



Cultural globalisation: A philosophical reflection

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Abstract

The essay Global Culturalism explores how culture is becoming a defining factor in a world that is becoming more interconnected. It examines how global contacts, fueled by technological development, economic integration, and transnational communication, have made culture a crucial framework for comprehending social relations, identity, and power. The essay highlights culture as both a medium and an effect of global interchange, rather than only considering globalization as an economic or political phenomenon.

The conflict between cultural variety and homogeneity is brought to light by global culturalism. On the one hand, homogenized lifestyles and ideas that run the risk of marginalizing regional customs are promoted by global media, consumer culture, and prevailing value systems. However, global interconnectedness makes it possible for disadvantaged and indigenous cultures to be revived, reinterpreted, and circulated throughout the world. The essay critically examines how globalization actively reshapes culture through resistance, adaptation, and hybridization rather than just passively shaping it.

The paper presents culture as fluid, dynamic, and relational, challenging essentialist ideas of culture from a philosophical standpoint. It contends that ideas of identity are reshaped by global culturalism, shifting from rigid national or ethnic boundaries to many, overlapping cultural affinities. It also brings up moral questions about inequality, cultural supremacy, and the commercialization of cultural forms. In the end, the paper makes the case that viewing globalization via a cultural lens provides a deeper knowledge of current social realities, highlighting the necessity of communication, mutual respect, and cultural responsibility in a globalised world.

Keywords: Globalization, cultural identity, cultural hybridization, cultural homogenization, transnational culture

Introduction

Russell conforming to traditional philosophy asserts that the business of philosophers is to understand the world and not to change it. The remark is undoubtedly intended to refute Marx's view that philosopher's perceptions of the cosmos varied and that the objective was to change them.

Philosophy originates in man's biological and existential needs to understand, to adjust, and to create. Human beings in this world have no bounded space in which to change their thoughts and ideas, and living or existing position. Biologically human beings or homo-sapiens are classified as the highest living existents in this world. Philosophically, from the antiquity, man is treated as the centre of everything, irrespective of his individual, group, community, or societal existence.

Taking advantage and with the pretension to human welfare we change our views or thoughts, actions etc. everyday superceding the previous problematic. In history of philosophy, we find that philosophers change their thoughts and ideas with the purpose of human development. Now we are stepping into 21st century where philosophy enters into global thoughts or concepts. But the concept of 'Globalisation' is not new, it has been present in practice and theory as far back as humanity itself. In this regard Peter Singer points out that Diogenes' urged to globalise when he said that "I am a citizen of the world". The intensity to globalize may have varied from era to era but the way has lingered on from the days Diogenes. John Lennon, lead singer and musician of the Beatles, sung, "Imagine there's no countries...Imagine all the people/sharing all the world".

The present-day debate on 'Globalisation' has come to assume great importance mainly because of the intensity

and rapidity of the phenomena. The concept of 'Globalisation' has been defined variously mainly because of its multi-dimensionality. The human race had not earlier witnessed its urge to globalise with such intensity and extensity which has become possible mainly due to the quantum leaps in technology, especially in the last quarter of the previous century and the beginning of this century. Globalisation is discussed most commonly as economic, political, social and technological phenomena, however, less commonly but not less importantly as cultural. The discussion on globalisation can be as wide as one chooses but in order to say something significant one has to confine oneself in discussion. Therefore, I propose to discuss only 'Cultural Globalisation'.

Concept of Culture

The term 'Culture' is understood as the pattern of behaviour or customs, common to a society, which are socially shared by human beings in a group and also includes the ideas or patterns for behaviour, thought and feelings. Here Biesanz argues, "Culture is learned 'from others. For culture is shared and socially transmitted. It exists only in a human group". So, culture is a symbolic construction, articulation and dissemination of meaning. Moreover, Biesanz more distinctly explains that "...culture is a configuration of learnt and shared patterns for behaviour and of understanding concerning the meaning and value of things, ideas, emotions and actions. This configuration of patterns and understandings arises out of language communication within a social group and serves to adapt man to his physical environment, his biological nature and his group life". [Italics in the original]

The cultural meaning is displayed in the everyday expression of value that forms the basis of identity assertions and human practices, particularly in the public expression. Values are intimately related to meaning as the end product of communication and spaces of recurring action as the end product of socialisation. Culture not only develops through the possibility of communication but changes it with its widening. The issue is slightly different, though, in that all cultural politics must deal with the rhetorical oscillation between a purposeful condemnation of the strength of the cultural group and an overwhelming pleasure in its assertion. This cultural dialectic is merely political in nature.

Concept of Globalisation

The term 'Globalisation' refers to a collection of continuous processes that have transformed our current social situation into one of globality. The term globality signifies a condition in contrast to 'globalisation' which is a process. Indeed, the popular phrase, 'Globalisation is happening' may be agreed to contain at least one of the two elements, namely- we are emerging from the state of modernity, which began to take shape in the 16th century, and we have entered or are approaching the new state of post-modernity or globality. But the dynamics of globalisation are especially eager to investigate some issues pertaining to the topic of social transformation as pointed out by Berger, "How does globalisation occur? Is it one cause or a combination of factors? Is globalisation a uniform or uneven process? Is globalisation extending modernity or is it a radical break? How does globalisation differ from previous social developments? Does globalisation create new forms of inequality and hierarchy?"

In question, 'Is globalisation extending modernity or is it a radical break?' Steger has given an adequate and sufficient reply, "...modernity has become associated with the 18th century European Enlightenment project of developing objective science and liberating rational modes of thought and social organization from the perceived irrationalities of myth, refers to the period between the Enlightenment and Renaissance. During these two centuries, Europe and its social practices served as the primary catalyst for 'globalisation'".

Global Culturalism

The question 'Does globalisation create new forms of inequality and hierarchy' brings into play the notion of nation-state. Globalisation has impacted it as the preeminent classification of collective identity. Jameson argues that, "...the most frequent themes of collective dignity and self-respect lead in fact less often to social than to political consideration. We arrive at third ticklish subject-nationalism. ...nationalism, as a whole internal political programme appeals not to financial self-interest or the kind for power, or even scientific pride although these may be side benefits but rather to something which is not technological, nor really political or economic, and which we therefore, for want of a better word, tend to call 'cultural'." Here Cohen says that "[t]he idea of the 'Global' displaces both national and international", as [e]dges cities and regions become centers of the political engagement." Butcher argues that "the global can have a disrupting effect on the ordered nature of international relations".

The international relations are being determined by cultural exchanges, especially due to the impact of rapidly developing media. In this way, Jameson contends that the success of western mass culture over the world is not as terrible as it seems. One could, however, argue that, for instance, Indian identity will persistently oppose the hegemonic influence of Anglo-Saxon imported culture. The effect of this imported culture would remain merely superficial. In a similar manner there may even be an intrinsic European culture, which can never really be Western, in the sense used here, and so forth. Such an intrinsic culture would put up resistance in order to survive. It is unclear, nevertheless, if overt actions of resistance or a cultural political program are necessary for this so-called "natural" reaction against cultural imperialism.

Culture has a significant impact on social transformation in connection to the dynamics of globalisation. As Williams points out, the sense of culture to "a distinct 'whole way of life'... to include not only traditional arts and forms of intellectual production but also the 'signifying practices'- from language through the arts and philosophy to journalism, fashion and advertising - which now constituted this complex and necessarily extended field". Williams is basically arguing that the concept of culture is itself a symbol for something that can only be derived from the behaviour of human beings as it falls into more or less regular culture and the necessary basis of culture is language, and only humans possess the inherent characteristics that allow them to write, speak, and think. Language also presents to the outsider a mirror of the culture, enabling him to understand its emphasis. Each language is the outcome of the common experiences of the members of a social group and as such reflects its history and its interest.

Language helps people learn, communicate, remember, think, imagine, and think likely. It also helps societies store, accumulate, and transmit culture. It reflects cultural focus and moulds people's perceptions of reality. So, we can say that, language is the backbone of culture. According to Jameson, cultural problems frequently influence social and economic ones. If we examine the economic aspect of globalisation, which in reality seems to constantly dissolve into everything else, regulating new technology, supporting geopolitical goals, and, with post-modernity, eventually causing the cultural to collapse into the economic and the economic to collapse into the cultural. Nowadays, the manufacturing of commodities is a phenomenon that makes you desire for the object as much for its appearance as for its immediate utility. Since the commodity is now "aesthetically" consumed, commodification is likewise a form of aestheticisation.

But in India if we talk about 'Globalisation' then first of all, it should be necessary and vitally important to discuss "Cultural Globalisation" because India is multi-cultural land and is multi-lingual multi-religious with multi-ethnicity, etc. In this sense Butcher argues that. "...in contemporary India by the imposition of state regulated 'unity in diversity' has been replaced by a new form of identity politics falling under that ambit of localism". In Indian culture, identity is the main crisis because of multi-culturality. Butcher argues in this regard that "Layers of identity are not mutually exclusive, especially in a country such as India which is highly diverse regionally, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously. Local contexts for example, would have their

own dimensions that impact on the reception of television and influence that it will have on the audience". Reevaluating one's identity emerges as a reaction to globalisation, and cultural identity techniques are used as a tool to manage one in changing cultural contexts as well as to attract viewers.

In order to explain the global culture, identity is the main problem, narrative is essential to the study of it, and its characteristics as a field make it both are considered a favoured kind for study and especially likely to turn into a place for enactment, identity construction, and expression. Tajfel claims that identity is "...that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". Kroskrity talks also of identity as "the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories". These two definitions describe identity as 'self-concept' or as a 'construct'. So, we have a description of a process on the one hand, and a description that implies something stable and certain, like a notion, on the other.

Hall maintains that a subject's identity is a result of their beliefs and emotions, and that subjectivity is a stable and cohesive collection of behaviour that defines individuals or groups. The concept of the subject as a Cartesian entity representing reason and autonomy of choice is rejected by postmodern conceptions of identity. They have resulted in the replacement of the single term "identity" with alternative formations, such as its plural "identities," which reflects the idea that people and organisations can choose from a variety of socially accessible choices, or the term "identifications," which refers to a process and a creation that requires discursive work and is never completed.

While, in defining narrative Kerby has argued, "Narratives are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world of experience and ultimately of ourselves. Narrative employment appears to yield a form of understanding of human experience, both individual and collective, that is not amenable to other forms of exposition or analysis". The way narrators construct their identities emphasises that one's identity is a tactical creation that is responsive to local circumstances and events. In addition to creating and negotiating understanding of social realities through narratives, people also constantly alter the social relationships they have with one another and possibly with others who are not present during the interaction

According to Fina, the link between narrative and identity operates on a number of levels. The narrator's commitment to cultural narrative techniques through the use of language and rhetorical devices can be connected to identification on one level. Performance styles, rhetorical strategies, and story schemata that identify people as members of specific communities are examples of shared narrative resources that narrators creatively utilise. Alternatively, identity can be associated with the negotiation of social roles (local and global) that either reinforce or contradict those assigned to narrators, who use stories as platforms for the enactment, reflection, or negation of social relationships and thereby contribute to their maintenance or modification. However, the division, negotiation, and manifestation of community membership can also be associated with identity. This process depends on the categorisation of postures that let narrators distinguish themselves from members of other groups or identify themselves as members of groups.

The concept is that identities are located within social, historical, and global contexts. But what setting matters for the construction and analysis of particular identities? The topic of how local and global identities interact with one another and what sorts of settings are necessary for their analysis is usually left unanswered by social constructionist approaches, which emphasise the variety of identities that may be presented and their context sensitivity. Narrative-built identities can connect to a variety of circumstances. Since identities are created and achieved during the procedure by presenters and other participants, global identities only become relevant in the analysis motivated by those approaches when they are signalled, performed, or negotiated in the international context.

In emphasizing the concept of 'Globalization' Sterger queries, "... is globalization primarily at phenomena of the modern world?" He goes on to explain that, "the concept of globalization has been applied in a historically imprecise manner". Due to multi-dimensionality of culture in India and because of identity crisis we are globally backward and underdeveloped. But now because of our global thinking to overcome the identity crisis we became a developing country. But a culture is arranged in a structure that is generally in agreement. "Integration," which in this context refers to reciprocal adjustment among the many cultural aspects, a culture's pattern is harmonious when there are no conflicts or contradictions and when ideas and practices are united. Cultural assimilation obtains when everybody within the polity is not simply in it but of it. It is a situation which impacts a sense belonging to all citizens wherein the distinction between the ins and the outs is done away with. Thus, we have to travel a long distance to achieve cultural integration in India. One of the main obstacles in achieving cultural integration is the persisting tendency to characterise the followers of some of the religious faiths as 'outsiders. Sterger also contends that a notable change in people's consciousness has been facilitated by "Cultural Globalisation." In fact, it seems that a new "post-modern" framework with a less secure sense of identity and knowledge is gradually replacing the old modernity frameworks.

Oppressive ties may exist both within a society and on a global scale as a result of globalisation. In some respects, globalisation concept is affecting the culture in countries like India. If we look at the history of civilization, we find that the concept of globalising always existed. In this regard Singer pointed out that, "The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are celebrated for the voyages of discovery that the world is round. The eighteenth century saw the first proclamations of universal human rights. The twentieth century's conquest of space made it possible for a point not on it, and to see it, literally as one world. It is a daunting moral and intellectual challenge, but one cannot refuse to take up".

In this respect Kar has argued in the preface beautifully and defined that 'globalisation' is, in the present context, "The world has become, in important respects, a single social system, as a result of growing ties of interdependences, which now virtually affect everyone. The global system is not just an environment within which particular societies develop and change. The social, political and economic connections, which transcend borders between countries, decisively, condition the fate of those living within each one

of them. The general term of this increasing interdependence of the world society is 'globalisation'".

But Wallerstein maintains that "Globalization is a misleading concept, since what is described as a globalization has been happening for 500 years. Rather, what is new is that we are entering an "age of transition." We can usefully analyze the current world situation using two-time frames: 1945 to the present and circa 1450 to the present. [Italics in the original]

In order to explain the cultural globalisation Berger points out that, "... the cultural dimension of the phenomena and "culture" is understood here in its conventional social scientific sense as the beliefs, values and lifestyles of ordinary people in their everyday existence". In India such kind of beliefs, values and lifestyles has varied on the basis of religious, social and political. From the religious point of view, there are various religions which have their own rules and regulations living style, wearing dress, social set up etc. Though India is a secular and democratic country, yet we have found that political, social set up, ethnicity based on religious point of view. In spite of these differences, we see that people who are educated and living in metropolitan or cosmopolitan cities live their lives not only religiously but at the same time have their ideas, thoughts and actions impacted by globalization.

Jameson contends that when global culture becomes more standardised, regional popular or traditional forms are displaced or destroyed to make room for Western living and lifestyles which has been seen by many as the very heart of globalisation. This reflecting effect, which displacing everything else now extends beyond the realm of culture into the two divisions that remain. This procedure is evidently, initially, the result of economic supremacy – local cultural characteristics that have been suppressed by Western competitors. At a deeper level, the concern that particular when ethno-national ways of life are lost, social anxiety develops, of which cultural anxiety is but a symptom. Berger argues that "Cultural Globalisation is the movement of goods and ideas (cultural-freight) from the west to the rest of the world". He makes this argument because more modern conceptions of globalisation and additionally global culture has tended to correlate the procedure with cultural homogenisation associated with western, especially American, economic and political dominance.

Conclusion

Two presumptions emerge from the explanation of globalisation given above in order to explain the cultural dimensions: firstly, cultural globalisation is somehow inevitable, and those who try to oppose or reject it are foolish. Other presumptions include the idea that cultural globalisation is "good" and "desirable" in and of itself, and that the changes it brings about must be accepted. We must reconsider the definition of cultural globalisation in its entirety and adopt a critical perspective on the process.

Secondly, the reality of globalisation emphasises the connection between the local and the global, as well as the hybrids known as globalisation that are developed to close the gap. But from the above assumption and discussion, the question arises that, "are the two categories in a dialectical relationship to one another? Is this merely a reformation of the old tradition and modernity debate?" Can the dialectical synthesis be adequately described as 'glocalisation'?

There can be no doubt, however, that global culturalism is duly related to the local, regional, ethnic, social, political, religious aspects of India bringing with it a huge identity crisis which is not easy to overcome. Hence, whatever 'Globalisation' is, it is definitely reformation of the traditions and modernity debate or dialectical relation between global and local but we can say with Berger that, "...globalization has come to be emotionally charged in public discourse".

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