One

The Two Faces of Enlightenment

If we speak of 'enlightenment' in the context of the history of ideas in the western world, we are referring to that strand of thought beginning in Europe around the seventeenth century that centrally values the pursuit of scientific, objectively verifiable knowledge, individual autonomy, social progress, and justice. If we speak of 'enlightenment' in the context of eastern thought, we are referring to *satori*, or the mystically awakened mind. Accordingly, we may speak of an Enlightenment West perspective that revolves around the acquisition of scientific knowledge, increasing social justice and maximizing human happiness. And we can refer to an Enlightenment East perspective that values the practices held to be conducive towards mystical self-realization, or *moksha*, spiritual liberation, or *satori*.

Of course there is no intention to suggest by reference to Enlightenment East that the east is entirely or even predominantly mystical, nor is the term 'Enlightenment West' intended to suggest that the west is predominantly rational or anti-mystical. Our nomenclature, quite simply, derives from the different meanings the term 'enlightenment' acquires in the context of western compared with eastern philosophy and history of ideas. Indeed, neither 'Enlightenment East' nor 'Enlightenment West', on this usage, designates a perspective whose exponent is geographically located. Obviously, western thinkers can espouse a perspective or value system dominated by what the word 'enlightenment' means in eastern thought and vice versa. It is the perspectives, or value systems, we are referring to. 'Enlightenment West', then, means, roughly, humanistic and scientific rationalism, and 'Enlightenment East' means, roughly, mysticism.

To be more contextually precise, I will offer a list of some main sources one can look to in an effort to locate elements of Enlightenment East and West. The terms 'mysticism' and 'scientific and social rationalism' are sufficiently subject to interpretation that the concepts would be too open-ended without a set of paradigm texts

and sources. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive anchoring but merely suggestive.

Among sources within which to find expositions of Enlightenment East ethics and metaphysics, one could look to *(a)* Yoga philosophy as expounded by Patanjali, *(b)* Advaita Vedanta as systematized by Shankara, *(c)* Theravada Buddhism, *(d)* Madhyamika Buddhism, *(e)* Zen Buddhism, *(f)* philosophical Taoism, as in the writings attributed to Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, *(g)* the writings of Parmenides, where these are interpreted as asserting a strong form of monism, *(h)* the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and *(i)* the *Ethics* of Spinoza. We should also include *(j)* Jewish *devekut* mysticism, *(k)* Christian mysticism as found, for example, in Meister Eckhart, as well as *(l)* Islamic esoteric mysticism including Sufi texts and practices, as sources for some Enlightenment East notions, even though the encasement of the mystical teachings in theistic systems sometimes makes the classifications problematic. It should also be noted that the term 'Enlightenment East' as we're using it does not centrally include bhakti (i.e., devotional) forms of Hinduism, nor Dvaita (dualist) Vedanta texts, nor Pure Land Buddhism in its standard or exoteric interpretation, nor Carvakin materialism, nor much of Confucianism, each of which plays an important role in the history of eastern thought and culture.

To find sources for Enlightenment West notions, one might look to *(a)* foundationalist approaches to the theory of knowledge from the seventeenth century and on, *(b)* the French Encyclopedist movement, *(c)* social contractarian theory from Hobbes through Rousseau and on, *(d)* Kantian deontology, *(e)* utilitarianism from Bentham through Mill and Russell, *(f)* progressivism in the philosophy of history, *(g)* various utopian socialist movements, *(h)* Comtian humanism, and *(i)* many aspects of Confucian humanism, to name some prominent branches of the humanist tree. Enlightenment West does not include any of the prophetic authoritarian versions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, each of which is of immense importance in the history of western thought and consciousness. Nor does it include Parmenidean monism, nor neo-Platonic forms of mystical metaphysics, nor the esoteric mysticisms such as Kabbalah and Sufism associated with western religious traditions. Nor does Enlightenment West include radical subjectivism, radical existentialism, or radical postmodernism, each of which has been of crucial importance in recent thought in the west.

In sum, 'Enlightenment East' refers to a style of thought, wherever it may be found historically and culturally expressed, in which the

central doctrine is the belief in the possibility of mystical experience, and in which the pursuit of mystical awakening is centrally valued. By mystical awakening or mystical experience we mean, roughly, the experience of dissolution of the ego, or oneness with the Absolute Ground of Being. 'Enlightenment West' refers to a style of thought, wherever it may be found historically and culturally expressed, in which the central value is the humanistic pursuit of social and individual well-being, justice, and scientific rationalism.

Our primary interest in what follows is to explore the relationship between these two value systems. Plainly, there is an important contrast of some sort between Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values as thus articulated. And wherever there is a contrast between two sets of values, the question is immediately raised as to their consistency in relation to one another. It may be that there are serious practical or theoretical obstacles in the path of one who would wish to live in accordance with both Enlightenment West and Enlightenment East values. Indeed, there are many who have argued just that. In our times, we have the weight of the Anglo-American philosophical tradition heaving against any justification and, even, intelligibility, of the cognitive claims of the mystic; and there are social and religious thinkers who argue the irreconcilability of the Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values. On the other hand, there are those who would like to think that Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values can meet.

There are, however, two ways in which one might envision a meeting of these values. The values might be discovered to be broadly consistent, so that one can espouse both. One's task, then, would be to work out a schedule that reflects one's priorities of implementing them. (That's right, a schedule, in the literal sense: One spends so much of one's time emptying the mind of thought, and so much of one's time thinking; so much time sitting in the lotus posture, and so much time making sandwiches at free food outlets.) In such a case one might say that Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values meet and shake hands. On the other hand, one might hope for more. One might hope to find that the values not only meet and shake hands, but date, become engaged, and married.

The theme of this book is that Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West traditions have come of age. They have gone through their puberty agonies, and are now ready for the nuptials. Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values are not only minimally consistent, but also mutually required. Unless and until one integrates mysticism with scientific and social rationalism, one has

an incomplete understanding of the cosmos, and incomplete ethics. The Enlightenment West project of making scientific and social progress must be informed by Enlightenment East mysticism. And developing Enlightenment East mystical doctrines, practices and institutions must be informed by Enlightenment West values of clarity in thought, scientific knowledge, and awareness of social justice.

Of course there is a problem for anyone who wants to argue not only the meeting but also the marriage of East and West Enlightenment perspectives. The problem is that there are apparent irreconcilables in the way the traditions either have worked themselves out or have appeared to work themselves out. Accordingly, our first task is to have a good hard look at the apparent obstacles to any marriage of Enlightenment East and West values. These apparent obstacles will provide us, in effect, with our table of contents for discussion.

The problem, in a nutshell, is that Enlightenment East traditions are, or sometimes appear to be, world-devaluing, whereas Enlightenment West traditions are wholeheartedly and devotedly worldly. Moreover, Enlightenment West traditions seem to some to objectify everything, to be based fundamentally on it-ification of world, self, and happiness, so that the very basis of the Enlightenment East approach, namely, dissolution of the ego, appears to be undermined. If the aim of Enlightenment West is to maximize ego happiness, and the aim of Enlightenment East is to dissolve the ego, then the aims are, or appear to be, irreconcilable.

Let us now look at the alleged irreconcilability in more specific terms. At this stage, we are not concerned about the accuracy of the charges leveled. Rather, our task here is to lay on the table the apparent irreconcilables, as they are taken to exist within recent currents of thought. Later we will assess the accuracy of the descriptions on which the appearances of irreconcilability are based, as well as the justification of the charges. Since the apparent problems are pure hearsay at this stage, we would do well to entitle our allegations the "Catalogue of Rumors."

CATALOGUE OF RUMORS PART I: ALLEGED FLAWS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT EAST TRADITIONS

Rumor 1

Renunciation is the spiritual ideal of Enlightenment East. In the traditional Indian social system, it is alleged, anyone might at any time,

despite objections from family members, decide to become a *sanyasin*, a renunciate. In some cases, the sanyasin might even decide to abandon wife and children in order to pursue mystical self-realization, as the founder of Buddhism is reported to have done. (See Kalupahana & Kalupahana, 1982, pp. 73f, for a contemporary conjecture concerning the social issues involved in such a decision as they would have been perceived in ancient times.) For the exponent of Enlightenment West, even the issue of financial responsibility for the welfare of the abandoned family is not ultimately determinative of the ethics of renunciation. Rather the objectionable fact is that the life of the sanyasin, which is devoted completely to the goal of liberation or moksha, is held to be the spiritual life par excellence, the following of the highest calling. The sanyasin has no social ties or obligations. The sanyasin does not go about instituting beneficial social changes, and goodness knows, says the critic of Enlightenment East, there were surely many such changes which would have been appropriately introduced. Thus, there is sanctioning in the mystical traditions of what to the Enlightenment West modernist appears to be social irresponsibility in the pursuit of the mystical goals.

As A. C. Bouquet writes, ". . . the world-renouncing ascetic is the type universally admired, and his renunciation is in no sense altruistic or philanthropic, but is purely self-regarding, since it is every man's business and license to look after his eternal welfare; and to be concerned with delivering oneself from the generally accepted chain of rebirth, and from the cycle of biological existence is not considered to be a blemish upon one's character" (Bouquet 1956, p. 147).

Rumor 2

Celibacy is an ideal. Within mystical traditions, according to the critic, it is often held that the person most fully suited to religious contemplation, mystical realization, or spiritual attainment is the celibate. The critic of Enlightenment East would not find it difficult to point to texts which support such claims. For instance, the well-known twentieth-century teacher of yoga, Sivananda, writes that "Celibacy . . . is of vital importance. It is the gateway to liberation or eternal bliss, it bestows super-human strength and supreme bliss, and it is the basis for morality. Absolute celibacy is the sine qua non of divine life or spiritual higher life. The door to nirvana or perfection is complete celibacy" (Sivananda, 1985, p. 286). The celibate may or may not be a forest dweller, but there appears to be a significant amount of world-devaluing in the ideal of celibacy. Furthermore,

from the standpoint of Enlightenment West, it might be held, marriage and family life constitute the ideal spiritual training ground.

Rumor 3

The best one can attain is cessation of the cycle of rebirths. Mystical systems often teach that re-birth in this world is something to escape from. As Swami Nikhilananda puts it, ". . . from the relative standpoint, the Vedanta philosophy admits the existence of a multitude of individual souls, called jivatmas, and distinguishes them from the supreme soul. Attached to the body, the individual soul is a victim of the pairs of opposites. Entangled in the world, it seeks deliverance from the eternal round of birth and death, and with that end in view studies the scriptures and practices spiritual disciplines under the guidance of a qualified teacher" (Nikhilananda, 1968, p. 49). This too seems to be world-devaluing.

Rumor 4

According to the Enlightenment East doctrine as it is often presented, *one's station in life is fixed by the karma associated with one's past lives.* Hence, charges the critic, incredible suffering is ignored or rationalized. Instead of being eliminated, it is tolerated on the grounds that it is karmically fitting, and we need not exert ourselves unduly to alter the situation. Indeed the rigid and oppressive caste system as it has actually been practiced (not the theoretical meritocracy it has sometimes been touted as) has been justified along these lines. A. C. Danto forcefully articulates this criticism of Enlightenment East traditions: "Respect for life as a whole is consistent with a not especially edifying attitude towards one's fellowmen, who, for all that they may be one essentially, nevertheless remain lodged at different stations on the surfaces of the world. That they should be where they are is, as *karma* teaches, very much a matter of just desert: they are there because they deserve to be there. Our *karma* has brought each of us to whatever pass we are at. Indians tend to invoke *karma*, and hence their past wickedness, to justify the evils that befall them, much as Christians invoke their sins. As each man gets what he deserves, there seems to be no special reason to help one another. Men have only themselves to blame for what they are. Had they been better, they would be better off now. It is up to them to try for a better life next time. Present felicity, likewise, is the mark of having done well before. With a row of lifetimes in which to improve one's karmic station stretching endlessly before one, there seems very little urgency in doing very much in this brief moment" (Danto, 1973, p. 38f).

Scriptural authority for the theory of karmic justice is to be found in very ancient materials. Chandogya Upanishad, (5:10,7) states, "Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain a good birth, the birth of either a Brahmin, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaishya. But those whose conduct has been stinking will attain a stinking birth, the birth of either a dog, or a swine, or an outcaste [Chandala]" (Kaufmann, 1976, p. 221). Facing a similar problem, Agehananda Bharati writes ". . . the second canto of the Gita teaches, 'Do not abandon such actions as are born with you. It is better to perform these actions, even though they be bad, than to perform others' actions', where 'others' actions' mean[s] actions. to which you are not entitled by your birth, actions, that is, to which persons of different birth are entitled. This passage, of course, is crass theological casteism; it goes without saying that the representatives of the Hindu Renaissance, which rejects innate rights belonging to any particular social group, cannot accept it at its face-value. On the other hand, it is such clear and unambiguous Sanskrit that esoteric interpretation would look too artificial even to those who are impressed by metaphorical verbosity" (Bharati, 1976, p. 133).

Rumor 5

In Taoism, the ideal individual, the Taoist sage, is one who realizes and cleaves to the ineffable, mysterious way. According to some critics, this implies that the Taoist sage lies low, follows nature, doesn't interfere, doesn't intrude a particular, private point of view on the world. *The ideal individual in Taoism is more or less socially invisible*, according to these critics. The justification for such criticism may be held to be found lurking even in such sympathetic expositions as Huston Smith's, for example, "The Taoists' refusal to clamber for position sprang from a profound disinterest in the things the world prizes. The point comes out in the story of Chuang Tzu's visit to the minister of a neighboring state. Someone told the minister that Chuang Tzu was coming in the hope of replacing him. The minister was severely alarmed. But when Chuang Tzu heard of the rumor he said to the minister: 'In the South there is a bird. It is called *yuan-ch'u*. Have you heard of it? This yuan-ch'u starts from the southern ocean and flies to the northern ocean. During its whole journey it perches on no tree save the sacred Wo-tung, eats no fruit save that of the Persian Lilac, drinks only at the Magic Well. It happened that an owl that had got hold of the rotting carcass of a rat looked up as this bird flew by, and terrified lest the yuan-ch'u should stop and snatch at the succulent morsel, it screamed, "Shoo! Shoo!" And now I am told

that you are trying to "Shoo" me off from this precious Ministry of yours.' So it is with most of the world's prizes. They are not the true values they are thought to be" (Smith, 1958 p. 208). It seems that Taoist ideals run contrary to the grain of Enlightenment West valuation of highly visible, even heroic activities on behalf of society.

Rumor 6

In Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, *the individual is encouraged to give up ego-ideation*. The giving up of ego-ideation seems to be diametrically opposed to the central value found in Enlightenment West conceptions of moral living as autonomous thought and activity. Giving up the ego-ideation expresses itself institutionally in Enlightenment East systems as the requirement in the guru-disciple relationship that the student demonstrate ego-lessness by serving the guru, the living embodiment of wisdom, in complete selfless obedience. "The student had to remain strictly celibate, constantly to guard against falling into ritual impurity, and to subordinate himself to his guru's every dictate while following a course of study which, for a Brahmin, might last twelve years or longer" (Parrinder, 1971, p. 198). "He who can appreciate the blessing of being taken into the fold of the Satguru . . . will forever sing of his Grace, beauty and perfect love. . He will never question the actions of his Master, even if he fails to understand them. . . . He will have to develop the faith of a child, who, having trusted himself to a loving hand, moves as directed, never questioning anything" (Kirpal Singh, *The Crown Of Life*, p. 181).

Rumor 7

Moreover a particular consequence of this selfless obedience is the tradition of not questioning, and therefore not properly investigating teachings. *The practice of serving the guru in perfect obedience tends to become a training in repressing of one's natural curiosity.* And this seems to be contrary to the scientism of the Enlightenment West system of thought. Agehananda Bharati writes, "There is in the Indian tradition the notion that guru-ninda 'criticizing the guru' is a thing that the disciples must not tolerate, and they don't" (Bharati, 1976 p. 103). A further consequence of the educational method, or method of training of people in mysticism found prevalent in the Enlightenment East systems, revolving around authoritarian patterns of teacher student relationship, is that the student is required to accept systems of thought which, according to the exponent of Enlightenment West, centering on analytic clarity and philosophic

rigor, turn out to be fuzzy-minded, and philosophically unintelligible. In short, the conclusions of Enlightenment East values and their doctrinal expressions are often regarded as inevitably paradoxical, antilogical, and hence, as far as the exponent of Enlightenment West values are concerned, philosophically nonsensical. Indeed, even western exponents of Enlightenment East are willing to acknowledge that Enlightenment East experience cannot be described without abandonment of the laws of logic. Walter Stace, for instance, concludes that ". . . although the laws of logic are the laws of our everyday consciousness and experience, they have no application to mystical experience" (Stace, 1960, p. 270). Few exponents of analytic clarity will be able to accept Stace's, and the mystic's, advocacy of the notion that there are noetic experiences which are not themselves, or whose descriptions are not, subject to the laws of logic.

Rumor 8

Further still along these lines, Enlightenment East values tend to express themselves in paranormal and occult theories. The *locus classicus* of paranormal claims in Indian systems of thought is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Chapter III, entitled, "Powers." In this chapter, it is stated that the yogi can learn to levitate, become invisible, and cultivate other powers over nature of a rather incredible kind. Contemporary rationalist investigators such as Paul Kurtz, James Randi, Abraham Kovoor, and the Indian scientist-magician, B. Premanand, suggest that no claimant to such paranormal powers has ever been able to demonstrate the claimed powers to pre-agreed standards when scientists and magicians are around to inspect. The conclusion of such rationalist exponents of Enlightenment West values of scientific rigor and clarity, is: *Belief in the genuineness of the paranormal effects is unjustified, and the methods which mystics use to convince people of the reality of these effects are anti-scientific.* Hence, there appears to be an unbridgable gulf between Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values and practices. Enlightenment East values and practices induce the practitioner to give up on too many features of what Paul Kurtz calls "critical intelligence" (Kurtz, 1986, pp. 60-69).

Rumor 9

And again, a social consequence of the authoritarian patterns of student teacher relations in the Enlightenment East traditions, according to the critics, is a *prevailing political conservatism.* As we've seen,

the charge is that the sociopolitical status quo is taken to be an expression of karmic necessity. If the response to suffering is escape of the cycle of rebirth, and the suffering is an expression of karmic justice, then the sociopolitical causes of the injustices are, in effect, endorsed. Even worse, the critic claims, there is a distinctly antinomian or amoralist aspect to Enlightenment East otherworldly teachings. The liberated being is all too often described in language which suggests that liberation is liberation from the constraints of moral behavior. Thus, for instance, the Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad, (4:4, 22) states, "This eternal greatness of a Brahmin is not increased by deed, nor diminished. One should be familiar with it. By knowing it, one is not stained by evil action." And later, (5:14), "Even so, although he commits very much evil, one who knows this, consumes it all and becomes clean and pure, ageless and immortal." Such language does nothing to assuage Enlightenment West exponents' concern that mysticism's otherworldliness conduces to amoralist attitudes.

Rumor 10

Finally, it is suggested that history is conceived in cyclical terms by exponents of Enlightenment East. Societies come and go. Political orders come and go. The round of existence, the wheel of karma keeps turning, never getting anywhere, but turning, turning anyway. That's how it is, and *no thought of a progressive march through history* enters the picture. "The logic of Hinduism and Buddhism is of a different sort from that of the Mediterranean creeds. There is no potential for progress in the Indian core tradition" (Bharati, 1976, p. 156). By contrast, the Enlightenment West vision posits at its center the potential for progress, and the need for decisive action to bring about such progress. Belief in the potential for progressive gains in happiness and social well being through worldly restructuring is one of the definitive elements of Enlightenment West. Once again, the Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West world views appear to be diametrically opposed and irreconcilable.

These criticisms of Enlightenment East traditions may be grouped into three: Enlightenment East traditions are thought by exponents of Enlightenment West values to be:

1. World devaluing
2. Philosophically unintelligible
3. Anti-scientific

CATALOGUE OF RUMORS PART II: THE ALLEGED FLAWS OF ENLIGHTENMENT WEST

From the other side there is an Enlightenment East critique of Enlightenment West traditions, revolving around the alleged entrenchment of objectifying attitudes within the Enlightenment West program. This criticism may be elaborated in the following way, again, subject to the cautionary note that the allegations are being presented without critical scrutiny. Our assessments of accuracy we reserve for later:

Rumor 1

According to some mystically minded critics, the Enlightenment West tradition is, to its detriment, *excessively trusting of discursive language* and the capacity of discursive language to capture the important features of consciousness and ethics, whereas exponents of Enlightenment East tradition tend, quite properly, to be mistrustful of ordinary discursive language and its capacities in these regards. "The way that can be followed is not the eternal way. The name that can be named is not the eternal name," begins the Tao Te Ching. Consequently the very framework within which Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West attitudes are to be reconciled does not seem to exist. The Enlightenment West proponent will try to do the reconciling in an abstract theoretical language, whereas the Enlightenment East proponent is not interested in theoretical reconciliations, and doesn't think theories can express the Enlightenment East experiences in any case. Then where is a common framework within which reconciliation can take place?

Rumor 2

The Enlightenment West tradition expresses its political program in lists of rights, and its moral program in lists of principles. This incessant *centering of consciousness on principles and explicit laws and statutes* seems to be fundamentally distorted from the Enlightenment East perspective. According to some Enlightenment East critiques, Enlightenment West rationalism leads to a mind set in which one finds it ever more difficult to detach from the ego and to plumb the depths of consciousness or of simple, compassionate wisdom. Instead, one becomes more and more attached to the laws, the rules, the procedures, the principles, accumulating rigidities rather than abandoning them. The Tao Te Ching, once again, speaks eloquently about the gap between a principle centered consciousness and a con-

sciousness which is directly, immediately, and intuitively, in harmony with nature or Tao. "The great Way declines: We have humanity and justice; Prudence and wisdom appear; There is cultivation of behaviour. When the six family relationships are out of accord, there is filial piety, and parental affection. When state and dynasty are disordered, there is loyal trust." (#18) And within a strictly western contrast, William Earle in *Mystical Reason* notes the association between abandonment of wonder and reverence and the modernist program of Enlightenment West: " . there still remained within the supremely philosophical Plato a sense of reverence and awe before the transcendental form of the Good. Not so, of course with the Enlightenment thinkers and their present-day descendents, still searching for a *formula* of the good and its justification" (Earle, 1980, p. 84, emphasis added).

Rumor 3

The Enlightenment West tradition centers on the development of the healthy ego. The Enlightenment East tradition regards ego-consciousness as the very problem itself. Thus, the effort of Enlightenment West traditions seems to be aiming at the very worst goal. Instead of eliminating, or, at least, softening the ego perspective, *Enlightenment West traditions strengthen the ego experience*, which is the cause of our problems. As Walter Stace expresses the point: "The basis of the mystical theory of ethics is that the separateness of individual selves produces that egoism which is the source of conflict, grasping, aggressiveness, selfishness, hatred, cruelty, malice, and other forms of evil; and that this separateness is abolished in the mystical consciousness in which all distinctions are annulled. The inevitable emotional counterpart of the separateness of selves is the basic hostility which gives rise to Hobbes' war of all against all. The natural emotional counterpart of the mystical awareness that there is, in that reality which the mystic believes himself to perceive, no separateness of I from you, or of you from he, and that we are all one in the Universal Self–the emotional counterpart of this is love" (Stace, 1960, p. 324). However, the foundational metaphysics of Enlightenment West includes the notion of an objective world in which there is a plurality of separate individuals. Moral, social, and political health are conceived in terms of the proper regulation of the relations among these separate selves. Many writers, moreover, see the ego-strengthening effects of the Enlightenment West epistemologies as inevitable. Morris Berman, for instance, writes, "Since the Cartesian or Newtonian personality sees only duality, only sub-

ject/object distinction, the stage of unity . . . is permanently inaccessible to him or her. But . . this unity is the primary reality of all human being and cognition, and to be out of touch with it is to be suffering from severe internal distortion" (Berman, 1984, p. 171).

Rumor 4

According to the Enlightenment East tradition, the rampant scientism, which is the child of the Enlightenment West program, has resulted in a thorough, unpleasant, *self-alienating objectification* of everything. Because of the Enlightenment West program people have lost the experiential treasures of mystic participation and subject-object unity. In place of mystic participation and subject-object unity is an inescapable I-it relation with self and world. Accordingly, the Enlightenment West tradition seems to lead to one's being cut off from one's body, living up in the head, instead of the heart, and out of touch with one's intimate senses. Thus, Jeremy Rifkin summarizes recent research on the modern loss of the senses of touch, smell, and even sound in favor of allowing for a complete dominance of vision and mechanistic, control-minded thinking: "The balanced relationship that had long existed among sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch was abandoned during the early modern era to make room for a worldview immersed in visual imagery. The eye helped modern man become an individual. It fostered analytical thinking and rational thought. . . . Sight is the least participatory and the most isolated of the senses. It is also the most willed of the senses and is always projected outward onto the world. Its stance is largely aggressive and expropriating. In a world increasingly mediated by sight, autonomy is inevitably pursued at the expense of relationship. . . . The separation of human beings from nature and the parallel detachment of human consciousness from the human body has transformed Western man into an alien on his own planet" (Rifkin, 1991, pp. 235-236).

Rumor 5

Finally, scientism and its consequent I-it relation with the world, according to some Enlightenment East proponents, leads one inevitably to aggrandize all forms of control. The center of the Enlightenment West program is the myth of control, and the myth of control ultimately leads to rampant, unchecked, and possibly even uncheckable militarization. The forward march of history towards universal happiness sought by Enlightenment West seems instead to be veering towards *despoilation of the environment* through rampant technologization, and possible despoilation of humanity. These

negative effects are but the more or less inevitable consequences of the Enlightenment West attitudes towards individuality and nature. As Fritjof Capra expresses this point, "Our progress, then, has been largely a rational and intellectual affair, and this one-sided evolution has now reached a highly alarming stage, a situation so paradoxical that it borders insanity. We can control the soft landings of space craft on distant planets, but we are unable to control the polluting fumes emanating from our cars and factories. We propose Utopian communities in gigantic space colonies, but cannot manage our cities. The business world makes us believe that huge industries producing pet foods and cosmetics are a sign of our high standard of living, while economists try to tell us that we cannot "afford" adequate health care, education, or public transport. Medical science and pharmacology are endangering our health, and the Defense Department has become the greatest threat to our national security. Those are the results of overemphasizing our yang, or masculine side–rational knowledge, analysis, expansion–and neglecting our yin, or feminine side–intuitive wisdom, synthesis, and ecological awareness" (Capra, 1982, p. 42).

Thus, to proponents of Enlightenment East, the Enlightenment West tradition seems to be:

1. Unduly trusting of language and discursive thought
2. Committed to a program that results in unhealthy objectifications of self and world
3. Based upon a control-minded mentality, which threatens the very survival of human population and the planet.

The agenda

These mutual criticisms, accurate, or inaccurate, provide us with our agenda. Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West traditions posit not only divergent but apparently irreconcilable central values. Furthermore, as we've seen, there appears to be no common framework of value within which these sorts of questions can be discussed. Accordingly our first task must be to address the question of whether there is a framework of valuation which is intelligible and appropriate to exponents of both Enlightenment West and East.

Our search is for what we may call, somewhat tendentiously, no doubt, a "universal ethical problematic." An ethical problematic is an expression of the questions one must answer in order to gain insight into one's situation. A universal ethical problematic is a set of ques-

tions which knowingly or unknowingly everyone is answering by the choices one is making in life. In less tendentious terms, we need an understanding of values at a level sufficiently rich and deep that exponents of both Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West can identify with these values, and proceed on to the clarification of the problems. We begin our exploration, then, with an examination of ethics, and particularly value theory, from the broadest possible perspective.

Candidate approaches

Aristotle tended to approach his topics by surveying the best thought on the subject among his predecessors and contemporaries, and I hope it will not be thought unduly rationalistic to adopt this strategy. Let us canvas the most general approaches to valuational questions which are available to us. Of course we are interested in both Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West approaches. However, in our exposition we will attempt to present them in the most universal possible manner. In addition, we will be interested in comparing these two traditions with approaches to value that cannot be identified either with Enlightenment East or Enlightenment West traditions.

(a) The Eudaimonian Approach to value. "Eudaimonia" is the Greek word for happiness, and so a eudaimonian approach to value is one which holds that the central value is human happiness. According to this approach, whether one is meditating in the lotus posture, bringing food to the food bank for the needy, or going to the theater with one's friends, one is attempting to increase happiness and decrease unhappiness. Thus, the eudaimonian approach to value would require that meditation practice be happiness making. If meditating in the lotus posture doesn't make you happy, to put it crassly, it's not to be ultimately valued. Bringing food to the food bank for the needy serves the ultimate value of happiness because it is very likely indeed to help make the recipients happy. It may also increase the donor's happiness to know that he or she has brought happiness to others. But without having brought happiness to others that knowledge would never occur. So it is the bringing of happiness to the recipients which is the primary way in which food donations serve the value of happiness. And of course going out to the theater with one's friends can serve the value of happiness insofar as one is likely to enjoy the experience of the outing even if one pans the performance. The eudaimonian approach, then, regards the universal happiness as the ultimate goal of each person, and each activity is seen as positively

contributing to the ultimate goal to the extent that it brings about an increase in overall happiness.

Now there is a paradox associated with this approach which we must immediately mention. The paradox is this: if one puts front and center in one's consciousness the search for happiness, one is bound not to find it. If one were, for example, to constantly ask oneself while out with one's friends at the theatre, "Are we having a good time now?" "Are we increasing our happiness this way?" one would be bound to have a much less enjoyable time than if one forgot utterly about whether one was having a good time, and concentrated instead on experiencing the play, discussing its merits or demerits over tea and dessert afterwards, and so on. Happiness is not sought, but it is nonetheless found. We find it when we seek more specific things, the things which seem to us to be constitutive of happiness. Happiness is empty as a concept, but it collects other things which are constitutive of it or the vehicles of it. Health, enjoyment, feelings of well being, sensory, social, and intellectual pleasures, knowledge for its own sake, these are the vehicles of happiness. And these vehicles of happiness we may go out in search of to a much greater degree. We go to the hot tub because we know we will feel good afterwards. We set a date to meet and socialize because we know or believe we will enjoy the social interaction for its own sake. While we are interacting, of course, we do not focus on the interaction as a vehicle of happiness. We focus on the interaction: agreeing or disagreeing with what's been said, recounting an anecdote or incident which occurred, speculating on the future of some political movement, and so on. We study because we believe or may believe that breadth of knowledge is itself a happiness-constituting thing. "Happiness has a way of sneaking up on persons when they are preoccupied with other things," is the way Joel Feinberg has put it (1958, p. 493). But these other things are not entirely other. They are the elements which are constitutive *of* happiness, or vehicles for those elements which are constitutive of happiness.

We make note of the happiness paradox in order to defuse a potential criticism of the eudaimonian approach to value which might come from either the Enlightenment East or Enlightenment West camp. If the eudaimonian approach were misunderstood as recommending a constant conscious obsession with happiness, eudaimonianism would be contrary to the psychology of happiness. But that would be to misread eudaimonianism. Eudaimonianism seeks to understand the fundamental value of human activity. We only consciously dwell on happiness as the central value when our activity is the attempt to clarify our fundamental values!

There is, however, a criticism of the typical eudaimonian, or happiness-based approach to value which renders it unsuitable for our purposes. The typical happiness-based approach appears to be settled in favor of the idea of the positive evaluation of ego-based experience. We do not in practice find articulations of happiness-based ethics at a level of generality which will do for us. Rather the most general statements of happiness-based ethics are given as explicitly Enlightenment West articulations in which the ego experience, and the desirability of enhancing the ego experience, are taken for granted. Consequently the happiness-based approach will often appear to the exponent of Enlightenment East as tainted or at least biased.

Consider, for instance, the most influential articulation of happiness-based ethics in circulation today, that of John Stuart Mill, in *Utilitarianism:* "If by happiness be meant a continuity of highly pleasurable excitement, it is evident enough that this is impossible. A state of exalted pleasure lasts only moments, or in some cases, and with some intermissions, hours or days, and is the occasional brilliant flash of enjoyment, not its permanent and steady flame . . [H]appiness . . . is not a life of rapture, but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having, as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed, to those who have been fortunate enough to obtain it, has always appeared worthy of the name 'happiness.' And such an existence is even now the lot of many, during some considerable portion of their lives. The present wretched education and wretched social arrangements are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all" (John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 2).

In this famous summary of what can be hoped for, the proponent of Enlightenment East finds explicitly denied the central value of his or her program, namely, the life of bliss transcendent through extinction of the self in *nirvana*, liberation from the cycle of desire or reincarnation, or Taoist uninterrupted immersion in the ineffable source of nature. Compare what Mill suggests is the best one can hope for, with the hopes the ninth century Hindu monist, Shankara, feeds: "Master your mind, and the sense of ego will be dissolved. In this manner, the yogi achieves an unbroken realization of the joy of Brahman. . . When the mind achieves perfect union with Brahman, the wise man realizes Brahman entirely within his own heart. Brahman is beyond speech or thought. It is the pure, eternal con-

sciousness. It is absolute bliss. . . . To taste, within his own heart and in the external world, the endless bliss of the Atman–such is the reward obtained by the yogi who has reached perfection and liberation in this life" (Shankara, 1963, p. 297).

Moreover, this value, ego-less experience of bliss transcendent as expressed in the various Enlightenment East systems, does not seem to accept the nomenclature of "happiness" too readily. Although Buddhist materials sometimes refer to mystical liberation as "the highest happiness," the vision of happiness in Enlightenment West is of the fulfillment of the egoic individual, whereas Enlightenment East liberation is liberation *from* the ego. The two notions of happiness seem fundamentally different.

We cannot, then, accept the Enlightenment West eudaimonianism as adequate to our purposes. This should not be taken as indicating any necessary defect in the eudaimonian approach. Rather, there is no articulation of it that it will be seen at the outset of the inquiry as an acceptable approach by all concerned. We need a specific articulation of ethical life which is not only unbiased in the final analysis, but is seen to be unbiased at the outset.

(b) The deontological approach. Deontology is usually presented as offering a theory of right action; as such it may be contrasted with the utilitarian theory of right action. But we may also construe deontology as a value theory in order to contrast it with the happiness-based value theory associated with utilitarianism. According to such a construal, the deontological approach posits as the central value, the value of justice. According to this approach, an action has ultimate value just in those cases where the action is intended to express respect for the recipient of the action. "Act towards every person as an end, and not merely as a means" is the fundamental principle of this approach.

Immanual Kant, in his classic formulation of this approach, puts it as follows: " . . [M]an, and in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. In all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, he must always be regarded at the same time as an end. All objects of inclinations have only a conditional worth, for if the inclinations and the needs founded on them did not exist, their object would be without worth. The inclinations themselves as the sources of needs, however, are so lacking in absolute worth that the universal wish of every rational being must be indeed to free himself completely from them. Therefore, the worth of any objects to be

obtained by our actions is at all times conditional. Beings whose existence does not depend on our will but on nature, if they are not rational beings, have only a relative worth as means and are therefore called 'things'. On the other hand, rational beings are designated 'persons' because their nature indicates that they are ends in themselves, i.e., things which may not be used merely as means. Such a being is thus an object of respect. . . . [W]ithout them nothing of absolute worth could be found." (Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*).

In other words, if satisfying desires (which Kant refers to as achieving objects of our inclination) were all there were to value, then every value would be conditional on one's having that desire, and there would be no absolute value. If there is to be an absolute value, it must come from the nature of a person as person, (a rational being, in Kant's terminology), who is deserving of respect as a person. This deservingness as it were is a kind of justice, and so the fundamental value of deontological ethics is justice.

The deontological approach to value has an austere glory, and its merits are manifest from many points of view. However, for our purposes, to find an approach to value which is seen to be neutral with respect to the fundamental controversies splitting the Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West vision, the deontological approach is not satisfactory. The goal of extinction of desire or extinction of attachment to desire which is frequently found in the Enlightenment East traditions would seem to be consistent with the Kantian dismissal of desire satisfaction as a central feature of ethics. However, the philosophical psychology of the Kantian realm of ends is as ego-bound as is that of the happiness-based ethic. In other words, the only value for the deontological scheme arises outside of the context of the individual acting for himself or herself, and only in the context of two agents, one acting for the other. Even where the individual is acting in a self-regarding way, Kant's analysis requires that the individual abstract herself from herself and treat the act more or less as though it were one person acting upon another. The subjective placement of the agent is irrelevant. But the Enlightenment East value is the release of the agent from a narrow or partial or incomplete relationship with the Absolute Ground of Being. The fulfilling of this project can be undertaken in hermitude, and, indeed, is apparently aided by hermitude. Thus, the central value of deontology appears to be incommensurate with the central value of Enlightenment East.

Once again, this does not indicate an ultimate flaw with the deontological approach to value, but only that the deontological approach

will not serve us at the outset as a framework within which to discover whether there can be a meeting ground for our discussion of Enlightenment East and Enlightenment West values.

(c) The Complex approach. The complex approach to ethics has been developed as a response to various problems with respect to the completeness of the eudaimonian and deontological approaches. Many western philosophers have regarded each of these approaches as incomplete, even for the purposes of the Enlightenment West program. For instance, if all we were interested in were increasing happiness, then one could conceive of a situation in which it would serve happiness to find an innocent person guilty. Consider a case in which we have a marginal individual, a hapless waif, with no family, who is ill, malnourished, suicidal, and so forth, and whose personal position is improved through imprisonment, in a situation in which finding someone, anyone, guilty of some unsolved crime, will increase respect for law in society, and so will increase order, stability, and thus happiness. In such a case, the pure eudaimonian, it is argued, has no way to represent the intuition that it would be wrong to deliberately frame the hapless waif and find her or him guilty of the crime.

Thus, justice appears to some to be an absolute value that is not included within the purview of the eudaimonian approach. On the other hand, if the only value we have is justice, then our ethics is incomplete in that it cannot establish priorities in pleasures or in happiness-making features. However, once we recognize happiness and justice as ultimate, but distinct values we will have a complex ethical theory. Perforce there will be the potential for dilemmas, situations in which justice and happiness cannot both be achieved, so that a priority must be established between them. Yet there is no apparent way to commensurate the values involved, as they are fundamentally distinct. Then only a very subtle discriminative wisdom can negotiate such situations. If one held that the only two fundamental values were happiness and justice, then one would express one's approach this way: "Increase happiness, and practice justice. And when the two come into conflict, do the best you can." In this case, the injunctions, "increase happiness" and "practice justice" are conditional or hedged. An action might increase happiness, but be unjust. Since they are conditional, or hedged, they are merely prima facie injunctions, injunctions one unhesitatingly tries to fulfill, all other things being equal. Other things not being equal, one does the best one can under the circumstances.