

Metaphysics of Exclusion and Its Impact on western civilization

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Exclusion is the very foundation of Western metaphysics. Metaphysics, as the science of being qua being, is based on the concept of exclusion. That is to say, to be is to be excluding and excluded. Thus, being is founded upon such relationship of binary opposition.

Accordingly, exclusion is the most fundamental principle upon which the Western metaphysical and logical system is based. Indeed all other concepts, which are claimed as the most fundamental principles of classic Western metaphysics, like the principles of non-contradiction, and the excluded middle in Aristotelian metaphysics, or the recent studies of the concept of the metaphysics of presence in Derridean deconstructive philosophy, are all based on the concept of exclusion. the power of exclusion can be traced to the very beginning of Western civilization, namely the Greek creation myth. According to Greek mythology, in the beginning there was chaos, then a systematic world emerged. Hence, it is necessary to raise this question: what are the principles of the system and order in the world? We initially deal with Ovid's metamorphosis, in which

the Greek creation mythology reveals its implicit principles. Thus, exclusion is the main principle of the organized world, which is derived from the power of exclusion between opposites, and the role of Zeus in activating such power¹. Whatever the history of Greek philosophy could be considered as an attempt to philosophize and conceptualize Greek mythology. Hence, Western metaphysics, which inherited such philosophy, is shaped by such a lurking mythological origin to the extent that it could be called the metaphysics of exclusion. However, the philosophy of Anaximander was the cornerstone of philosophizing the Greek mythology and establishing the metaphysics of exclusion, through which the mythological idea was masked in philosophical and logical concepts.

Anaximander followed the Greek creation myth, as he claimed that the first cause is Apeiron. According to Theophrastus, "the first cause, Apeiron, is eternal and ageless, as it encompasses all the worlds, and into that from which things take their rise they pass away once more as is meet for they make reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice according to the ordering of time"²

How could we interpret Anaximander's fragment?. Heidegger argues that we should ignore Aristotle's tone on Theophrastus's version of the fragment

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book One ¹
Burnet 1920, Ch.1 ²

and try to understand it within the time that has been announced³. How can we understand this unlimited origin in the fragments without comparing it to chaos, as the origin of being in Greek mythology? Whatever, according to some interpretations of Anaximander's Apeiron, the Apeiron is comparable with Hesiod chaos. Nevertheless, we argue that the Apeiron is the manhood of chaos, whereas chaos is the childhood of the Apeiron. The Apeiron speaks what was unsaid and concealed in chaos. It reveals the contrast between the undefined, unlimited, timeless origin; on the one hand, and the defined, limited, and temporary world, on the other. This in turn reveals more essential contrast between the knowable world, as the world of exclusion between opposites, and the Apeiron as the origin of everything that lacks such exclusion. Such exclusion is founded upon justice. This justice grants a temporary exclusionary relationship between two opposites, as represented by the power of exclusion - This leads to a temporary balance between two opposites within which both of them give existence to the other. This power of exclusion which is founded on justice, makes things exist in the knowable world. However, through the passage of time such balance decays, as one of them overcomes its opposite. Then, it must be punished in terms of the concept of justice upon which such exclusion is based.

Heidegger 1984, p14 ³

Based on his mit-sein concept, Heidegger argues, that the fragment exhibits a kind of barter system of being, namely, a multiplicity of beings as a whole⁴. Thus, the meaning of being in Anaximander's manner is a mutable exclusionary relationship between beings, whereas beings give being to each other

Based on its mythical foundation, namely the concept of justice, the philosophy of Anaximander provides an appropriate interpretation of the temporal being. As such, a primitive concept of the just exclusionary relationship interprets the existence of two opposites through the temporal balance between them and interprets their decays as way of punishment for violating such justice. Changing, in such a manner, is manifested in the movement between two domains: being and non-being, order and disorder, the exclusionary world and the non-exclusionary world, the knowable world and the non-knowable world, the concealed being to the non-concealed being, as in Heidegger's terms, and the Apeiron and the world, as in Anaximander's terms, which resembles chaos and the ordered world in Greek mythology.

By philosophizing the Greek creation myth, Anaximander established a social theory of being that in turn lurks in all kinds of logical,

Heidegger 1984, p15 , ⁴

epistemological or social system and upon which all such systems are founded, consciously or unconsciously.

Such temporality of being impacts and forms the development of the power of exclusion throughout the history of Greek philosophy. Hence, Heraclitus eliminates the power of exclusion at the level of things, while adopting it at the level of the logos, in order to establish an appropriate interpretation of change and movement. This different level of power of exclusion plays a major role in the history of philosophy. Conversely, Parmenides, adopts a strong, extreme approach to the concept exclusion, which leads to rejecting movement and change. Nonetheless, it also leads to the destruction of the exclusionary relationship itself, which in turn represents a major threat to metaphysics and an obstacle to establishing logic. That is to say, the first principles of Greek metaphysics and logic and in turn the entire Western culture, namely, the non-contraction law and the excluded middle, are founded upon such exclusionary relationship. The first early hierarchy system founded implicitly upon such principle was Euclidian geometrical system. As the developed contemporary axiomatic system shows that the rigidity of axiomatic systems relies upon two conditions which were implicit in classic an ancient systems, namely consistence and completeness as the former relies upon the principle of excluded middle while the latter relies upon non-contradiction. Such just exclusionary

relationship is explored explicitly in Plato's perfect state system in his Republic; however, the state constitutes from different rigid exclusionary layers as exclusion is an aspect of good as a most fundamental principle. All Western social institutions have inherited this hierarchy from Plato's model

Aristotelian metaphysics was a crucial stage to conceptualize and philosophize mythological exclusion, namely to bury the social and ethical theory of being, which remains forgotten and lurking in all the system of metaphysics and logic. These principles were stated explicitly in Aristotle's metaphysics as the most fundamental principles of ontological theory and, in turn, logical and epistemological systems. Aristotle argues for the logical and epistemological meaning of being (namely being as true and false is subordinate to the ontological meaning of being namely being as categories or attributions and being as act and potency)⁵. Thus, Aristotle masked such exclusion into the first principles of a metaphysical logical system, namely, non-contradiction and the excluded middle. On the other hand, such metaphysics try to defend the concept of exclusion from the threats represented by Heraclitus's and Parmenides's philosophies, through providing two integrated and independent meanings of being. He provides the first meaning of being, being as categories or attributions, and such

⁵, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, E2, 1026, a(35-36)

meaning can be traced to the philosophy of Plato, in order to defend exclusion from the threat of Parmenides's philosophy. He also provides the second meaning of being, namely, being as act and potency in order defend exclusion from the philosophy of Heraclitus, or from the threat of the concept of time in general. This in turn leads to the domination of bivalent metaphysics, namely being and not being, and bivalent logic, or two-valued logic. Indeed, Aristotle had a great opportunity to surpass bivalence in his book *On Interpretation*, in chapter nine, while he was discussing the following two propositions,

“Tomorrow there will be a sea-battle”

“Tomorrow there will not be a sea-battle”

Then, he considered the question of whether we should consider one of these statements as true today and the other as false ⁶. Lukasiewicz the logician who established three -valued logic, argued that this discussion about the truth value of future events could have paved the way to introduce a third value between true and false, or to surpass two- valued logic and surpass the law of the excluded middle. Hence, today both statements about tomorrow's events are neither considered true, nor false⁷. However, Aristotle comes up with a totally different answer, as he argues that in the

"Aristotle, On interpretation, Book9,a19(31-29) ⁶
"JAN LUKASIEWICZ 1957,p156" ⁷

case of that which exists potentially, but not actually, the rule that applies to that which exists actually does not hold good ⁸. Therefore, Aristotle appeals to the second meaning of being, namely being as a potentiality and actuality to preserve the absoluteness and rigidity of the power of exclusion represented in the principle of bivalence and the law of the excluded middle and to maintain such power as the most fundamental principle of Greek thought and medieval and Western modern philosophy, which derives from such Greek thought, and in turn leads to the domination of bivalent logic.

Christian and Islamic cultures represent a different aspects of such western exclusionary culture. Torrance Kirby, in his introduction for *Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions: Scriptural Hermeneutics and Epistemology*, explores the relationship between Abrahamic religions and Western culture and argues that the inseparable interwovenness of Greek philosophy and religion initially with Hellenistic cults and subsequently with the three Abrahamic religions, played a critical role in shaping the basic contours of Western intellectual history⁹. He maintains this even though the concept of god in Abrahamic creation myth is totally different from the Hellenistic one as god in Abrahamic religions brings non-being into being rather than bringing chaos into order. Thus there is no rigid transcendental principle like exclusionary relationship there is merely undetermined principle, god's

Aristotle, *On interpretation*, Book 9, a18(35-29) ⁸
Torrance Kirby, Rahim Acar and Bilal Baş ,2013 ,Introduction . ⁹

will, which can be shaped and re shaped according to the nature of power in different era. However, it is true that those religions became merely different aspects of Western culture in terms of absoluteness of the exclusionary relationship .Thus, the Islamic and Christian cultures in the medieval, modern and contemporary era didn't represent an alternative culture to exclusionary western culture but a profound tools to deploy such culture. The Meadville Crusades demonstrated explicitly this relationship between Western culture and Abrahamic religions whereas the Western culture emphasized its essential character and identity by using such religions, This kind of usage never ceased over the history of Western culture but became a more subtle and implicit, or to some extent unconscious usage ,in terms of psychoanalysis . The Gorge W Bush usage of the term crusades in his speech after the 9-11 attack to refer to the war against terrorism could be considered a slip of tongue, or parapraxis in psychoanalysis terms, revealing what was unconscious¹⁰. Historically, war has played the role that negation plays in logic as tool of exclusion. Additionally, layers conflict, dictatorship, irrationalize the non-scientific knowledge and marginalize the monitories are different aspects of the principle of exclusion as most fundamental principle of western culture.

Bush ,G w, .2001, ¹⁰

Democracy also could play such role smoothly and subtly when it is used to exclude some culture for sake of another.

Indeed the serious profound alternative of such dominated exclusionary culture was Indian Buddhist logic and its founding metaphysics. Meanwhile, Graham Priest argues, during Aristotle's time Eastern thought had surpassed bivalence into four-valued logic. For instance, in India in the fifth century BCE, in the age of the historical Buddha, a rather peculiar principle of reasoning appeared to be in general use. This principle is called the *catuskoti*, meaning that four corners postulates that there are four possibilities regarding any statement: it might be true (and true only), false (and false only), both true and false, or neither true, nor false.

Priest, in *Beyond True and False*, argues that Aristotle's logic is the predominant one, as it is founded upon the law of the excluded middle and the law of non-contradiction. Thus, Western thinkers – even those sympathetic to Buddhist thought – have struggled to grasp how something such as the *catuskoti* might be possible. Apart from a *third* not being given, here was a fourth – and that fourth was itself a contradiction. How to make sense of that?¹¹. Indeed, Buddhist logic is difficult to understand from a Western perspective. This difficulty of comprehension is not merely due to the principle of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle, it might

,Graham Priest,2014 ¹¹

stem from the mythological power of exclusion, which is masked by such principles.

Such mythological power has shaped all aspects of Western ontological theory and in turn all western logical systems. Western metaphysics is a kind of epistemological ontology. The main aim of such ontology is to explore the knowable world and existence as a given for humankind's consciousness by identifying the individuality of individuals through exclusion. Thus, all different aspects of such metaphysics have in common one main characteristic: Logocentrism as consciousness is the center of existence. Logocentrism is represented over the history of philosophy as logos, god or first principles. Thus Western metaphysics excludes any non-epistemological ontology, or ontology that does not adopt some kind of exclusion, as a kind of mysticism. Or non being, non-order or chaos

Consequently, we cannot interpret the concept of *catuskoti* via Western logical concepts like values of truth and falsehood which rely upon an exclusionary ontological theory. Indeed, it is necessary to redefine such values according to metaphysics within which the concept of *catuskoti* emerged. That is to say, *catuskoti* relies upon totally different metaphysics and ontological theory, a theory that states that the world is not one person's world, but the world's world as stated in the *Lüshi*

chunqiu passage ¹² . this is obviously some kind mysticism from the Western perspective.

Buddhist metaphysics represents the totality of existence namely undistinguished existence which lacks rigid individuation or any kind of discrimination or exclusion among existents. Such metaphysics has been explored explicitly in the principle of no-self .according to this the human self does not exist, even theoretically as an isolated agent, choosing its connection to the world or employing its principles upon the world¹³ . Indeed in Western ontology the logos was established upon such individuation and within it humankind's ego and its principles are concealed. As a masked ego, the logos resists any attempts to surpass exclusion as the first principle of such a lurking ego. This is the major difference between Western metaphysics and the Buddhist metaphysics, that the ego or reason in the latter are absolutely involved in the world. Thus there is no room for any transcendental principles. The difference between Buddhist metaphysics and Heraclitus metaphysics in particular could demonstrate the essential difference between Western and Buddhist intellectual. Heraclitus and Buddhist philosophy represent continuously changing metaphysical theories of being that represent ego as totally involved in a changing world.

Franklin Perkins 2015,25 ¹²
The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics,301 " ¹³

However eventually the Heraclitus metaphysics as part of the Greek intellectual tradition, reestablishes logos as the masked, unchanging ego principle at higher level while Buddhist metaphysics remains absolutely free from any transcendental ideas. Henceforward Western intellect remains restricted to the exclusion power. Such intellect is essentially expressed through the idea of a system whereas the logos is represented as the most fundamental axioms for such systems. Thus the individualized Western ontology creates logos within which the individuality of man is lurking and through which the exclusion principle is always represented at a higher level. Thus all attempts to surpass such exclusion within Western intellectual thought have always lead to higher level of such exclusion represented through logos. This is what represents the essential difference between Buddhist metaphysics and Western metaphysics.

Accordingly Buddhist logic is non- systematic and non -valued logic from the Western perspective. Buddhist logic relies upon absolute non-exclusionary metaphysics while the concept of system and term of value is essentially associated to exclusionary metaphysics.

Thus, we cannot interpret Buddhist logic as many valued logic as Persit argued the term value in Western logic is founded upon the individualized logos as masked ego, which in turn relies upon

exclusionary metaphysics. On the other hand the values in Western logic are defined values as rely upon exclusion .therefore many valued logic does not mean absolute ambiguity but rather the surpassing of two definite values to many definite values, which in turn leads to two main values namely designated and non-designated. Additionally in many kinds of many valued logic there is a kind of exclusionary negation that distinguishes between what is designated and what is not¹⁴. On the contrary, the Buddhist logic represents an absolute ambiguity from the Western perspective as one corner from those four corners is a combination between true and false or designated and not designated in their absolute meaning. On the other hand Buddhist logic cannot also interpret, according Perist and many contemporary logician's interpretations, as para-consistent logic. As the latter is systematic logic that adopts the exclusion at higher level, while the Buddhist logic is nonsystematic.

As the concept of catuskoti does not emerge within an axiomatic system or structure, it represents an absolute surpassing of any kind of exclusion. This is contrasted with Western concepts which are structured concepts in principle. Moreover, the term structure plays an essential role in Western civilization. Derrida in his *Written and*

Derrida points to such essential relationship, arguing that the word structure is as old as the episteme—that is to say, as old as Western science and Western philosophy—and that its roots thrust deep into the soil of ordinary language, into whose deepest recesses the episteme plunges in order to gather them up and to make them part of itself in a metaphorical displacement¹⁵.

Indeed, the principles of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle play three roles in three different levels of language throughout the history of western thought:

1. They are considered as the axiom, or theories within the system;
2. They represent the conditions of the system, namely consistency and completeness at the level of meta language.
3. They function as the universal law between different frameworks, by creating some kind of meta-language. For the sake of precision, this could be called a beyond language

The last point in the above-mentioned laws, represents the major problems throughout the history of philosophy, like the conflict between science and religion in the 17th and 18th centuries. This point reserves the exclusivity of the system and gives it a legitimate power to exclude other systems. That is to say, there is one true system that excludes all other systems. At this

Derrida, 1978, p278¹⁵

level, laws are free from all conceptualization into logical form. Thus, they reveal their firm exclusion, which relies on ethical-mythological foundations.

There have been many attempts to surpass such exclusion, and establish exclusion in a higher order. However, Heraclitus rejects the concept of exclusion, with respect to the level of things, while he adopts a strong version of exclusion at the level of logos. Additionally, the philosophy of Hegel obviously surpasses such exclusion, in order to establish a comprehensive system excludes all other systems. Recently the post-postmodernist approach had struggled against the principle of exclusion, as manifested in the exclusionary nature of modernism, though both the modernist and postmodernist approaches eventually constitute an exclusionary relationship with each other.

In the philosophy of science, Carnap adopts the principle of tolerance within the sphere of science, according to which there is more than one adequate logic. Thus, everyone is at liberty to build up his/her own logic ,i.e. his own form of language, as he/she wishes. In so doing, he/she is required to state his/her methods clearly, namely his/her syntactic rules instead of philosophical arguments¹⁶. However, such syntactic rules are confined to scientific requirements Thus, such multiple co-existing

(Carnap,Rudolf.[1934] (2002) p51-52 ¹⁶

systems rely on a comprehensive scientific system, which gives them legitimacy as the only possible interpretation system, and in turn the power to exclude all other systems. As Carnap said that Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science –that is to say, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences¹⁷. In other words, the logic of sciences is the logical syntax of the language of science. Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science – that is to say, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences, for the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of the language of science

The revolutions in contemporary logic that rely on surpassing such exclusion represents the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle at the different levels of language. The para-consistent logic, could be considered as a revolution against classic logic. In classic logic from contradiction premises anything can be inferred. However not the case is in para-consistent logic, as this logic can treat contradicted information without lapsing into absurdity. This kind of system was unthinkable for centuries due to the absolute exclusion power. Nevertheless, the whole system adopts a higher kind of exclusion. all such systems of logic represent a different kind of Carnpian idea of syntactic rules which have to replace philosophical arguments or exclude all kind of metaphysics. Thus,

Ibid,xiii ¹⁷

the power of exclusion dominates all aspects of Western thought, and any kind of tolerance that has emerged within such thought was turned to higher kind of exclusion.

That any kind of tolerance or democracy remains confined to the system. Indeed all such attempts to soften the rigidity of exclusion is not step toward overcoming it so much as a subtle attempts to defend exclusion against the threats of history given throughout the progression of science or logic or social thought. These kinds of democracy or tolerance remain confined to the system. By such internal tolerance the logos disunites itself to conceal its exclusionary nature as excluding and excluded entity. By such deceptive disunity, namely, the transmission from subject to subjects or from the center –subject willingness to inter-subjects willingness and its related concepts, namely, inter-subject good and inter-subject truth, the Western intellect seems to surpass its exclusionary nature . However, it thus confirms and strengthens such an exclusionary nature to overcome the threats of history. Whatever it re-expresses its exclusionary power, which is founded upon the buried, concealed, mytho-social theory of being as in Carnapian philosophy, which adopts tolerant approach among different scientific systems while using the science as ideology to exclude metaphysics. Whatever in some cases such as intellectual thought being forced to express its exclusionary nature within a system (e.g., the most

influential institution after Second World War, Security Council which is founded upon veto power as the willingness of Victorious entities excludes the willingness of rest of the system).

In this sense, we can refer to Buddhist logic as non-systematic and non-valued logic. Thus Buddhist logic cannot be understood through any revolutionary progress non-classic Western logic, either many-valued logic or even para-consistent logic, as both of them rely upon subtle, developed versions of exclusion. Therefore, there is an insistent need to elaborate a non-Western reading for such logic upon which non-exclusionary alternative perspective for world, on political, social and even scientific level, could be established to pave the way to overcome humankind's major current crisis. As the exclusionary intellectual thought comes to an end, while it roots in western dominated culture to the extent that it is considered as most fundamental intuition. Thus, we should overcome such pseudo intuition that originally were founded upon some myth in order to overcome such major historical crisis in all levels.

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