provoking commentaries on my response. Each of these has helped to heighten my appreciation of the mission of *Confluence* and of how this instance of response-and-commentaries is fulfilling that mission to my benefit, especially. For I have had to reconsider my response in light of considerations offered by persons who have forged their commentaries by drawing, in part, on the resources of traditions and praxes of thought from historical and cultural contexts different from those on which I have drawn, in which I have lived. Dialogue is now under way. Following are my contributions to its continuation …

I Response to Ankur Barua

Much more than a direct response to my considerations, Ankur Barua offers considerations of philosophical efforts by Indic thinkers who, both drawing on and renovating Indic traditions of thought-praxis made sacred, wrestled with vexing issues of ordering and ordered Indic social life that were fraught with philosophical-anthropological, ontological, political (ethical) significance: the terms, logics, and characteristics of differentiation by which persons, by nature or by convention, could or should be proscribed into social orderings of hierarchical or egalitarian arrangements.

I find especially helpful Barua's abbreviated and cogent account of the evolving ›stages‹ of strategies of critique and correction, and the understandings produced, by which Indic thinkers continue to wrestle with how to think the consequences of Indic encounters with the various aspects of European colonialism or Eurocentrism. I am persuaded by Barua to endorse the »third stage« of the dialectical evolution of strategies of engaging Eurocentric elements in Indic life: recognition, through »fine-grained micro-studies of everyday postcolonial life,« that ongoing life is »a work-in-progress« in which are interwoven old and new traditions, »tradition« (forged and institutionalized, I take it, before European colonization) and »modernity« (Indic life during European colonization and now during postcolonial life-world rescue, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts) (Barua 2015: 122). ›Eurocentrism,‹ then, is hardly a simple unity, however imposing and destructive overall, that can be accounted for and rejected wholesale because of the impositions and destructions since aspects of European thought have been taken up by some Indic thinkers as resources for critical rethinkings of invidious social orderings via castes and gender.

I am inclined to regard Barua's very thoughtful disclosure of how social categorizations of caste and gender still in play in Indic circumstances also »co-inhabit political spaces that employ the vocabulary of human rights, civil liberties and social justice« (*ibid*.: 123) presumably carryovers from encounters with Eurocentrism, as a revealing instance of evolutionary adaptation. What I am arguing for, and aspire to contribute to, is the normalization of situations of encounter and engagement that are democratically structured so as to maximize the possibilities for the mutuality of adaptations that enhance human flourishing without the impositions, destructions, exploitations, and distortions of life generally that were characteristic of colonialisms.

Barua points out how such efforts have been under way in India: Indic thinkers have drawn on traditions of Indic thought to forge critiques of invidious gender and caste orderings, critiques that valorize the essential equality of individuals on much the same terms as, for example, conceptions of liberal-democratic individualism long thought to be definitive of European modernities. Still, Barua notes, some of these Indic thought-projects are stressed by efforts to affirm *both* egalitarian notions of persons and hierarchic social orderings by gender and caste as the key to social stability in keeping with insights

from sacred traditions. A crucial difference, apparently, is that the valorizations of the essential equality of individuals in tradition-influenced Indic thought draw explicitly on foundationally sacred metaphysical principles while the political philosophy of liberalism, in many contemporary articulations especially, abjure metaphysical groundings. The challenging question that Barua raises for my offering is whether I am relying on an implicit evolutionary metaphysic.

Mine is an explicit evolutionary perspective on philosophical anthropology, an empiricist evolutionary human social ontology. However, I insist that the political philosophy of liberalism was, from the outset, likewise grounded on particular social ontologies that embraced both inclusive egalitarian and exclusive hierarchic commitments ordered by gender, raciality, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic class. Hierarchies and inequalities, firmly embedded in very elaborate and articulate metaphysical and ontological constructions concerning race and gender, especially, fundamentally and thoroughly structured European modernities.

One of the foundational metaphysical and ontological ›unit ideas‹ structuring distinctively ›modern‹ European philosophical and theological thought, but out of intellectual legacies stretching back for several thousand years, was that of »the Great Chain of Being« (Lovejoy 1936). This metaphysical unit idea provided resources by which to develop strategies for forging and imposing explanations of the relative and linked characterizations and positionings of all types or categories of living beings. During the formations of the distinctive European modernities, the ›chain of beings‹ idea was conjoined to that of distinctive ›races‹ to provide a rational and rationalizing account of racial hierarchies in the ordering of socio-political life in terms of civilizations as well as in particular polities. Only as the result of centuries of partially successful, still ongoing struggles against those metaphysically-grounded socio-political constructions and the practical implementations of them have the political philosophies of Modernity, philosophies of liberal-democratic individualism in particular, been largely rescued from racialized imperialist projects of White Racial Supremacy and rehabilitated to make possible the recognition of and respect for the ontological equality of differing non-white races, disparaged ethnicities within white races, women of all races and ethnicities, persons who orient key aspects of their identities and lives by understandings and norms different from those that structure heterosexuality, and social classes that are not

in control of the economic and political means by which shared life is organized and sustained.[1]

Still, as Barua makes clear, here, in colloquial terms, is where the rubber meets the road: »The vital question […] is whether all difference is intrinsically dignified, or whether there are any moral limits to what sorts of difference can be accepted« (*ibid.:* 130) The significance of this question is such that it has priority over that which motivates and frames this *Confluence* discussion: »What (if any) limits ought democratic pluralism impose on diversity within a cross-cultural context?« With laser-like intensity of focus, Barua poses what might seem to be *the* question: »*which* differences […] (*ibid*.: 128)« should be valorized as dignified, *which* should not; *which* subjected to limitations, *which* ones not?

Are answers to be provided by *philosophizing* about the political while drawing on the resources of whatever traditions of thought-praxis and their enabling metaphysics and ontologies, philosophies of history, social and political aspirations? Or, due to seemingly ineradicable conflicts that come with the de facto plurality of such constructed resources and the seeming epistemological impossibility of forging a non-self-serving metaphysical foundation for a political philosophy that trumps all others in affirming *which* differences for affirmation and limitation, are we compelled to settle for forms of *modus vivendi* only?

As I hope I made clear in my initial offering to this discussion, my intellectual ›inhabitation‹ of an evolutionary perspective on (and self-understanding of) our species being, as it were, compels me to conclude that evolutionary constraints on our knowledge-productions prevent our developing either retrospective or prospective instances of ›knowledge‹ regarding matters historico-empirical, thus matters socio-political, that have the security of invariant certainty unaffected by history or evolution. Consequently, I favor, advocate, can endorse a form of *modus vivendi* as acceptable, in Barua's words, »[…] provided it allows for spaces where differences can be celebrated« (*ibid*.: 130). Such a form I would regard as a favorable set of conditions in which democratic equality of regard and respect can be in play such that the *experiment* in living can proceed through which democratic pragmatic decisions can be reached regarding *which* differences should be valorized positively, *which* limited, to what extent,

[1] See, for example, Sandel (1998); Young (2011); Pateman (1988); Mills (1999).

for and by whom, etc. – all of the questions emergent in the experiment of political life. Put differently, I am convinced that the better resources for attending to the questions and issues of political life, including, especially, those emergent in conditions of diversity and plurality, are not those of political *theory* in search of invariant and ›universal‹ truths, nor a similar theology as a foundation for political *theory*. Rather, persuaded by Aristotle, I am convinced that a better resource is to be had in the knowledge-production efforts he characterized as *phronesis*, that is, wisdom about matters in the realm of changing political life regarding which studied lived *experience* is the key, not *theoria.*

II Response to Anne Schulherr Waters

Through her response, Anne Schulherr Waters, of the Seminole people of Florida and Oklahoma, raises a number of important issues and questions that test my considerations. In doing so, she brings to the discussion one of the most profound challenges to forging just political life in the United States of America: how best to conceptualize, realize, and sustain democratic recognition, respect, and justice, retributive and distributive, for peoples who are the descendents and carriers of the life-worlds of the peoples who settled the landmasses tens of thousands of years before the coming of imperialist, exploitative European explorers and settler-colonists who unjustly appropriated and renamed the lands ›the Americas‹ while subjecting many, many thousands of the peoples to genocide and various modes of oppression. (A personal note: I *refuse* to participate in referring to these peoples as ›Indians,‹ which derives from a misnaming by the lost Christopher Columbus; likewise in referring to them as ›Native Americans,‹ since they had their own names for themselves as well as for the landmasses across those tens of thousands of years before the renaming of the lands to honor latecomer Amerigo Vespucci.) Indeed, how descendents of these Indigenous peoples share in political life at all levels in the USA, whether they can do so to the satisfaction of their critically vetted notions of justice required, are major tests of the viability and suitability of my considerations of how best we might wrestle with matters of democratic limitations on diversity and pluralism. However, it is my very firm conviction that I have neither an obligation nor a responsibility – definitely neither the cap-

ability nor the legitimacy – to lead the way in taking up these profound challenges to philosophizing and to actual political praxis. Rather, I believe, I am to be led by those from among and on behalf of Indigenous peoples who take up the challenges with democratic openness and equality or regard and respect.

Anne Schulherr Waters is just such a person, and a philosopher. A key aspect of her response is her challenging proposal that my offering of a way of conceiving of human bio-cultural life-world diversities negotiated by way of *democratically* informed principles and practices – fundamental equal respect and regard for all – be tested, in part, by examining and adjudicating a particular case-study of a recent history of decisions regarding one of the ›diversity committees‹ (Waters 2015: 136) of the US American Philosophical Association (APA): a change-of-name from the ›Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy,‹ of which Waters was the founding chairperson (but who, apparently, was neither involved in nor consulted about the consequential changing of the name of, thereby the demographic scope of those to be served by, the committee) to the ›Committee on the Status of Indigenous Philosophers.‹ Water's framing question is »What would the discipline of philosophy in America look like from a perspective of a non-power-conscripted diverse creativity« (*ibid*.: 137)? Very much at issue for Waters is what she (though she is hardly alone …) takes to be the prevalence of considerations and practices by which persons among US-born »American Indians« (*ibid*.: 138; passim) are excluded from professional Philosophy – first and foremost from tenure-track and tenured positions in departments of Philosophy in institutions of higher education – thereby from the oldest and largest US-based organization of professional philosophers, the APA. I will focus my response on this challenging case study while acknowledging that there are other issues of importance that Waters has raised.

In addressing Waters' concerns regarding the APA, I prefer to distinguish three issues, two closely related, one less so: First, the extent to which what serve as canonical paradigms of quests for, and instances of, philosophically vetted ›knowledge‹ in professionalized, academic Philosophy are representative of the full range of the modes of ›knowledge‹ produced and philosophically vetted within the historical life-world contexts of the world's people-cultures and civilizations, those of Indigenous peoples of the Americas in particular. Second, the extent to which, demographically, the profession of philosophers in the USA, within the APA in particular, reflects, in just and appropriate ways, the demography of the historically diverse people-cultures and civilizations still being carried and reproduced by relatively distinct people-groups in the USA, including descendents of Indigenous peoples. Third, the extend to which most of shared daily life, short-term and long-term, is much affected, if at all, by what professional philosophers do *as professional philosophers*.

Though the first and second issues are related, progress addressing the first *could* possibly proceed, to some extent, without concomitant progress addressing the second. In truth, though, progress in increasing the number of professional philosophers who are descendants of peoples native for many thousands of years to the landmasses renamed ›the Americas,‹ and who philosophize out of and on behalf of modes of knowledge long vetted and confirmed by the survival-successes and flourishing lives of the various peoples before displacements and genocide were imposed by settler-colonials from Europe, will, in all likelihood, be key to motivating increasingly wider, more respectful and informed considerations of the ways of knowing forged by Indigenous peoples.

I think it important to distinguish these two complex issues in order to better assess how best to work for progress, even how best to use either or both as a case-study for wresting with matters of diversity and democratic justice, and to be as clear as possible about where best to focus efforts on conditions affecting the production and the philosophizing of persons who are descendants of Indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, I do not believe that daily shared life in the life-worlds of most of the world's people-cultures are much affected directly by the work of professional philosophers since, beyond the teaching of undergraduates, most of what we do as professionals is directed primarily at other professional philosophers. Consequently, I am not yet persuaded by Waters that failures within the APA to proceed democratically and justly in renaming and staffing a committee charged with attending to the status of ›American Indian‹ philosophers is of great and direct consequence for the life-worlds, thus for the lives, of descendents of Indigenous peoples except for those who are, or might become, professional philosophers who seek involvement in the organization.

The consequences, then, of institutionalized injustices *within* the APA as a profession is of some significant consequence for the social and intellectual productions of philosophers, thereby for the produc-

tion, legitimation, and mediation of what passes for ›knowledge‹ in academic Philosophy and, further still, for the education of successive generations of college and university students who take courses in the discipline and draw on their learning experiences, to whatever extent, to orient themselves and to act in the world. For far too long these production activities have proceeded in bad faith, sanctioned by rationalizations that have served efforts to secure knowledge-production and validation from contamination by sociological and historical factors while pursued in the contexts of institutions and organizations distorted by investments in White Racial Supremacy and by other invidious considerations.

The sanctioning of a Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy was an effort by officers and members of the APA to provide a formal organizational context in which to articulate and pursue agendas by which to safeguard and improve the professional status of those Waters refers to as »American Indians,« and to consider ways by which to increase their numbers among professional philosophers. This effort was in keeping with a broader, hard-won agenda of the APA to recognize and support diversity/pluralism in philosophizing that was a consequence of the diversity/pluralism of peoples' life-worlds in which the diverse population of professional philosophers were nurtured. Subsequently, a Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession was chartered, with the chairperson also having membership on the APA's Board of Officers, to serve as the board-level committee for attending to organizational and professional issues that transcend the charters of the ›diversity committees‹ serving particular constituencies (committees on Black; women; Asian and Asian-American; Hispanic; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender; and Indigenous philosophers).

It is to the Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession, then, that I believe Waters' account of the change-of-name, demographic scope, and agenda of the committee charged with attending to professional matters concerning ›American Indian‹/Indigenous philosophers must be directed for initial adjudication, first and foremost by philosophers, and by assisting activist thinker-scholars from other disciplines and contexts of service, who are themselves descendants of Indigenous peoples. I have already taken a critical position in this response on failures of recognition and respect involved in impositions of renamings on Indigenous peoples who had already forged identities and registered those in names of their choosing.

I remain convinced that a great deal more transformative progressive work within and on the APA has to be accomplished, and sustained, to have the profession and its practices manifest much more fully and appropriately commitments to democratic equality and respect, epistemologically as well as socio-politically. Epistemologically, we stand to gain substantially by expanding the range of critical examples of knowledge-production through human evolutionary adaptations and flourishings that the world's people-cultures offer us through, in part, the stocks of knowledge they have developed. Waters provides a poignant example: that of stable, long-running democratic confederacies that were forged by Indigenous peoples many years before peoples from Europe and elsewhere emigrated to and settled on lands renamed ›the Americas‹ and developed, in the case of the USA, a democratic republic.

However, I am convinced that even more such work must be accomplished in individual programs and departments that teach Philosophy in institutions of higher education, high schools, middle schools, elementary schools. These are the contexts in which democratic recognition and respect, invested in teaching the thinkers and texts that become legitimated when included in curricula as exemplars of accomplished philosophizing, can be particularly impactful in addressing many of Waters' concerns regarding longstanding failures to cultivate such regard for Indigenous peoples. These are the contexts in which to engage in the cultivating work that will be most likely to produce more academic philosophers from among Indigenous peoples. This work should be endorsed and supported, not impaired, by the APA.

Would such efforts result in a substantial increase in the number of philosophers who are descendants of the continents' Indigenous peoples? Perhaps. But only if more such persons become convinced that a career as a teacher-scholar of academic Philosophy is a viable and worthwhile choice. The convincing case is not to be made by the APA as an organization, which exists, first and foremost, to serve persons who have already made a decision to become a professional philosopher. Rather, the persuasive case tends to be experienced during the years of undergraduate education, especially, largely through the influence of particularly impactful teachers (who need not all be descendants of Indigenous peoples; I never had a teacher of academic Philosophy who was a person of African descent), and through the experiences of impactful intellectual stimulation and

growth through formal and informal learning-situations fostered by such teachers.

The APA continues to support efforts to foster renovations of course syllabi to include more materials of philosophical significance produced by thoughtful persons whose life-worlds, identities, and life-agendas have not been forged in, nor are in service to, life-worlds and agendas of peoples of Europe or Euro-America. In addition, summer programs targeting young women and men of people-groups with low numbers in the profession can help to increase the numbers, as has been the case through summer programs offered by Philosophy departments at Rutgers University and the Pennsylvania State University. One or more of the APA Divisions has supported these programs. Why not a program targeting young Indigenous undergraduates?

The use of the APA as a case-study of to what extent, and how well, democratic equality of regard and respect has been institutionalized by and among professionals who philosophize about such important matters is appropriate and, in exploring the questions, can be very instructive. However, it is crucial that we be clear about the extent to which the organization can have direct impact on the numbers of persons who decide to become professional academic philosophers, and have direct impact on the hiring, promotion, and tenuring of professional philosophers. To the best of my knowledge, the APA has no direct leverage on these important matters; rather, these are adjudicated within the context of individual institutions and their departments and programs, though individual professional philosophers, many of whom may well be members of the APA, do influence decision-making through formal and informal communications and recommendations.

It is the deliberate disconnect between the APA and departments and programs of Philosophy in individual institutions that accounts for the absence of direct leverage on departmental and program practices: the APA is organized *not* to serve as anything approaching an accrediting agency, even regarding standardized curricula for undergraduate majors or minors, or for graduate degrees. This deliberate structuring of the independence of individual institutions' departments and programs of Philosophy from APA influence and authority guarantees the organization's impotence regarding, and freedom from culpability and responsibility for, improprieties and injustices in institutional situations. Consequently, attending to instances of practices and/or judgments that call for assessments regarding propriety and justice are matters of institutionally-local jurisdiction, though these can sometimes be influenced through mobilized letter-writing and publicity campaigns that can include the participation of APA-affiliated persons, officers, and committees. Even so, success in influencing such situations requires that work building principled democratic solidarity must have been accomplished and nurtured, or be forged, through a campaign organized to influence a particular situation (or pattern of similar situations), particularly among the officers and members of the diversity committees, and among members of other organizations affiliated with the APA.

Finally, we should take particular care in determining just how valuable a critique of national or international organizations such as the APA can be in terms of providing critical understandings by which to attend to, and struggle to correct, historic injustices constitutive of the very formation and continuing structuring of life within nation-states. In my judgment, Waters' case-study, while instructive, does not suffice to provide corrective leverage on injustices perpetuated well beyond organizations of persons whose professional lives are played out in the contexts of institutions of higher education.

Still, within such institutions and organizations much important progressive, transformative work can be accomplished with varying mediated impacts on the social orders within which the organizations and institutions are situated. Institutions of higher education, because they are chartered to sustain socio-political life through the reproductive socialization of, and mediation of knowledges to, successive generations being prepared to become heirs of the social order, are *especially* pertinent sites for cultivating and practicing principles of democratic equality of regard and respect without distortion by secondary commitments to principles of recognition and reward in keeping with meritocratic considerations regarding capabilities and accomplishment. Here, then, is the key point of leverage for the force of Water's challenge: that we endeavor to determine, and correct where needed, that our academic institutions, and the professional organizations of academics, are structured foundationally by democratic equality of regard and respect and, consequently, are inclusive through *deliberate* efforts devoted to nurturing diversity and pluralism of capable persons of life-worlds and cultures from the full range of evolutionary successes at adaptation and flourishing.

III Response to Mario Wenning

Mario Wenning's response is so very rich with considerations that a proper response would require a full essay from me, which would be more than is expected or acceptable on this occasion. I will focus my response, then, for the most part, on the first of what Wenning identified as two issues raised by my »metatheoretical observations« (Wenning 2015: 154): namely, »the coupling of an evolutionary and a democratic perspective« (*ibid.*).

Wenning's worry:

> […] that the adoption of an evolutionary framework threatens to commit Outlaw to a detached third-person perspective when it comes to engaging with what he refers to as the mechanisms of social reproduction through individual and group competition […] Such a stance would be at odds with the democratic spirit evoked by Outlaw. And yet, Outlaw sees strategies of survival from the third-person perspective of an evolutionary theorist or social anthropologist rather than as a member of a society engaged in the democratic exchange about ideas based on more or less convincing reasons within democratic public spheres. (*ibid.*: 155)

First, I believe, Wenning is wrong about my offering being from »a detached third-person perspective« rather than being offered »as a member of a society engaged in the democratic exchange about ideas based on more or less convincing reasons within democratic public spheres« (*ibid.*). My offering is written in first-person voice, as an invited contributor to an *explicitly* democratic context of public discursive exchange – *Confluence* – within which the reasonings constituting my offering were to be, have been, and will be subjected to testing, by Wenning and by others. Furthermore, the ›evolutionary perspective‹ articulated in my offering is drawn from public, socially constructed reservoirs of theorizings about *processes of evolution*, which theorizings are subjected continuously to discussion, critique, and revision. And there is the crucial matter of my own self-understanding regarding my evolutionary perspective: that I, too, am both a product of and contributor to processes of evolution, socio-cultural (as a teacher-scholar, for example) and biological (as a father of three sons). I am in no way ›detached‹ from such processes.

It is with this self-understanding that I must respond to the several questions raised by Wenning regarding »the relationship between the democratic and the evolutionary perspective« (*ibid.*: 156). The evolutionary perspective provides me with a particular mode of

historicist understanding of our species that conditions, substantively, how I approach the work of forging understandings of *democracy* and of instantiating instances of ›democratic‹ social practices and arrangements. When such understandings are sanctioned epistemologically and thereby valorized as instances of ›knowledge,‹ they then provide rational (and rationalized) grounds for legitimations of normativity. Such efforts have histories, as Wenning notes. This very *Confluence*-initiated exchange is a shared international effort to revise considerations of *democracy* with mindfulness of global socio-cultural diversities – that is, to contribute to directed efforts to ›evolve‹ notions of *democracy*. A structuring anticipation of this *Confluence*-initiated discussion, I believe, is that instantiations of praxes guided by revised considerations of *democracy* made more fit for global diversities would contribute, substantively, to human well-being.

Thus, I disagree with Wenning that »[t]he normative dimension goes beyond contexts of securing self-preservation and orderliness« (*ibid.*: 156). Further on Wenning argues that »[b]y subsuming reflective and creative acts of deliberation to strategies of evolutionary success […]« (*ibid.:* 157) I fail »to acknowledge the normative achievement of practices of intersubjective legitimation« (*ibid.*). How are terms of ›normative achievement‹ set? What are the measures of ›achievement‹ if not by way of some terms of survival-success and enhanced well-being? I remain convinced that the primary work of praxes constituting the ›normative dimension‹ is, precisely, to secure preservation and orderliness, to secure ›the good life,‹ however and by whomever conceived on behalf of some polity, current or desired. Such efforts, I believe, are hardly ever ›unreflective‹ because concerned with securing preservation while, Wenning claims, democratic processes »replace instrumental calculation and contestation with deliberation« (*ibid.*). Really? This claim is totally unpersuasive. Clear and compelling historical examples might persuade me otherwise …

Finally, Wenning wonders whether my conception of learning is »based on the prospects of species survival or a reflective conception of the good life in a well-ordered society« (*ibid.*: 158). I should be clearer than was the case in my essay: the evolutionary perspective I invoked was *not* restricted to concern for »mere survival.« Rather, it was intended as a conceptualization of the situating context for all that humans do, including engaging in reflective conceptualizations and discussions, democratic or otherwise, of »good life« for whom-

ever in a society however »well-ordered« (*ibid.*). Because of the anthropological diversity and diverse historicities characterizing our species, I endeavored to argue, such conceptualizations have been, will be, diverse. My emphasis on *equality of regard and respect* was offered as an initial normative grounding for *democratic* praxis through which to work through differing conceptualizations and instantiations of, or quests for, shared life well-ordered, always weighing these against the questions whether, in what ways, to what extent, if at all, any particular instance, current or proposed, preserves and enhances the survival *and* well-being of humans, other species, our planet (which Marx, in speaking about ›nature,‹ characterized as ›man's extended body‹). Hence, for me it is not appropriate to position an evolutionary perspective as an alternative to a democratic perspective.

There are more challenges in Wenning's response worthy of attention, particularly the discussion of »the scope and interpretation of equality of regard and respect« that I made foundational to my evolutionary perspective (*ibid.*). Wenning worries that:

> The emphasis on democratic values, especially that of equality, is in danger of losing its emancipatory force, as well as its capacity to sustain, integrate and foster significantly different life forms, just at the moment when the politics of appealing to these values are being reduced to a mechanism of self-preservation […] If these values are interpreted as an extension of the evolutionary drive to gain competitive advantage over other individuals, groups or species, it would simply ignore the universalistic dimension of equality. (*ibid.*: 159–160)

I agree. However, an ›evolutionary perspective‹ need not interpret efforts by social groups seeking to preserve themselves as *requiring* destructive competition. Rather, an enlarged sense of human diversities, and of the significance of particular diversities (cultural, genomic, for example) for enhanced prospects for the survival *and* well-being of groups that partake of them in fruitful ways, could, should, hopefully will lead to reduced destructive competition and enhanced cooperation that help to preserve life-enhancing diversities as a counter to diversity-eliminating processes of homogenizations. In exploring tendencies toward homogenization, I would urge Wenning to take more care with key concepts: in advocating the ›integration‹ of diverse migrant populations into receiving polities, it seems that Wenning is advocating the *assimilation* of the migrants into a ›melting pot.‹ Migrating persons might well wish to assimilate; I would not require

them to do so. Rather, I argue for democratic ›integration‹ of diverse populations – unity in diversity, many and one.

Otherwise, there is much with which I agree with Wenning's critique of the history of conceptualizations and instantiations of liberal democracy, of the ideological masqueradings of the political philosophy of liberal democracy as »value neutral« (*ibid.*: 159). No need, I think, to belabor those partaking of *Confluence* with recapitulations of the critiques of the lies of the masquerades. Particularly inspiring were Wenning's sharing of the notion of »all-under-heaven« (*ibid.:* 164) by Chinese political philosopher Zhao Tingyang and that of »equality of all things« by Chinese scholar Wang Hui (*ibid.*: 165). Both notions, Wenning makes clear, enrich considerations of *equality* in ways that challenge the »anthropocentric bias« that deeply affects, even afflicts, conceptualizations of democracy with long heritages in Western polities. I am very much open to having my own taken-up notion of *equal regard and respect* for diverse peoples be refined through engagement with the considerations Wenning has brought to the fore.

–Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.), Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

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