

“THE QUEST FOR A COMMON HUMAN ETHIC AND THE PARTICULARITY OF CULTURE”¹

Arve Brunvoll
Universidade da Noruega

The problem

Our starting point is the claim that morals as a comprehensive norm for behaviour and action in a human fellowship always has been linked to a specific culture. We shall in this paper ask about possible models for understanding the relation between *ethics and culture*, which can help us to answer the question *whether*, and in case *how it is possible to imagine a universal ethic*², in the meaning of a *common ethic for people from different cultures*. In so far as we relate to persons and schools of thinking on ethical questions we are not primarily interested in the right interpretation of these persons or schools, but in the use of them in order to find possible *models* for our own reflection on the question.³ (There is nothing catastrophic in the making of strawmen.)

Definition of culture

The definitions of culture are legion. It is not so much a question of disagreement on the understanding of culture as of different perspectives. We do not think that the definition of culture will make any decisive difference in the discussion of a universal ethic.

The social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz bases his definition of culture on a definition of man as the “creature ‘who makes sense’”.⁴ In line with this he understands culture as “social organization of meaning”.⁵ The educationist Georg Auernheimer defines culture in a way which resembles that of Hannerz:

The culture of a society or a group in society is composed of the repertoire of symbols of meaning, i. e. the repertoire of means of communication and representation. To cultural practice belongs also the symbolic way things are used in daily life... Culture serves the interpretation of life in society and guidance for action. It contains the ‘map of meaning’ for the group concerned.⁶

The main point in this understanding of culture is the underlining of culture as a ‘map of meaning’, which is decisive for action and behaviour in the group or society, i.e. the ethical aspect of culture.

The historical aspect of culture is essential. It is a main point in Hans Gullestrup’s definition:

[Culture is] the world view and the values, moral norms and concrete behaviour - as well as the material and immaterial products of these - that people take over from a previous generation, which they then - maybe in modified form - try to transmit to the next generation, and which in one way or other distinguishes them from people who belong to other cultures.⁷

All cultures till now have been particular cultures, i.e. culture exists only as particular culture. Human culture exists in a global plurality, and it makes sense to speak of *interculturality*. This is not contradicted by the fact that we also have to speak of globalization and cultural amalgamation. Culture is not static. Therefore it is also necessary to speak of an *intracultural* plurality. In extreme form this is expressed by Stephen Lukes: "The idea that cultures are wholes, rather than clusters or assemblages of heterogeneous elements with varying origins, is a systematic exercise in the reduction of complexity based on mythical thinking."⁸

Consequently we have also a problem with determining the boundaries between cultures. When are cultures 'different'? When is a culture an 'other' culture, a 'subculture', a 'counterculture' a.s.o.? Elements in a given culture can change hierarchical position. Sometimes religion seems to be of constitutive importance, but not always. If a Norwegian becomes a Moslem, does he change culture?

It is possible to live as a human being in many different ways. But a human being always lives in a cultural context. Even the eremite lives within and by a communally organized meaning, a culture. No one is more culturally typical than Simon the Stylite, even if he exhibits a very special feature of that culture.

The place of religion in culture

The definition of religion is highly controversial. We shall not attempt to give a precise definition, only presuppose that there is a consensus on the understanding of religion, which is sufficient to identify the phenomenon more or less clearly within the various cultures.⁹ Our argument in this paper will not depend on any definite circumscription of the phenomenon.

Suffice it to say that religion has a central place within most cultures. Only within modern European culture after the Enlightenment have we experienced a culture where the religious element has been uncertain, or even, in some branches of that culture, absent.

Morals and their reflected form in ethics is traditionally part of culture and is conditioned, or marked, by the context of meaning of which it is a part. As a consequence, in most cultures religion is an essential element in the interpretative universe from which morals spring.

The actualisation of the question of a universal ethic

The question of the universality of morals is an age-old question. New in our time is its actuality as a practical necessity for a world characterized by the problems of global ecology and of the co-existence of cultures in a pluralistic national and international community, al-

though we must not exaggerate the novelty of multiculturalism, cf. Michael Walzer's interesting description of "the institutional history of multiculturalism".¹⁰

The question of the possibility of a universal ethic can be posed from a philosophical, theological, sociological as well as from a political viewpoint. Often we find a combination of viewpoints, e.g. in the attempts of Hans Küng and his followers in the Parliament of the World's Religions to lay the foundation for a Global Ethic.¹¹

The basis for a universal ethic from the point of view of a Christian theology

Our reason for posing the problem of a universal ethic as a question for a Christian theology lies in the fact that this is our particular cultural place,¹² and according to our views a universal ethic must have a theoretical basis in the particular culture in order to be functional at all.

A traditional Roman-Catholic theology, as well as a theology which follows Martin Luther's explicit views on a natural and universal knowledge of God's Will may be taken as providing a basis for a notion of a universal ethic. Interesting is here the fact that Luther, contrary to what is often taken to be his view, holds that not only the 'secular', human side of morality is open to a natural recognition, but also its religious side, its God-relation.¹³

What form of a universal ethic is possible?

One can imagine alternative foundations for a possible universal ethic. A main question will be whether ethics must be culture dependent, or whether it can be culture independent. Can we establish a universal ethic which is independent or autonomous in relation to particular cultures, i.e. stands above them? Such an ethic could be called *supracultural*, an ethic *from above*. A further question would be whether such an ethic would have to be rationalistic-philosophical.

Or, shall we have to conceive of a universal ethic as an ethic *from beneath*, an ethic which is dependent of particular cultures and subsequently only can be established as *consensus ethic*. Such an ethic will be *transcultural* in the sense that it *crosses* or *goes through* cultures.

In addition to the question whether a universal ethic can be conceived as an ethic from above or from beneath we shall also have to ask whether such an ethic can or must be *material* or *procedural* (formal).

Attempts to establish a universal ethic from above

There is a line in ethical thinking in the whole of western European history which could be called the rationalistic project. It reaches from Greek antiquity to contemporary European philosophy, from Socrates to Karl Otto Apel. This project presupposes that there can be established a universal ethic with a starting point in a universal human reason. This ethic will of course have an historical origin, but it will have a *validity* which is independent of culture, tradition and history.

Antiquity

Socrates will by means of the dialogue bring out the ethic which is latent in the reason of man. Through the dialogue we can uncover what is to be rejected, and unite in the ethical standpoints which are evident for reason.

The belief in the one, universal reason and the universal ethic is encountered in its pure form in the *Stoic* conception of natural law, as in Marc Aurel's words about the whole world as a state to which all humanity belongs, and from which we have got our power to think, our reason and our law.¹⁴

Enlightenment

Fundamental for Enlightenment is the belief in human reason as an independent source of all knowledge and insight. Individual, but common, reason can re-enact or imitate the whole of humanity's intellectual history, as Enlightenment found it in the medieval arabic story by Ibn Tufail about Haji ibn Jaqzan, who grew up alone on an isolated island and recaptured all of man's intellectual achievements on his own. He is like Adam, the first philosopher, who gave everything its name, man without past and tradition. Lessing placed Ibn Tufail very high, and Ernst Bloch calls him "the saint of Enlightenment".¹⁵ Radically understood Enlightenment means a departure from all cultures as particular cultures. Therefore it is only consequent that Enlightenment saw man as capable of building an ethic on the basis of reason alone.

Immanuel Kant

Kant thinks that we can find the fundamental principles of moral thinking by analysing the view of morality in common reason, principles which are basic for all cultures, despite their differences. As we know, it is the ground norm of all ethics Kant formulates in his categorical imperative. Whether this is only a formal principle or also a material principle, we shall leave undiscussed. Essential is the point that Kant finds *objective*, rational norms in the human *subject*. We see Kant in a tradition going back to *Socrates* and representing a universalistic moral philosophy, based on reason.

Some would want to maintain that the Enlightenment project bears in itself its own dissolution, that epitomized autonomous and individualized reason could not in the long run carry belief in an *objective, universal* reason. Subsequently, the situation which many hold to be the situation of our time, and which is given the name 'postmodernism', should then be the fruit of reason dissolving itself, with the result that there is not any more a reason which binds humans together.

Still the Enlightenment project may not be given up completely. It may have its proponents in present discussions of ethics.

John Rawls

We cannot here in any sense find the space to discuss adequately the theories of John Rawls theory of justice.¹⁶ The main question to be raised is whether Rawls is advocating the possibility of establishing a kind of political liberalism on the basis of an identifiable universal and rational essence in man, or whether he maintains a kind of cultural particularism, i.e. whether he is starting in reason or in society. Some would hold that there is a turn in Rawls' views towards the latter, which could count for the fact that some liberals do not like the later Rawls, suspecting that he tends to give up the universalistic pretensions.¹⁷

Discourse ethics

The concept is first of all linked to Jürgen Habermas¹⁸ and Karl Otto Apel.¹⁹ We shall comment briefly on the latter in this paper. Apel is quite clear in his programme. He will give a *moral philosophical last reason (foundation)* of ethics. This last foundation is human discourse. We can have a dialogue across all historical epoches and cultures. By entering into a dialogue a person is accepting the principles of a discourse, which is the equality of all participants. There is a kind of democratic element of reciprocal acceptance in the common, theoretic rationality of human beings.²⁰

Ram Adhar Mall, who is a leading figure in the work to establish an intercultural philosophy today, tries to give a postmodern, pluralistic interpretation of Apel, holding that even the last foundation has to be given in plural, and that it cannot be found in singular. This is, however, an unlikely interpretation of Apel.²¹

Ethics as culture dependent

Against a liberal-political theory of ethics it is held that ethics will always have to be based on a communal fellowship and be bound to culture and tradition. Such a view is found e.g. in so-called 'communitarianism' in present ethical debate.²² We shall have to bear in mind that we are thereby using a name which is given by others to a number of ethical conceptions, without the authors in question necessarily accepting that they can be grouped under such a name. We are referring to 'communitarians' like Michael Walzer, Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor. We shall look briefly at the first two of them in order to find a possible alternative model for a universal ethic.

Michael Walzer

Walzer underlines that he is radically particularistic in his philosophy.²³ He renounces on trying to find an objective and universal starting point for philosophy. In his own philosophy he sees it as his task to interpret for his fellow citizens the *world of meaning which they share*. All distributive justice (cf. Rawls) must take into account that even the understanding of *social goods* is a product of historical and cultural particularity.²⁴

What Walzer wants to defend is not particular interests. Particularism means something different:

The problem is with the particularism of history, culture, and membership. Even if they are committed to impartiality, the question most likely to arise in the minds of members of a political community is not, What should rational individuals choose under universalizing conditions of such and such a sort? But rather, What would individuals like us choose, who are situated as we are, who share a culture²⁵

Alasdair MacIntyre

MacIntyre is concerned with the history of ethics.²⁶ He sees liberal political theory as a project for founding a social order where the individual can liberate himself from the contingency and particularity through an appeal to genuinely universal, tradition independent norms.²⁷ Against this MacIntyre holds that all conceptions of justice and practical reason spring from particular societies, from particular types of social order. They are developed as rational conceptions of socially embodied particular traditions.

It might seem reasonable to regard so-called 'communitarian' ethics as relativistic, also in the sense that it will be impossible to evaluate ethical forms in relation to each other. This is not MacIntyre's standpoint. He claims that it is possible to evaluate ethical conceptions rationally, but only from the standpoint of one or other particular tradition. We can, according to MacIntyre, judge between competing truth pretensions in the various traditions. But it is only the history of our own and alternative, rival, traditions which can justify our moral choices.²⁸

It is possible that we shall have to change views, even fundamentally, by our own tradition experiencing what MacIntyre calls an 'epistemological crisis', and by the fact that another tradition may have more adequate resources for giving meaning to our world. Therefore, to commit oneself to our tradition does not exclude the dialogue with other traditions, and we must always admit that it is possible that one's own tradition can show itself to be less adequate than other traditions.²⁹

On what premisses can we choose between various models for ethical thinking? In the end it will probably be a question of coherence and capacity for giving a convincing interpretation of existing ethical forms as phenomena and a theory for a dialogue between these ethical forms which can preserve their identity and at the same time be functional. In some sense we shall side with the view that an ethic will always be culture dependent.

Culture dependent ethics as a possible basis for a universal ethic?

If ethics always will be historical, culture- and tradition dependent, what prospect will there be for the establishment of an ethic which could in any sense claim to be universal? The avenue which is open to us, is the attempt to reach an aposterioric consensus ethic as

the result of a dialogue between ethical forms (ethoi). This ethic will be without a supracultural basis, be it rational or other. Further, this ethic will be dependent upon the possibility of finding, through the consensus project itself, a basis in the ethics of the particular cultures.

It is reasonable to maintain that the Declaration of Human Rights and the whole idea of universal human rights have their origin in the Enlightenment heritage and implies a belief in their basis in a common human rationality. This way of thinking is not unproblematic in today's situation. This has got to do both with the theoretical discussion about ethics and with the concrete encounter between the formulated human rights and the cultures which are asked to accept them.

Is there a possible alternative starting point for the implementation of the human rights principles universally? We think that precisely the recognition of the particularity of ethics can be a basis for a realistic defence of human rights as universally binding. An interesting initiative for such a way of thinking is found in the views of Abdullahi An Na'im, the Sudanese jurist and scholar and professed muslim, who is known for his radical programme for a new Islamic law.³⁰ An Naim is also the leader of the human rights organization *Africa Watch* and speaks for a universality as the result of a *consensus* among cultures. The concept of human rights, he holds, has its origin in a particular, western culture, and human rights can not be transferred as a normative standard for all cultures unless people from these other cultures can see them as valid from their perspective and thus incorporate them in their culture specific ethic:

... I am convinced, however, that moral rights cannot be 'constitutionalized' in muslim countries without a form of religious legitimacy... There is a potentially powerful and vital crowd of supporters for universal human rights all over the world - also in the islamic world. But these crowds of supporters can ever be mobilized in a global project on the basis of solely western ideas of individual civil and political rights. Together with other rights and new formulations of well-known rights, all human rights will only be able to claim universal respect and validity through discourse and dialogue.³¹

Menahem Locherbaum discusses the question of tolerance in the Jewish society and argues that "for reasons of both validity and effectiveness, arguments for toleration must come from within the tradition".³² This sees Locherbaum as possible, taking rabbinic tradition as a starting point. Such a cultural translation sees Locherbaum as necessary for life in a multicultural society, it seems.

One who according to our view in a very clear way has advocated a project for a universality-creating dialogue between ethical forms on the basis of an acceptance of their relation to a culture, is the German Catholic systematic theologian Hans Kessler, whose special field is intercultural theology. In a newly published book on "a world ethic in the dialogue between cultures and religions"³³ he calls for a dialogue which aims at reaching

what is common, but which at the same time preserves and strengthens what is particular in the cultures. This dialogue seeks a consensus which is not abstract, but which has its roots in and is nurtured by the concrete, manifold cultures. It is here a question of something which is neither abstract universalism nor normative cultural relativism, but which is a "limited universality in culture specific form".³⁴ Kessler proposes a "plural ethic in the many cultural-religious traditions, and a common goal of taking care of the earth for all".³⁵ Basic for this thought is that "an ethic must ...be contextually rooted and therefore plural".³⁶

From Kessler's side this is a suggestion that we shall view "plural ethical forms as sources of a world ethic".³⁷ Kessler does not see this as just a simple accumulation of existing overlappings, but as an involvement in a dialogue which also implies a process, where the change of standpoint is possible and necessary. "We all need the corrective from the other to see if we are on the right way, but the anchoring in the concrete culture and religion is indispensable, as the place from where we draw our ethical power [strength]" Kessler quotes from Kandil.³⁸ Here is a possible link to the views we meet in Alasdair MacIntyre.

As a preliminary conclusion we can say that a view which regards all forms of ethic as culturally conditioned need not mean that an ethic must be totally particular (particular in all ways). Any ethic can, despite its historic-particular genesis, implicitly and explicitly claim to have a universal validity. It will therefore be quite legitimate that the representatives of the various forms of ethic through a dialogue try to determine what is actually overlapping in the respective forms, *and that they in the dialogue try to convince the others of the truth in their own conception, where there is disagreement.* This may also, of course, concern the basic norms and the very foundation of ethics. Only on such a basis can we unite a view of ethics as culture dependent with the concept of a common ethic.

In this context we should also like to add something about the concept of 'overlapping'. It can be used to annul the contending truth pretensions of the various cultural forms, e.g. in ethics. We interpret the project of Ram Adhar Mall in this way. Mall's postmodern, pluralistic overlapping philosophy and ethic presupposes that the different philosophical forms cannot imply exclusive truth pretensions, but must be viewed as bearers of truth only in the sense that they participate in a universal truth, an all-truth, it seems. This is the paradigm for the intercultural philosophy of which Mall is a marked spokesman today. An interesting question would be whether there is a parallel to Mall's philosophical conception in traditional Hindu religious thought.

An evaluation of various attempts to establish a common or universal ethic

Defending the view that our discussion will necessarily be contextual on some sense I take the liberty to mention the Norwegian variety of the discussion about a common ethic. Especially from the quarters of Norwegian secular humanism (Humanist Association) there has been an interest in championing such a project, however, from what I would label a fun-

damentally ambiguous standpoint, which tries to combine radical individualization (individualism) with a remnant of Enlightenment belief.

The idea of common values in Norwegian liberal humanism presupposes the harmony model, e.g. in the views of the philosopher Anfinn Stigen. He holds that the school should play a greater role as a transmitter of values and culture. At the same time he holds that there are no neutral value transmission. Therefore the school has to concentrate on common human values, not particular values, which are linked to various religions and life stances.

In our most fundamental needs and goods we meet. We need food, water, air and warmth. We seek security, now and for our future. We need friends, people whom we can trust and have confidence in. We seek love someone to be fond of and who can be fond of us. We seek respect from others and seek to preserve our self-respect. It is in our search for these values that we are humans. It is this which makes us human beings. But in order to obtain these values we must co-operate. These are the common values which bind us together. No human being can be happy alone, as Aristotle said. Therefore it is so important that young people come to see our common values as cardinal goals in life.³⁹

The question we have to raise in view of this mode of thinking is on what basis these values are established. Can they be established independent of culture and tradition, somewhat in a combination of rationalistic and naturalistic thinking. Anfinn Stigen's opponent in Norway, Professor Guttorm Floistad, maintains that the common values themselves have to be grounded in a certain life stance.

With regard to Hans Küng's 'Global Ethic' project it will be decisive for our evaluation what kind of relation it presupposes between the sought-for common ethic and the particular cultures it is supposed to represent.⁴⁰ The danger is that we are left with a kind of minimum ethics which are both too formal and abstract, and which lacks the basis in a concrete, living culture. It looks on the one hand as if Küng maintains a reason-based humanist ethic,⁴¹ but what he really aims at is probably what he calls an "aposterioric" consensus, which is the result of a dialogue based on the actual beliefs of the participants.⁴² In the last case the project itself will be based on a view that on the outset is kin to our own, however much we should have to say about the way the project is carried out.

In our concept of a universal ethic the respect for the integrity of the particular cultures, which does not mean that cultures are static, will be the decisive viewpoint. It means that the common elements of the ethic will be based on the specific cultures and will not be thought of as existing without these, both with regard to ethical knowledge, resp. the formation of moral principles, and to the motivation for moral action.

It will be a pragmatic ethic of co-operation, which renounces any supra-cultural foundation, be it philosophical, religious or other. It presupposes that the co-operation itself will find an internal basis in the particular cultures themselves. At the same time it will let the contending truth claims of the culture-dependent 'ethoi' (forms of ethics) persist and be expressed

where there is reason for it. No other relativity is presupposed than the one which is permitted by the respective cultures from the outset, or which can be developed in the encounter between the cultures in the ethical discussion. What is presupposed is of course *that* common rationality which makes exchange of meaning at all possible. (We are well aware that this is a large issue in its own, which we shall not be able to discuss here).

Conclusion:

Are we arguing for a kind of pragmatic basis for a universal ethic? In that case it is at any rate a kind of pragmatism which is allowed by the stances or dogmas of the particular cultures. It is a search for a limited universality, which does not cancel the struggle between the alternative truth pretensions of cultures. It also presupposes that the limit of universality which can be obtained never can be determined in advance. It will always be dependent on the actual result of the *polylog* and therefore theoretically open.

For us the question of a common ethic is connected to the wider question of a strategy for intercultural dialogue as a whole. We will conceive of such a dialogue as a *polylog* without presuppositions, where cultures are allowed to find their expression independent of any 'culture-free' basis and without any suppositions about the relation between the cultures in question. The relation will be constituted *in the polylog* by a realization of an eventual consensus or discordance, and by the influence which can be exerted through the dialogue, an influence which can unite or disunite, or both, according to the field of discussion. On the basis of our particular ground-conception, which on our part is a Lutheran theology of revelation, and a certain previous experience we cannot give up faith in a project of trying to reach an agreement on a sustainable ethic for human co-existence in our time. Without giving up the foundation of ethics in a particular, comprehensive ethic it is possible to say with Paul in his recognition of the universal aspect of ethics:

And now, my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and gracious, whatever is excellent and admirable - fill all your thoughts with these things (Philipp. 4,8, NEB).

Here we also touch the question whether there will be a willingness to implement the norms which are recognized as binding. Here at any rate we are convinced that a basis in a fellowship of tradition and culture is a necessary condition. This is, however, partly a separate question.

Notes

1- This paper presents brief and preliminary theoretical reflections in view of a proposed study project on culture and ethics in Eritrea.

2- *Ethic* is here used in the sense of a certain ensemble of fundamental moral attitudes and principles, cf. the term *Ethos* as used in German, and somewhat different from *ethics* as the theory of morals.

3- This also accounts for the summary treatment especially of classical figures in the history of thought. The reader is here referred to her or his previous knowledge of the matter.

- 4- Ulf Hannerz: *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. New York 1992, 3.
- 5- Ibidem, 17, cf. the title of the book.
- 6- «Die *Kultur* einer Gesellschaft oder gesellschaftlichen Gruppe besteht in ihrem Repertoire an Symbolbedeutungen, d.h. in ihrem Repertoire an Kommunikations- und Repräsentationsmitteln. Dabei ist sicher auch die symbolische Verwendungsweise von Dingen im Alltagsleben Teil kultureller Praxis....Die Kultur dient der Deutung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens und damit der Orientierung des Handelns. Sie enthält die 'Landkarte der Bedeutung' für die jeweilige Gruppe." Georg Auernheimer: *Einführung in die interkulturelle Erziehung*, Darmstadt 1990, 112, with reference to J. Clarke u.a.: *Jugendkultur als Widerstand*, Frankfurt a. M. 1979.
- 7- Hans Gullestrup: *Kultur; kulturanalyse og kulturetikk: eller hvad adskiller og hvad forener os?* Kbh.1992, 54.
- 8- *The Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (JPE)* 1995, 174.
- 9- Admittedly, we are here pushing aside a great problem. It becomes evident when one considers e. g. Kwasi Wiredu's article on «African religions from a philosophical point of view», in Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro (eds.): *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford 1997, 34-42. Wiredu's point is that a concept of religion based on Western categories is grossly misrepresenting the African world view.
- 10- *JPE* 1995, 181ff.
- 11- Hans Küng: *Projekt Weltethos*, 1990. Hans Küng og Karl-Josef Kuschel (utgj.): *Erklärung zum Weltethos. Die Deklaration des Parlamentes der Weltreligionen*, 1993, eng.: *A Global Ethic. The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, London 1993.
- 12- The author is professionally doing philosophy and ethics in Lutheran theological context.
- 13- Striking is Martin Luther's views as expressed in his treatise *Against the Sabbatarians*, in the Weimar edition of Luther's works, vol. 50, 312-337.
- 14- Marcus Aurelius: *To myself* (Gr.: *Ta eis heauton*, Lat.: *Ad se ipsum libri XXII*), reference here is based on the Norwegian edition: *Til meg selv*, transl. by Rebekka H. Bang, Oslo 1977, 79.
- 15- For the story of Haji ibn Jaqzan, see Franz M. Wimmer: *Vorlesungen zu Theorie und Methode der Philosophie im Vergleich der Kulturen*, Bremen 1997, 19f.
- 16- John Rawls: *A theory of justice*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1973.
- 17- On Rawls theory as a political theory, not as a moral philosophy, see his "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, 1985. On Rawls, see further Bernard Williams: *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, London 1985, 75-80
- 18- Jürgen Habermas: *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1983, *Erläuterungen zur Diskursethik*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1991, and numerous other publications.
- 19- Karl-Otto Apel: *Diskurs und Verantwortung : das Problem des Übergangs zur postkonventionellen Moral*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1988, *Die eine Vernunft und die vielen Rationalitäten* (herausgegeben von Karl-Otto Apel und Matthias Kettner), Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1996, and numerous other publications.
- 20- On the question why, according to the theory of discourse ethics, we cannot choose whether we will accept the norms of argumentative reason, see Ulrich Steinvoth: *Klassische und moderne Ethik. Grundlinien einer materialen Moraltheorie*, Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1990, 81. On discourse ethics in general, see Wolfgang Kuhlmann: "Ethikbegründung - empirisch oder transzendentalphilosophisch?" in *Evolutionäre Ethik zwischen Naturalismus und Idealismus*, hrsg. von Wilhelm Lütterfelds unter Mitarbeit von Thomas Mohrs, Darmstadt 1993, 92ff, on K. O. Apell especially 102ff. The exposition also contains a confirmation (93) of Apel's (oral) characterization of the difference between him and Habermas: Habermas thinks *sociologically*, while Apel thinks *philosophically* (conference Bremen 1997).
- 21- This becomes evident also from an oral remark from Mall to a contribution of Apel in a recent conference: "Warum brauchen wir eine Letztbegründung?"
- 22- On communitarianism and liberalism, see Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift: *Liberals and Communitarians*, Oxford 1992, 230.

23- Michael Walzer: *Spheres of justice : a defense of pluralism and equality*, New York : Basic Books, 1983, *Thick and thin : moral argument at home and abroad*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994, and a number of other publications.

24- "My argument is radically particularist. I don't claim to have achieved any great distance from the social world in which I live. One way to begin the philosophical enterprise - perhaps the original way - is to walk out of the cave, leave the city, climb the mountain, fashion for oneself... an objective and universal standpoint.... But I mean to stand in the cave, in the city, on the ground. Another way of doing philosophy is to interpret to one's fellow citizens the world of meanings that we share." *Spheres of Justice*, Oxford 1993, xiv.

25- *Spheres of Justice*, 5.

26- Alasdair MacIntyre: *A short history of ethics*, London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, *After virtue : a study in moral theory*, London : Duckworth, 1981, *Whose justice? Which rationality?* London : Duckworth, 1988, and other publications.

27- Cf. the interpretation in Mulhall/Swift 1992, 97.

28- This is what he develops in the chapter on "Contested Justices, Contested Rationalities" In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame 1988.

29- On this cf. Ian Markham: "Faith and reason: reflections on MacIntyre's 'tradition-constituted enquiry'", in Jeff Astley and Leslie Francis (eds.): *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education*, Leominster 1994, 486f.

30- *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law*, Syracuse N.Y. 1990.

31- "Hva mener vi med universell?", in NFF-Nytt 2/94, 15-17, originally in *Index on Censorship* 4/1994. Here quoted on the basis of the Norwegian text.

32- "Tolerance in the Jewish Tradition", in *The Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain* 1995, 274f.

33- *Ökologisches Weltethos im Dialog der Kulturen und Religionen*.

34- "Die folgenden Hypothesen suchen die Differenzen zwischen den Kulturen bzw. Ethosformen stark zu machen, jedoch nicht, um bei den Differenzen stehenzubleiben, sondern um den andern in seiner Andersheit und Würde ernst zu nehmen und im Dialog mit ihm zu Gemeinsamkeiten zu finden, die nicht abstrakt bleiben, sondern in den pluralen konkreten Ethosformen verwurzelt und von den pluralen Quellen gespeist sind, daher auch von den Menschen pluraler Kulturen rezipiert und von ihnen getragen werden können. In diesem Sinne wird hier - jenseits eines abstrakten Universalismus wie auch seines Gegenstücks, eines schlechten normativen und(?) Kulturrelativismus - für eine *ingeschränkte Universalität in kulturspezifischer Ausprägung* votiert." Hans Kessler, i Hans Kessler (Hrsg.): *Ökologisches Weltethos im Dialog der Kulturen und Religionen*, Darmstadt 1996, s. 19.

35- "...plurales Ethos in den vielen kulturell-religiösen Traditionen und das gemeinsame Ziel einer Bewahrung der Erde für alle", Kessler 1996, s. 18.

36- "Ein Ethos muß daher zuminderst auch kontextuell verwurzelt und deshalb plural sein".?Kessler 1996, p. 18. Cf. in this context also Kessler's criticism of Küngs og Apels proposal for a universal ethic.

37- Kessler 1996, s.270.

38- "Alle brauchen das Korrektiv der andern, um zu sehen, ob sie auf dem richtigen Weg sind; unaufgebar aber bleibe die Verankerung in konkreter Kultur und Religion, woraus wir unsere ethische Kraft schöpfen (Kandil)." Kessler 1996, p. 270, cf. 277, note 26.

39- The newspaper "Aftenposten?", Oslo, 128.01.1985.

40- Cf. Kessler, 17.

41- Cf. ibidem, 129f.

42- Cf. ibidem, 145.