Reconciliation and the Fusion of Horizons – Trevor Tchir, Algoma University

Many of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*'s "Calls to Action" pertain to intercultural understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. In this paper, I argue that the intercultural understanding necessary for the ongoing project of reconciliation can be constructively informed by Charles Taylor's concept of 'languages of perspicuous contrast,' itself animated by Gadamer's concept of the 'fusion of horizons'. Taylor's hermeneutic approach seeks mutually respectful intersubjective recognition and non-distortive understanding of other cultures, in order to overcome ethnocentricity in a way that does not surrender to the impasse of cultural incommensurability or a disingenuous assertion of cultural relativism. His approach is animated by an initial presumption of the equality of all cultures, as horizons of meaning that animate a rich array of different and often conflicting human goods or potentialities. Taylor's account of interpretive intercultural understanding helps us to judge the relative merits and limitations of our own and other cultures, in a way that is mutually respectful, helps us to more clearly identify points of commonality and difference, invites interlocutors to be transformed by what they learn from a more perspicuous meeting with the other, yet maintains the moral-experiential importance of each individual asserting those ways of being that, upon deliberation in an intersubjective context, continue to deserve the assertion.

In the second section of this paper, I present Hannah Arendt's account of political judgment as another valuable source from which to formulate an approach to the intercultural understanding called for by the *TRC.* Arendt's ontology of plurality, her agonistic conception of politics, her performative account of self-disclosure, her insistence on the redemptive power of narrative, and her argument that a 'valid' reflective judgment about the particularity of objects and events in our shared world is one made from the perspective of an 'enlarged mentality' that requires that individuals 'visit' the perspectives of others, make her approach a valuable counterpoint to Taylor. Arendt's approach reminds us that in the intercultural communicative processes of reconciliation, citizens should not assume that the final purpose is an ultimate convergence of values. Arendt also offers an important criticism of the politics of recognition, helping us to overcome the colonial modes of recognition that expect or command a particular set of ways of being, acting, and thinking, and which perpetuate Schmitt's 'friend-enemy' distinction. Arendt's theory of political action contains other valuable resources for considering the process of reconciliation, including her account of constitutional foundation or beginning, promise making, forgiveness, and non-sovereign freedom. An examination of these is beyond the scope of this paper. I focus here on her account of political judgment since it contains enlightening commonalities and contrasts to Taylor's approach to intercultural understanding. This paper also engages with Andrew Schaap's insightful book, *Political Reconciliation.*

Intercultural Understanding and the *TRC*'s "Calls to Action"

The notion of intercultural understanding is referenced in a wide range of the *TRC*'s calls to action. Intercultural understanding and mutual recognition are foundational principles in the constitutional and legal framework that the *TRC* deems necessary for the project of reconciliation, including the Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation that reaffirms

the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown.[1] The *TRC* calls for intercultural competency training for students in medical and nursing schools,[2] lawyers,[3] law students,[4] public servants of federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments,[5] journalism and media students,[6] and management and staff within the corporate sector.[7] In its promotion of spiritual autonomy and religious pluralism, the *TRC* also calls upon governments that fund denominational schools to require them to provide education on comparative religious studies, including "Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices."[8] One of the objectives regarding education is to build "student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect."[9] The *TRC* calls on governments to create mandatory curriculum for primary and secondary students on "residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada."[10] It also calls upon governments to provide the necessary funding "to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods."[11] This funding is similarly called for at the post-secondary level, in order to "educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods."[12]

The *TRC*'s call to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into post-secondary education is of particular interest to my home institution. Since 1971, Algoma University has been located on the site of the former Shingwauk and Wawanosh Indian Residential Schools. In 1979, Algoma University College partnered with the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association to establish *The Shingwauk Project*, for "cross-cultural research and educational development."[13] This project has been inspired by the ideal of a "Teaching Wigwam" that was envisaged by Chief Shingwaukonse (1773-1854), as "a crucible for cross-cultural understanding and for synthesis of traditional Anishnabek and modern European knowledge and learning systems."[14] The Shingwauk School was opened in Sault Ste. Marie in 1833, in cooperation with the Government of Upper Canada and Anglican Church. Chief Shingwauk saw the school's "cross-cultural educational project" as "essential to the restoration of cosmological balance and of social harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, and between both Peoples and the natural environment."[15] Chief Shingwauk's vision was never realized. Instead, as the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Industrial Homes (1874-1935) and the Shingwauk Indian Residential School (1935-1970), the institution was the site of linguistic, religious, and cultural assimilation as well as psychological, physical, sexual, and spiritual

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[1] Ibid., 4 (45).
[2] Ibid., 3 (24).
[3] Ibid., 3 (27).
[4] Ibid., 3 (28).
[5] Ibid., 7 (57).
[6] Ibid., 10 (86).
[7] Ibid., 10 (92(iii)).
[8] Ibid., 7-8 (64).
[9] Ibid. 7 (63(iii)).
[10] Ibid. 7 (62(i)).
[11] Ibid. 7 (62(iii)).
[12] Ibid. 7 (62(ii)).
[13] Algoma University
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

violence. Inspired by Chief Shingwauk's original vision, *The Shingwauk Project*, the CSAA, the National Residential School Survivors' Society, Algoma University, the Anglican Church, the Shingwauk Education Trust, and the Dan Pine Healing Lodge are partnered to "research, collect, preserve, and display the history of the Residential Schools [and] develop and deliver projects of 'sharing, healing and learning' in relation to the impacts of the Schools, and of individual and community cultural restoration."[16]

In 2008, Algoma University College received its University Charter from the Province of Ontario with the "special mission of cross-cultural Aboriginal education and research."[17] As part of its special mission, the University collaborates with the Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, an evolving Anishinaabe post-secondary institution, to grant degrees in Anishinaabe Studies and Anishinaabemowin. Following the publication of the *TRC* report, and given its special mission, the Algoma University community has felt a particularly urgent need to reflect and deliberate about what 'cross-cultural' or 'intercultural' understanding, education, and research really means. Following a trend across the country, the dominant term of reference that tends to locate these discussions today is the 'indigenization of the university'. Committees are being struck at post-secondary institutions to grapple with what 'indigenization' means and how to put it into practice. This is a profound and contentious question for Indigenous and non-Indigenous university community members alike. Intercultural understanding and/or indigenization within the university would certainly entail meaningful affirmation or integration of indigenous epistemologies, methodologies, ontologies, and learning protocols within several or all university courses, even those whose usual content, epistemological, and methodological approaches are most attached to the European natural and social science traditions that have dominated Canadian universities. The way to a more equitable and mutually respectful exchange of our different ways of knowing, acting, and speaking, in the university community and beyond, is only possible through discussion that serves the objective of intercultural understanding, and this includes discussion about the appropriate conceptual approach to intercultural sharing with a view to reconciliation.

Taylor's Fusion of Horizons

Taylor's approach to cultural understanding fits squarely in the hermeneutic, or interpretive, social sciences. Taylor champions this *verstehen* approach to the study of human practice in contrast to the natural sciences approach, whose striving for a completely objective perspective free from culturally specific interpretations, he finds "sterile and futile"[18] when it comes to understanding human actions. For both Gadamer and Taylor, the aim of understanding should not be to escape our own point of view in order to inhabit another perspective. The tendency to do this is part of the hold of the natural science tradition since the 17th century, whose progress involved our separating ourselves from our own situated perspectives and striving for an omniscient 'view from nowhere.' In applying the methodologies dominant in the natural sciences to human understanding, we detach ourselves from "the most fundamental features of

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 121.

the experienced world."[19] Cultural understanding involves listening to the other's particular discursive self-interpretations of practices that provide intelligibility and meaning to the practitioners themselves. This cannot be achieved through a form of disengaged research and rationality that supposes its own universality by transcending particular self-interpretation. Each one of us has an understanding, significantly determined by our own culture, which establishes certain "limits of intelligibility."[20] This understanding shapes our *praxis*, how we "deliberate about our own motives and actions, and those of the people we deal with."[21] Following Heidegger's account of *Dasein*'s pre-articulate practical orientation to their environment, Taylor suggests that much of our understanding is "inarticulate," a kind of "pre-understanding" that shapes our judgments.[22] For Taylor, cultural understanding is always a matter of interpretive comparison, an encounter between particular understandings – neither of which may lay claim to a universally valid standpoint – that are each inseparable from engaged practice.

By self-understanding, Taylor means one's "desirability characterizations,"[23] how one articulates their emotions, aspirations, what one finds admirable or contemptible, what one desires, loves, or despises. Here Taylor's approach incorporates the Aristotelian idea that we can understand the *ethos* or character of a person and of a community by the virtues that they espouse and the subjective disposition by which they 'live out' these virtues. Our "desirability characterizations" refer not to those goods that we just happen to desire, according to our free, arbitrary will, but those goods that, upon self-reflection and dialogue with others, we find to be "normative for desire," in other words, goods that we "ought to desire."[24] Taylor develops an account of the authentic self as situated in moral space. One's own sense of self is developed through reflexive, rational evaluation and prioritization of objects of desire and the lifelong development of an authentic, highly personal orientation towards moral 'hypergoods.' Taylor defines 'hypergoods' as "goods which not only are incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, decided about."[25] Following Herder, Taylor holds that each individual and each community has a unique, irreplaceable way of expressing their conception of the good.[26] To live authentically involves a lifelong journey of discovering and uniquely articulating one's particular relation to the good. Authenticity is not a matter of arbitrary choice or license. It involves a positive notion of freedom as self-determination or 'autonomy' – living by one's own rational law. While one's relationship to 'hypergoods' or 'second order desires', in order to be authentic, must be uniquely expressed and arrived at through personal reflection upon – and willing identification with – these goods, 'hypergoods' exist outside of the individual self and are kept alive through the cultural communities whose dominant practices they animate and into which individual human beings are 'thrown.'

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[19] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 148.
[20] Ibid., 149.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 120.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 63.
[26] Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity*, 47.

Taylor emphasizes that one of the challenges of intercultural understanding is that the "desirability characterizations" at the core of our self-understandings are not easily "intersubjectively validated."[27] We can't always easily validate what someone admires or finds contemptible by referring to abstract categories of universal logic, empirical evidence, or practical reason. Taylor evokes Hegel's critique of Kantian practical reason, and reminds us that most universal moral imperatives find unique, particular expression in the ethical life of distinct communities. Further, Taylor maintains Herder's notion that all individuals and peoples have their own unique and authentic way of expressing the good. Incommensurability between culturally specific articulations of the good is a significant challenge for intercultural understanding. The values of one culture are frequently not exactly replicable in another culture.[28] Despite the difficulties, Taylor maintains that intercultural understanding must always be in a sense comparative, because we can only make the desirability characterizations of the other culture intelligible by beginning through our own horizon of meaning.[29] There is no completely unsituated or disengaged perspective available from which to begin to understand the other, nor is it possible to couch our "explanantia" in the exact same language(s) belonging to the culture we are trying to understand.[30] This would require that we transcend the very conceptual apparatus through which we make intelligible our practical orientation to the world. Taylor holds that an engaged attempt to understand another culture will necessarily raise some judgments of truth or validity of the claims, conceptions, and practices made by individuals of that culture, despite the aforementioned difficulties in ultimately validating desirability characterizations.[31] Human practices and articulations of desirability characterizations can only be understood "against the background of their (presumed) world" and Taylor suggests that we cannot but "hold a view" about the contents of the world that situates the actor we are trying to understand.[32]

Intercultural understanding does not mean simply adopting the view or language of the other culture. This strategy, which Taylor associates with the "incorrigibility thesis," takes the validity of the other's self-understanding with "ultimate seriousness" and thus rules out any possible account of a culture or society as being "wrong, confused, or deluded" about any aspect of their worldview or practice.[33] The objective is not empathy, which can be paternalistic, nor is it a disingenuous, relativistic, uncritical affirmation of all dimensions of the other's way of life. The proper goal of intercultural understanding is, rather, to foster respectful coexistence, and to do so requires a recognition of ourselves and others as agents who are ethically accountable for our practices in a shared world. Understanding governed by a principle of respect does not entail unquestioning yea-saying of the other's desirability characterizations, but rather an open yet critical posture toward their and our own desirability characterizations and an underlying affirmation of each of our standings as free and equal moral and political agents.

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[27] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 119.
[28] Ibid., 120.
[29] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 150.
[30] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 118.
[31] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 152.
[32] Ibid., 153.
[33] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 123.

Taylor recognizes that in rendering our own judgment as to the validity of the other's articulations of the good and of the truth claims upon which their conception of the good rests, we run the risk that our judgments will be ethnocentric. Taylor writes that the problem of ethnocentrism arises whenever we try to understand another culture through a comparison undertaken strictly through our "home language."[34] When we consider the other in an ethnocentric way, we judge a good or practice in the other culture to be 'wrong' or 'invalid' merely because it represents a limit to intelligibility.[35] This has been a strong tendency especially in the European tradition of critical, transcultural and comparative social sciences, whose historical development is integral to the history of colonialism and modern imperialism, and which has so often explained other cultures in distorted and unflattering light while supposing to possess some universal, rational perspective or language from which to judge.

But Taylor insists that we are not unavoidably committed to ethnocentricity in the process of comparative intercultural understanding.[36] Part of overcoming ethnocentricity as an obstacle to mutually respectful coexistence is the affirmation of the principle of cultural equality. Indeed, the starting point for Taylor's approach to intercultural understanding is an *a priori* presumption of 'equal worth' of cultures.[37] By 'equal worth,' Taylor means that it is "reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time – that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable – are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect."[38] This presumption does not require a "peremptory and inauthentic judgment" of equal value of all dimensions of culture, but rather a "willingness to be open to comparative culture study of the kind that must displace our horizons in the resulting fusions."[39]

Also essential to overcoming ethnocentricity is identifying the proper language with which to engage in intercultural comparison. The key to overcoming ethnocentricity is not to try to identify an unavailable 'view from nowhere.' Nor is there remedy in the futile attempt to completely abandon our own language and self-understanding in order to embody that of the other. The error, Taylor argues, is in thinking that the language of intercultural understanding has to be either "theirs or ours."[40] Taylor's proposal, which I here want to endorse, is that intercultural understanding can best be reached in developing a new "language of perspicuous contrasts" – a language inspired by Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' – that will more adequately, non-distortively, articulate the commonalities and differences between cultures.[41] Gadamer uses the image of a conversation striving for a common language, a common human understanding, which would liberate both sides, allowing each to be, "undistortively". We "liberate the others" thus "allowing them to stand apart from" our own original home understanding, when we identify and articulate a contrast between their understanding and ours in a language in which

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[34] Ibid., 147.
[35] Ibid., 124.
[36] Ibid., 125.
[37] Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 66.
[38] Ibid., 72.
[39] Ibid., 73.
[40] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 125.
[41] Ibid., 67.

our differences can be undistortively expressed to the satisfaction of both sides.[42] The goal is a fusion of horizons, not an escape of horizons altogether: "The ultimate result is always tied to someone's point of view."[43] Thus the 'fusion of horizons' will not completely overcome the challenge of incommensurability. As Taylor puts it, even after finding a language of perspicuous contrast, we must allow the possibility that both cultures have some practices or goods with no correspondent one in the other, but this approach doesn't assume incommensurability from the outset.[44]

Formulating a new language of contrasts forces us to re-describe what we are doing in a language that makes cultural differences intelligible to both sides. We articulate things that were purely implicit before, to put them into question. We face a challenge by altering and enlarging our understanding, "remaking its forms and limits."[45] We strive to newly articulate the meanings that objects, events, and practices have for each culture in a language that makes them accessible for both. Striving to understand the other transforms and relativizes important features of our self-understanding, and it no longer goes without saying that we subscribe to the canons of our own discourse.[46] Our new understanding grows out of and past our original 'home understanding', since in formulating the contrast we have identified, articulated, and shown to be one possibility among others, what was previously a transgressor of the limit to intelligibility.[47] We can see particular cultural perspectives as historical achievements, not as "perennial human mode[s] of thought"[48] within a supposedly universal perspective. We come to see a plurality of goods, instead of only one good (our own) and its negation by the other.[49] A language of perspicuous contrast allows us to formulate both ways of life as alternative "clusters of human possibilities" in relation to some human constants at work in both.[50]

Intercultural understanding based on a language of perspicuous contrast helps us to recognize the co-existence of contradicting, or "nonjointly realizable" goods in the world.[51] We come to see that just because we cannot maximize two different goods without tension, this doesn't mean that one of them is not valid. A tension between culturally specific goods does not invalidate them or completely level them. Instead, suggests Taylor, it presupposes their validity.[52] Further, these conflicts are not always incapable of rational mitigation; we can sometimes find ways to combining conflicting cultural goods.[53] Taylor finds the mediation of conflicting cultural goods at the heart of the "comparativist entreprise" to be essential to the avoidance of political and military conflict.[54] This approach also bolsters the work of theorists

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[42] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 150-51.
[43] Ibid., 151.
[44] Ibid., 130.
[45] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 149.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 150.
[48] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 130.
[49] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 163.
[50] Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity," 125.
[51] Taylor, "Comparison, History, Truth," 162.
[52] Ibid., 163.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 164.

and actors committed to promoting political, social, and economic reform that might better realize human potentialities. Social justice theories like the 'capabilities approach' of Sen and Nussbaum rely on an idea of human potentiality derived from Aristotle's notion that what is *in itself* unfolds *for itself* in history, or that, in Taylor's words, "we have it in us from the beginning to become what we later become."[55] Approaches like the capabilities theory benefit from Taylor's account because through it, we can articulate and promote human potentialities, but without supposing a unitary set that pretends to be universal.[56] We can retain the notion of potentiality, without retaining two of Hegel's assumptions, so influential to modern social scientific research and guiding principles of imperialism, namely, that there is a single line of unfolding potentiality for all human beings and that this potentiality unfolds in fixed stages, where each is the precondition of what follows.[57] Instead, we might recognize diverse lines of development that are often incompatible with one another.

Formulating a language of perspicuous contrast forces agents to transform their standards and concepts for judging the other's – as well as their own – practices and desirability characterizations. We come to a new conception of what constitutes 'worth.' What is key is that we reach our judgments only through partly transforming our own standards of judgment, and that while challenging the other culture's language of self-understanding we must challenge ours as well. The contrasts between culturally specific 'hypergoods' that emerge less distorted by ethnocentric lenses, can be very significant. Taylor proposes that individuals may undergo profound change when they come to more fully experience the "spiritual force" of their own and the other's moral horizon, having gone through the exercise of articulating a language that explains each in its independence.[58] Taylor holds that in finding a language of perspicuous contrast and transforming one's standards of judgment, it will mean that depreciatory stories one tells of other cultures, religions, or worldviews that form the support system of one's own, will no longer be credible. That "prop" is "knocked away," and this will instead liberate one's own view and to "nourish itself on better food…the intrinsic power of whatever the faith or vision points us toward."[59] Thus, intercultural understanding can liberate both sides by helping each arrive at terms of mutual recognition that are less distorted by unequal power relations and ethnocentric projections of meaning and worth. Instead, freedom – understood as self-determination or autonomy – is actualized through a mutually recognized political relation of equality and through each subject's public identity, as it appears to and is understood by others co-existing in the world, coming progressively closer to how the subject sees its 'authentic self,' since the original 'home' understandings of others are now dialectically mediated by a discourse that incorporates the subject's self-interpretation. We are now on the terrain of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, an important source for Taylor's own account of the politics of recognition. Taylor, following Hegel, posits that identities are shaped dialectically through social relations of recognition, that unequal and codependent relations of recognition stultify the freedom and integrity of both subjects, and that the only ultimately satisfying social relation, the one that

[55] Ibid., 160.
[56] Ibid., 162.
[57] Ibid., 160.
[58] Ibid., 164.
[59] Ibid.

realizes the freedom and dynamic essence of each subject, is a relation of mutual recognition of equality.

Taylor suggests that Gadamer's perspective offers an 'omega point,' a language where all epochs and cultures would eventually be able to share in an undistortive horizon for all. Taylor admits that even this perspective is only a *de facto* universal, and would shift with the addition of any new culture to the mix.[60] Taylor does not suggest that there exists any ontological or epistemological guarantor of objectivity for the judgment of cultural practices or goods in this scenario, apart from the immanent standard of inclusiveness. The 'omega point' would be reached through the continuous construction of languages of perspicuous contrast between *all* cultures and always from the starting point of situated self-interpretations. Taylor writes that the displacement of our own horizons of understanding "requires above all…an admission that we are very far away from that ultimate horizon from which the relative worth of different cultures might be evident."[61] It is notable, however, that Taylor's language seems to disclose that he does consider such an ultimate horizon to be an eventual possibility. Taylor's respect of plurality, his celebration of individual and cultural authenticity, and his romantic expressivism mean that he nowhere posits a final convergence of values at the end of history. However, he does posit the historic possibility of a human discourse that might eventually represent an undistortive horizon against which all particular cultures can share and understand their differences in translatable terms. This seems to presume the eventual end of incommensurability.

Schaap's *Political* Reconciliation and the Critique of Recognition

Andrew Schaap, in his book *Political Reconciliation*, offers a compelling critique of what he calls the 'anti-political' moment in Taylor's recognition approach to reconciliation. On Schaap's reading, recognition tries to realise community, construct a constituent 'we,' between antagonists by transforming conflict into a reciprocal, ethical, integrative dialogue oriented towards a shared understanding.[62] Schaap writes that Taylor follows Hegel's thesis that recognition is distorted by relations of power and that we may reach undistorted, reciprocal recognition when we relinquish force as a means of imposing our truth on the other. He shows that much of 20th century philosophy, including Sartre, Levinas, Fanon, and Memmi, consisted in a criticism of Hegel and found the recognition relation itself to be complicit with the logic of violent appropriation and the deployment of power. In the spirit of these criticisms, Schaap writes that the knowing, understanding, interpreting look of recognition over-determines the other, robs them of their difference and spontaneity.[63] His criticism centers on the argument that recognition over-determines the terms in which a reconciliatory politics should be enacted.[64] Taylor's approach offers a view of identity that is too essentialist, it too rigidly separates the dichotomous subjectivities of 'self' and 'other', and it holds a conception of conciliatory

[60] Ibid., 151.
[61] Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 73.
[62] Schaap, 42.
[63] Ibid., 47.
[64] Ibid., 44.

interaction that places too much weight on the *telos* of community, thus emphasizing final closure and unity.

According to Schaap, Taylor has an ambiguous and ultimately essentialist account of identity, as both constituted by dialogue with others but also as monological, "inwardly generated," fundamental and non-negotiable. It presupposes identity both as an origin to which we should be true in terms of living authentically, and as a communal end that is the outcome of interaction. "[T]he denunciation of other-induced distortions relies on an implied counter-identity for its moral force: a true self-image that has been distorted by relations of power."[65] The 'anti-political' moment of recognition risks reifying and entrenching identities that are too rigidly circumscribed. Recognition is always in a sense anti-political, because it robs us of our possibilities for spontaneous, performative self-creation.[66] One dilemma of recognition is that while it reduces the other to a constrictive, authentic identity, the alternative is indifference: "Although recognition necessarily entails a reduction, this reduction appears necessary in order to engage seriously with what is different in the other."[67] According to Schaap, Taylor wants to avoid the risk of politics and privilege the survival of 'the defining community.' He thus sets the terms of recognition beyond politics and reifies existing identities.[68]

Schaap argues that the politics of recognition tend to reify a binary distinction between the self and other that perpetuates Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction.[69] Within Taylor's "shared" horizon, the identities of self and other remain equally valid, and mutually discreet, bases for judgement. The 'we' that is constituted by this shared horizon preserves the authentic identities that initiated the struggle for recognition. Schaap writes that while Taylor allows that identities will change through the fusion of horizons, Taylor wants to preserve the boundary that defines one authentic identity as distinct from another. Schaap suggests that while it cannot but proceed from terms of self and other that constitute the interpretive horizons of those divided by past wrongs, dialogues of reconciliation and intercultural understanding must include a reflective openness. Here it is useful to foreground something that James Tully reminds readers near the beginning of *Strange Multiplicity*. Tully rejects a 'billiard ball' conception of culture, that cultures are separate, bounded, and internally uniform. Instead, he rightly asserts that they are overlapping, interactive, internally negotiated.[70] The experience of cultural difference is internal to a culture and cultural identity involves being oriented in an aspectival, intercultural space.[71] The ability to change perspectives is acquired through participation in the intercultural dialogue itself.[72] Empirical individuals situated in modern, pluralistic, open societies are forever blending and negotiating different cultural practices, norms, and conceptions of the good. But Taylor's thought at times tends to reify cultural identities as relatively distinct and self-identical, despite the fact that they can only be transmitted temporally by individuals who combine, borrow,

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 49.
[67] Ibid., 54.
[68] Schaap, 47.
[69] Ibid., 6.
[70] Tully, 10.
[71] Ibid., 13.
[72] Schaap, 25.

transform, and contest aspects of two or more cultural traditions in their public activity and private life.

Schaap charges that Taylor's ideal of a fusion of horizons makes an unwarranted presumption that conflict will end in the realization of a relatively harmonious or completed community in which reconciliation between the formerly unequal moments of the Hegelian dialectic of recognition reach a state of absolute reciprocity.[73] Taylor presupposes that conflict will end in a fusion of horizons, and elides the risk that enmity might endure. His approach begins by reifying opposed identities but assumes a common, constituted, community identity will emerge from the conflict.[74]

Schaap, therefore, constructs a valuable alternative theoretical approach for "political reconciliation," which should be understood not in terms of restoring community between alienated co-members, but in terms of transforming a relation of enmity into one of civic friendship. Political reconciliation must not seek to restore a unity predicated on a common identity; rather, it presupposes the plurality of potentially incommensurable perspectives, between and among the communities.[75] The process must keep available a space for politics within which interlocutors can debate and contest terms of their political association and the significance of past events for their life in common.[76] Political reconciliation should not be conceived in terms of transcending the conflicts of the past, of reaching social harmony or consensus where discord is solved once and for all. Instead, it should be understood as "striving for a sense of commonness that might be disclosed from the clash of perspectives we bring to bear on the world in our historical relation to each other."[77] Only when the end of reconciliation remains as an open horizon, not a final closure or settlement, can it sustain politics. Reconciliation has as its *telos* a moral community that is always 'not yet'. If the fully reconciled moral and political community is completed, this closes off the crucial political discourse by which we humanise the world between us. Full reconciliation means self-completion, along with a negation of contingency, change, and the plurality that enables world disclosing action in the first place. However, paradoxically, an aspiration to reconciliation must inspire reconciliatory politics in the present. A faith in the possibility of reconciliation and an awareness of the frailty of the always-anticipated community furnishes the context that allows for respectfully confronting a former antagonist as a political adversary who is equally engaged in the shared political space as a co-builder of the common world. The process of intercultural interaction with a view to reconciliation should not over-determine the terms in which reconciliation is enacted. It should instead involve members of both sides within a shared horizon, while affirming their freedom to contest the terms within which this horizon is constituted.[78]

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[73] Ibid., 44-45.
[74] Ibid., 50.
[75] Ibid., 4.
[76] Ibid., 82.
[77] Ibid., 4.
[78] Ibid., 83-84.

Arendt's Reflective Political Judgment and Ethic of Worldliness

As Schaap writes, Arendt invokes the activity of politics as a remedy against the inhumanity of genocide and her work suggests an outline of a theory of political reconciliation. As a German Jew of the 20th century, much of Arendt's writing was a response to the inhumanity of the genocide carried out by the Nazi regime. For Arendt, reconciliation depends on developing civic friendship, which entails "openness to others" and an "intensified awareness of reality" that can only come about in political interaction that is "passionate" and "potentially agonistic."[79] Our sense of reality depends on the disclosure of the world as an object held in common from multiple perspectives or *doxai* (opinions) that should remain contestable. Schaap writes that Arendt's ethic of 'worldliness' suggests that political reconciliation requires holding in tension two contending moments of politics: "one in which a common world is disclosed between former enemies and the other in which this world is called into question. As such, it entails a fractious interaction that seeks to delimit a common horizon that might encompass former enemies while affirming their freedom to unsettle the terms in which this horizon is constituted."[80]

Many of the most valuable resources in Arendt's thought for developing an approach to intercultural understanding as a component of reconciliation come from within her account of political judgment. Her account also offers an interesting counterpoint to Taylor's "language of perspicuous contrast". Arendt develops her account of political judgment in an interpretation of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, rather than his *Critique of Practical Reason*, because only in the former do situated individuals with senses and capabilities, rather than a noumenal subject, encounter phenomena in a world of appearance, along with a plurality of others, whose sense of these appearances are immediately partial. Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment serves as a fruitful basis through which Arendt develops an account of political judgment because both are concerned with forming and validating judgments about public phenomena experienced from different perspectives, opinions that seek the assent of others without being able to redeem their validity with the certainty of rational, logical truth. Arendt argues that political judgments are *reflective* rather than *determinant* judgments. Spectators face the challenge of judging the meaning of the particular without the solidity of universal measures under which to subsume it.

So that judgment pays heed to the particular phenomenal integrity of the object, rather than allow itself to be pre-determined by self-consistent concepts and explanatory accounts, the model of judgment that Arendt proposes starts out from the immediate sense experience of the 'spectator'. To overcome the impasse at which judgments remain irreducibly particular to each spectator, Arendt posits that reflection requires the abstraction from the contingencies of one's own subjective conditions of judgment, from one's own instrumental self-interest.[81] In reflective judgments, the criterion of validity is the judgment's *communicability*.[82] Kant relates the communicability of aesthetic taste to the *sensus communis*, the idea of a sense common to all humans. Reflection takes *a priori* account of the modes of representation of all other human

[79] Ibid., 2.
[80] Ibid., 6.
[81] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant*, 73.
[82] Ibid., 69.

beings, in order to compare one's own judgment with the collective reason of humanity.[83] The spectator's initial judgment of the significance of what they experience is compared to the imagined potential judgments of other differentially situated spectators, so that its meaning is constructed and refined from the standpoints of various disinterested spectators, but always closely related to the phenomenon of the act or event. While the meaning of an act or event cannot be proven, it can be validated intersubjectively. The spectator aims to persuade others of the validity of their judgment or opinion, but cannot compel or coerce. The spectator's mentality is thus enlarged as they try to "woo the consent" of others.[84] Reflective judgment requires that one "go visiting" other perspectives.[85] For Arendt, the reflective judgment's validity "can never extend further than the others in whose place the judging person has put himself for his considerations."[86]

Arendt detranscendentalizes Kant's *sensus communis*, defining it as the shared sense of an actual community of judgment. The spectator must put himself in the standpoint of spectators who may stand outside his own particular cultural community, in instances where the community of judgment is intercultural. This allows for the widening of the community of spectators, and thus for the increased validity of opinions. Arendt shares Kant's cosmopolitan hope, not in the ultimate convergence of opinions, but in the widening of the community of spectators and the enlargement of public thought. Both Taylor's and Arendt's approaches to intercultural understanding call on subjects to come to judge from a third standpoint, mediated by two or more different situated, particular perspectives on the world. For Taylor, this third perspective is the 'language of perspicuous contrasts'; for Arendt, it is the 'enlarged mentality'.

Like Taylor, Arendt defends the autonomy of the judging individual, the critical subject. Because the actual judgments of others can themselves be distorted by subjective prejudices or political pressures, Arendt always emphasizes judgment's autonomy vis-à-vis the empirical judgments of others. Arendt suggests that empathy – to affirm "what goes on in the minds of others" – is merely to replace one's prejudices with those of others.[87] The power of judgment according to an enlarged mentality is in the imagined general perspective and the potential agreement of judgments, not in their actual, empirical agreement.

In Arendt's account, political judgment is valued for its reproduction of the space of appearance, maintaining the process of intersubjective discourse, rather than reaching consensus and closure. The community of spectators is not conceived as an Aristotelian bearer of a harmony of judgment and substantive *ethos*, but rather a community based on free and continuous argument. Villa argues that the post-Enlightenment idea of discursive winning of universal consent bears a "teleology of consensus" on the public sphere in a way that threatens plurality, spontaneity, and radical shifts in discourse that are part of Arendt's notion of natality.[88] Reflective judgment provides the reorientation needed to reconstruct moral horizons in terms of shared judgments, but no criteria for validity claims can shape the arena of judgment from outside.[89] Political judgment discloses to interlocutors what they have in common in the process of articulating their differences: not a common purpose or opinion, but a common *world*. Arendt

[83] Kant, §40, 170-71.
[84] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant*, 72.
[85] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 221.
[86] Ibid., 222.
[87] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant*, 43.
[88] Villa, 70-71.
[89] Ibid., 165.

writes: "The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective."[90] Curtis argues that Arendt's theory of judgment helps us develop a deeper sense of the plurality of the world that allows for future collective action. Renewed collective action requires a durable world – reliable spaces of appearance and interpretive contexts. Arendt's model of judgment provides a key to sensing the density of reality needed to sustain this durability.

Curtis also suggests that Arendt's theory of judgment helps us to think about our ethical and political responsibility towards others. This responsibility is grounded in actively countenancing the specificity of the *who* of actors out of *oblivion*, inviting them into public light.[91] Arendt argues that political action performatively discloses the unique 'who' of the individual, but that attempts to explain its meaning usually fall back on descriptions of 'what' they are, shared categories of identity. Curtis reminds us that the *who* appears only in situations of 'disinterested togetherness,' by suspending our expectations of how *what* others are will determine their behaviour, "while at the same time retaining our knowledge of the world out of which they struggle to rise."[92] We can participate agonistically but respectfully in a shared public realm as interlocutors in 'disinterested togetherness', 'neither for nor against' each other, nor assuming what one has to say or how one will act based on 'what' they are. Schaap writes that political reconciliation requires "acknowledging those identities that are constituted and sustained by a history of enmity," but also that we "remain attentive to the difference in the other that exceeds her identity."[93] Reconciliation must create room to countenance the unique, existential and performative 'who' of individuals, not merely the categorical 'what' of shared traits, traditions, and historically constituted identities.

Just as recognition risks subsuming the uniqueness of the other under a category of identity bound up with an authentic notion of the self or community, determinate judgement subsumes the particular under a category or rule. Schaap sees reflective judgment as important to reconciliation since it resists the anti-political moment of recognition whereby difference is subsumed under identity, by attempting to grasp the "unprecedentedness and singularity of events and the actions of others."[94] According to Schaap, we become dull to appearances if we always rely on inherited doctrines. In reflective judgement, we "reconstitute common sense…by reinventing existing categories or deriving new concepts for making sense of the world we share in common."[95] Reflective judgment helps disclose new realities that challenge the assumptions and logic of our received, historically constituted, conceptual apparatus for understanding and it thus "shows a way to resist the reality of the world created by past wrongs."[96]

Arendt's rejection of Taylor's ideal of authentic self-realisation is linked to her performative and non-sovereign conception of the 'who' disclosed in action. Self-revelation is not the expression of an essential or authentic self, a unitary subject that lies behind appearances. Instead, the meaning of the fragmented 'who' is narratively disclosed retrospectively by variously positioned spectators who witness and judge the political world in which the actor

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[90] Arendt, *Human Condition*, 53.
[91] Curtis, 142.
[92] Ibid., 148.
[93] Schaap, 4.
[94] Ibid., 83.
[95] Ibid., 74.
[96] Ibid., 83.

engages with others. Freedom, for Arendt, is not realized through self-transparency, sovereign self-mastery, or the rational determination of the will, but rather through spontaneous action with others through deeds and speech that interrupts or contests natural or historical processes.[97] Arendt's performative conception of the 'who' "is particularly attractive for a theory of political reconciliation as it does not presuppose that collective identification is a necessary precondition for collective action."[98] Participants need not declare from the outset precisely who they are, what they stand for, or precisely for whom they speak, in terms of a transparent knowledge of their group membership's interests, values, and self-understandings.

Schaap emphasizes the importance of narratives of remembrance and redemption in the process of reconciliation. Story telling is essential for reconciling with the irrevocable consequences of past actions, so that a new beginning can be established. This is a crucial element of Arendt's theory of judgment. It is the role of the spectator to judge the meaning of past and present actions, and to provide narrative accounts that disclose reality and redeem the dignity of human actors. There is a special focus in Arendt's fragmentary historiography on the narrative redemption of the sufferers or victims of teleological historiography, either in telling the stories of individuals who have been concealed by official history – always told by the 'winners' – or in telling the stories of victims of violence carried out by regimes who see themselves as enactors of historical necessity. Schaap writes that stories of reconciliation must resist the tendency for final closure, the 'past perfect' tense.[99] Furthermore, for the dignity of victims and survivors, we must retain a sense of the suffering that is unspeakable but which needs acknowledgement.[100] When the purpose of the narration of victims' experiences is said to be the restoration of a moral community, this offends against human dignity by explaining suffering in relation to an ultimate historical *telos*.[101] Narration that aims at restoring the dignity of particular victims is well supported by an Arendtian mode of judgment which demands that spectators abandon determinate judgment that would subsume particulars under the *teloi* of historical progress narratives, and instead engage in reflective judgment that induces meaningful narratives from the irreducible particularity of the phenomena.

Fraser finds Arendt's account of judgment inadequate in that it does not take into account its "structural locatedness in contexts of inequality," the fact that individuals judge "from specific positions that are discursively, institutionally, and sociostructurally constructed along axes of dominance and subordination."[102] This is an important criticism of Arendt, one that shares much with criticisms of her delineation of political action and freedom as its own autonomous realm of human activity, unconcerned with questions of social and economic inequality or instrumental ends. Explaining the historical emergence of the socially unequal standpoints of judging spectators was not Arendt's focus, at least not in her lectures on Kant's aesthetic judgment. Arendt is not generally insensitive to a human being's structural locatedness in contexts of inequality, as demonstrated by her influential analysis of stateless peoples and

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[97] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 151-53.
[98] Schaap, 82.
[99] Ibid., 146.
[100] Ibid., 147.
[101] Ibid., 146.
[102] Fraser, 175.

their difficulty in effectively appealing to human rights.[103] However, Arendt's approach to judgment could be strengthened by specifying the importance of seriously examining axes of dominance and subordination when the spectator 'goes visiting' the situated perspectives of others, but also by insisting that spectators consider their own role within these structures and their own responsibility to contest and transform them. Schaap writes that it is proper to hold ordinary citizens politically responsible for their state's past wrongs, as members in a political association. Political responsibility requires not just accounting for the past, as if a final settlement could be reached, but care for a fragile world threatened by legacy of past wrongs, responsiveness to the other, a willingness to live through consequences of the past in the present. It entails inviting the other to join in the "risky business of realising a shared polity."[104] What Arendt's approach does explicitly establish is the importance of Aristotle's *isonomia*, the formal, mutually recognized equality of judging spectators as citizens in a shared public world. One of the crucial objectives of Arendtian judgment is that our future collective actions be informed by a clearer understanding of our different, agonistic perspectives on the world, and that this action be inspired by a principle of equality and mutual respect, which allows room for ourselves and our fellow travellers to constantly redefine who 'we' are, both separately and together.

[103] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 291-302.
[104] Schaap, 8.

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