

Community, Not Nation

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Abstract:

We applaud with honor the killer-nation for no legitimate reason. We disdain as kid-stuff the playfully personal community in critical dialogues, self-forgotten. The fact is precisely the reverse. We ought to cherish natural community as we leave killer-nation.

Key-words: killing, honor, loyalty, play, critical dialogue, child

Introduction

Having just passed through Memorial Day meditation, I remain torn with a deep sigh. On one hand, I admire with great gratitude our brave hero-soldiers having made their supreme life-sacrifices to keep our safety from invasions by foreign nations. On the other hand, however, my very admiration gives me great pangs to my soul. Since my admiration is familiar to us all, I will focus below on my heartfelt sorrows of which no single person in the world is aware.

Let me be specific and seriously concrete. I am so sad over sacrifices of young lives for being loyal to the nation, and these precious lives given up are extolled for such life-loyalties. My agonized question is of course, "For what?" And its answer tails off into silence. This sorrow is on the "nation." This sorrow leads us to considering its contrary, the happy "community." We must choose between the two.

Nation the idolatrous Leviathan

My sorrow undercuts below all conventional conflicts among nations in which people get caught and killed. My heartfelt sorrow is over "loyalty to the nation" itself. Such national loyalty is a great worship of an idol that has been openly applauded worldwide as virtuous. This idolatry began in very early days of biblical Samuel, as recorded in 1 Samuel 8. Thomas Hobbes described the nation quite well as Monster

"Leviathan"¹ and applauded it well as collectivism today worldwide.

But nationalism is far more lethal than simple collectivism that is indifferently harmless since the world began. This cult of golden calf Leviathan has been killing countless people for ages, both by national onslaughts and by "protecting innocent civilians from foreign national invasions" *celebrated* on Memorial Day as laudable loyalty to our nation dearly revered. All such lethal nationalism is so tragic for no rhyme or reason at all.

We are replacing our loyalty to the Creator God of love of people for loyalty to "our nation, right or wrong!" This loyalty-switch to nationalism is a straight violation of the First Commandment to worship "no other god" so brutal, as it is praised to the skies. Memorial Day is dedicated to an unabashed nation-wide celebration of this big fat idolatry that sacrifices people's lives.

National loyalty is a tragedy:

Nationalist idolatry is thoroughly tragic at least in five ways. It is entirely beyond our wits as to why we (1) *have* to switch our loyalty to God of love to enliven people into loyalty to nation-god that (2) kills people. Besides, (3) hardly any person in the world realizes that loyalty to the nation is (4) our idolatry that is (5) assuredly lethal but highly praised worldwide continually for ages, even

¹ On the primeval dragon monster "Leviathan," see *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Nashville, TN; Abingdon Press, 1962, 3:116.

today! Nationalism is a stunning tragedy that is totally beyond our sense and sensibility. No one has ever heard that the nation we applaud is actually Monster Leviathan that tyrannizes us all as the glorified people-killer!

The absolute sovereignty of the ultimate God for the Christians consists in loving people no matter what. Our love of neighbors—those closest to us—is a straight corollary to our absolute loyalty to this ultimate God of loving people in the First Commandment. On reflection, we would realize that both our ultimate concern with our ultimate God-of-love and our heartfelt caring for our neighbors are at least quite reasonable exchange between love of God² and love of ours.

In contrast, our deepest gratitude to our fallen hero-soldiers who made their supreme sacrifices of their lives for us—however noble and admirable—is actually a tragic whitewash of the tragic grave produced by our Leviathan-nation, our idolatry so senselessly lethal. No one in their solemn nobility of admiration of their great hero-soldiers would ever have realized how all this nobility is a sham nobility of lethal nation-idolatry, senselessly applauded since 1 Samuel 8. Now, our lethal idolatry of Leviathan-nation so senseless reminds us of Japan no less senselessly lethal in its senseless loyalty to the lords of whatever kind.

Japan reports with gusto many a private frivolous wrangling between the lords, to result in many deaths and spread to more deaths among their loyal subjects and servants. *All* such deaths of lords and subjects of collective loyalties are of the lowest moral quality. What a prodigious waste of precious lives to Monster Leviathan of collectivism! Japan is the land of a culture rich in brutal senselessness!

Japan is thus a saddest culture in which people rush to sacrifice their lives for struggles of lowest moral quality. All this while, however, in glorifying loyalty to our nation, we are not sure whether we ourselves deserve to lament over Japan's silly rashness to throw away precious lives at the drop of an invisible hat. All of us non-Japanese are in an identical boat as the Japanese are in. Ours is just differently named as silly "nationalism." Among us all, ultimate sacrifice of life is loudly and eagerly applauded. All this while, all of us totally ignore the *object* of our

loyalty, as to whether our revered object deserves our loyalty or not.

"Just kill yourself. Never mind what it is for which you kill yourself. Asking such an idle question shows you are a coward!" people keep urging us. Wow! This is not even the end justifying the means, which is already bad enough. This is the means "justifying" the means, to wit, the glowing means itself enthralling us, without any justification at all of whatever sort. This is blind mice blindly chasing their own tails. All these blind mice only praise *how* they chase the tails, proud of having free voting system, saying, "Look how gloriously, excitingly, and scintillatingly we chase our tails!" How can blind mice see the whole picture at all?

Such is loyalty to Leviathan-collectivism. How sad and silly such nationalism of all sorts is! This is how so enormously sad nation-idolatry is that we all praise to the sky today. Memorial Day is the silliest and saddest of "adoration of national nobility" so lethal so sham and shameful! And the tragedy here is that no one is even aware of this tragedy of how silly and lethal it is here—in this nation-idolatry! This shiny golden calf around which we dance is the shiny idol dancing our deaths unlimited, so honorable!

Of course, the nation is supposed to protect and defend its people's "inalienable rights" of freedom to self expression, freedom from fear, freedom to worship, to security, and the list goes on. These benefits are self-consciously listed so as to be defended and protected from outside invasions. Such description overflows with angry belligerence. These words are fighting words that cost lives. Loyalty to nation kills. Nation gives people death sentence. Nation is killer par excellence. An explanation is in order.

Conscious mentioning of "rights" to various benefits is constantly haunted by fear of their potential loss. Against their loss the nation must be prepared to fight to defend and protect such shiny treasures so conspicuously displayed. Nation is forever in a protesting and fighting pose, by conscripting its people as its glorious soldiers—to fight to die. Such human deaths are constantly extolled as honorable. Death is an honor! It is such a deathly contradiction concocted by the killer-nation!

Living in a nation, people are absolutely required to pay taxes and to be conscripted. Now even women are enlisted as soldiers, as glorious combatants to death. People in a nation must give

² Need we mention God's tragic self-sacrifice to execute his intense love of all of us human beings?

up money and give up lives. Taxes are as inevitable as death—in the nation. The nation is a universally revered grave redolent of pungent death-stench that is *the* “glory and honor” of the nation, and as such this deadly Monster Leviathan is honorably paraded with impressive national pomp and circumstance.

Wow! Such a joint of extreme contraries so horrendous! This horrifying pomp of the nation will appear, toward the beginning of Conclusion, as an enormous contrast with sheer forgetting of happiness in the community of Alice’s casual Wonderland absolutely irresistible. Let us repeat. This is simply because there everyone is so happy as to forget they are happy. True happiness really forgets happiness, as the belt that fits forgets the waist. Everything vanishes in casual silence of being oneself, in sheer happiness of “I am what I am” in no need to claim.

The community so happy and self-forgetfully enlivening so casual is an absolute contrary to the nation so noisily glorified, with death-stench all pervading. Now it is time to visit the happy community so delightful where all things vanish. We never knew that vanishing can be the ultimate ecstasy of sheer joyful happiness. We must delve into such “non-existent” community so happy that no one has ever noticed!

Happy community

“But what is it that makes collectivism a killer?” Blind obedience makes collectivism lethal. Blind obedience is obeying without understanding. Understanding is an antidote to killing “innocent people” who spell ignorance. Now, understanding arises out of asking questions about specific commands. Asking back before obeying stops blind obedience. “Asking” begins talking back and forth, and “dialogues” take place. Asking-back spells criticism. Critical dialogue is extremely crucial to being human, to come out of a machine of blind obedience to compose Monster Leviathan quite lethal.

“How can we ask questions?” We ask by asking questions to begin critical dialogues. Reading books and articles, and writing stuff—essays, books—back to what has been read would be one form of engaging in dialogues mutually critical. Criticism and dialogue are synonymous. Criticizing does dialoguing as mutually dialoguing mutually criticizes. Such intimate mutuality composes authentic humanity jumping alive—as truly human. Again, dialogical mutuality is

synonymous with authentic humanity. Both inter-implicate.

Love incarnate:

Human community is the unconditional Love incarnate. It is the ultimate First Commandment concretized before our eyes. Here, first of all, the other in person is cherished and their ideas are respected. And then, as protest is patriotic, so honest criticism is true love. Socratic midwifery lovingly gives birth to a new person by critical asking, and continuing stubbornly to ask, in relentless dialogues.

Thirdly, all this dialogical critique expresses struggling effort to understand the other person, as we help that beloved person to come to realize their own true position. This help is indispensable as a matter of life or death. Bypassing this crucial obligation of midwifery assistance has cost Socrates’ life, as impressively demonstrated in his *Apology* that is quite brilliant, chilly, and objective.

Now, looking back we realize that the above three features—cherishing the other, critical dialogues, and understanding the other—compose the humane community. These three are essential and indispensable ingredients of the community that is an alternative to Monster Leviathan-nation. These three features are interrelated. Having one involves having the other two, to constitute humane community. Being robbed of them plunges us into tyrannical “nation” absolutely demanding our total loyalty to death, as is typical of any idolatry that ends in death. Death here is due to sluggish lack of stimulation in three ways as above described.

Muddled persons:

“But we do have muddled persons who refuse to move forward. They keep thinking of good nations as good and bad ones as bad. They never want to think of *all* nations, good and bad, as all idolatrous. What can we do with them?”

Now, criticism is all-powerful all-invincible, for criticizing criticism joins criticism. And so, the dialogue that inter-criticizes is all-victorious. Attacking dialogue joins dialogue. Such “joining” is a sort of collectivism other than moronic Leviathan of lethal nationalism. The dialoguing asking collectivism is an enlivening community all too human. Critical dialoguing continuous builds up solid human community quite

invincible, in need of no heroic soldiers ignorantly sacrificing their lives.

Interestingly, if someone is curious enough to ask—asking enlivens!—why we must execute enlivening, not killing, two answers can be given that are interrelated. One, killing lasts just for a while and stops forever, while enlivening lasts alive forever. Two, enlivening enlightens by asking-dialogue, and so, enlivening and dialoguing mutually implicate and promote. Inter-critical dialogues enliven each of us.

First, however ghastly, fascinating, and sensational it is, killing people by terrorists lasts only for a while and then stops forever. All wars and battles are aroused with hooplas of shouting threats, and last at most for some decades, and die away without a trace. Killings come and go. Killing has no patience. In contrast, enlivening activities last forever alive. Confucius, Socrates, Buddha, and Jesus enliven us. These enlivening sages so ancient continue to be alive today. They have been alive for centuries till today. and there is no sign as to their ceasing to be alive any day at all. Enlivening lasts forever as it continues to spread to be welcomed by each of us at each period of history.

Secondly, enlivening is inextricably involved with enlightening. Those sages mentioned above, Confucius, Socrates, Buddha, and Jesus, are all jumping alive each “today” while they continue to enlighten each of us, as long as we pay hearty attention to each of them. They enliven us as they enlighten us. “How do they enlighten us?” Interestingly, we must pull in here criticism and dialogue. As criticism is invincible to last forever, so dialogues that actualize criticisms last forever day and night.

Inter-critical dialogues continue enlivening each of us. No wonder, critical dialogues continue to sprout anywhere any time to compose the enlivening community. Such community effectively counters killing that features “nations” ever at war with one another. We now understand why and how nations come and go. All so impressive Roman Empire and Assyria and Babylonia are nowhere today. All this while, various human communities are silently spouting up and continuing to spread in any culture throughout any history.

These critical dialogues as all-powerful everlasting can be executed, with patient flexuous skills, to *ask* to begin dialogue with the muddled mentality. This was what Socrates tirelessly did

as he roamed around the market place. Skills are needed to ask relevantly stimulating questions to induce lively thinking out of sluggish muddled mentality. It takes skillful patience to continue trying critical asking to induce answering. When answers do come out, it is the precious moment. It is the crucial first step toward enlightenment. Such enlightenment is the success of Socratic midwifery that helps the birth of humanity jumping alive as authentically human.

At the very least, our cherishing respect of the muddled persons would induce them to gladly trust what we tell them in loving care, never in authority. We now understand each other in personal terms, and such personal understanding is the most important understanding we can have. Even Socratic midwifery implicates it. Dialogue is after all dialogue between persons.

Emotional understanding and intellectual understanding come out of personal understanding and go back home to it. And perhaps personal understanding is the most elusive and most difficult to attain as it is the most important. Everything in life comes out of the person and go back home to the person. Once understanding of the person is obtained, nothing can shake us loose from it. People simply flock to us in complete trust, and we in turn unconditionally cherish them and care for them each. Personal understanding is achieved by honest dialogue that maintains it.

Surprisingly, muddled minds are not confined to persons of low IQs. Clever people can be shockingly muddled. We overhear that Einstein who is a close friend of Freud personally went twice to the Nobel Prize committee to specifically propose to cease awarding the Prize to Freud. His reason was quite simple. “Psychology” is not science.³ Einstein clearly lets the public know that only mathematics is “science” truly so called, and nothing else is.

Wow! His academic myopia is displayed here all too clearly and tragically. With all his well-known sharp cleverness, Einstein dares to claim that only mathematics is science! He is blinded by his brilliance in one branch of science to confine all “science” to this *branch* of science alone. If this is not myopia, nothing is. To cure his muddled myopia so otherwise sharp, the identical almighty dialogue can be applied.

³ Walter Isaacson, *Einstein*, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2007, p. 656 (index on “Freud”). Thomas Levenson, *Einstein in Berlin*, NY: Bantam, 2003, p. 322.

Skillful and critical dialogue with patient concerns is a gentle panacea to cure *all* muddled minds, clever ones as well as not-so clever ones.

All this critical dialoguing takes lively intellect to engage. Away from ignorance, we continue to criticize one another, to chase out stolid muddled mentality. Such mutuality of inter-criticizing dialogue is attended with a basic requirement. It is *respect* of one another to agree to freely disagree. Reverence for life is an effective antidote to ignorance of ignoble “obedience without understanding” that leads to killing persons. Reverence of one another is an enlivening agent of enlightening enlivening community.

Violence:

“But how can the gentle community deal with violence so bloody and lethal?” Well, the same almighty dialogue that composes the community can persuade people out of violence. Let me explain. We all live for joy. All violence is perpetrated to attain joy, but such sadistic joy lasts only briefly. National protection from violence is done by opposing violence with violence, to produce deaths among victors and victims. That is how the sad Memorial Day is instituted. Fighting “the war to end all wars” only prolongs wars to prolong violence. “Just war” to punish unjust nations is a whitewash on killing people *we* label “bad.”

Instead, we must dialogically persuade people out of violence. Such persuasion could go as follow. Violence hurts others by robbing them of treasures to hoard what we desire, in winning over others. We could gently insist that we can have no fun in continuing to *hurt* people. And it is more fun to care for people than to hurt people. *Robbing* people of what we desire robs us all of shared joys so many in exchange for “my joy alone,” to change “many joys” for “my joy alone.” It is silly. *Hoarding* what I desire will rot it away. Power, money, talents, and other stuff that I desire must flow around and shared to be real treasures that are “water” in need of flowing around, lest it rots.

Winning is no fun in brutal zero-sum competition where I win because you lose, for you the loser will come back to make me lose. Instead, we must have much fun in playing a win-win game

where I win because you win.⁴ This win-win game is constantly practiced today by sharing need and satisfaction in commerce. You are given my bread you need, and I get your money I need for the bread I make for you. Such mutual winning has no room for violence of whatever sort. Such is what almighty dialogues practice to consolidate human community, where violence is naturally melted away.

Fatigue:

“We often meet a person so tired out that she does not even talk. What can we do to her?” Fatigued persons have been ravaged by all sorts of “violence” of the surrounding—into silence. What they need is to just stay out of all active stimulations. We must give them quietude. We can soothe them with the music they love, to stretch themselves in it.

We can give them soft drink, delicious foods—ask them what they want now. We can of course stretch under them a soft quiet bed on which they can sleep “like a baby.” We watch them as their Mom watching them her babies. As their mother, we watch them intently to *learn* what they need. But they are too tired to reach out to get these things that they need. Having leaned what they need, we can softly supply them to them.

In such a way as this, we “mother” the tired persons back up. First, we revere them as our teachers. We observe them teaching us what they need, often by wordless patterns of their behavior. And then, in responsive silence, we softly supply what they need. Silence here is an effective dialogue going back and forth between their self-restoration and our joy of satisfying their life-essentials. With tired persons, we do silence-dialogues. Our mutual silence talks them into resumption of their days humming alive. Seeing them humming, we smile back in antiphony humming back our shared music of life. Such is the human community caring for persons tired out.

Love incarnate again:

The humane community is actually an actualization of our absolute loyalty to our Ultimate Divine that is Ultimate Love. Astounding is how the New Testament—new love-contract—begins. This new contract begins

⁴ See Kuang-ming Wu, “Win-Win Managing,” *Sociology Mind*, forthcoming.

with God of love as a *baby* entirely helpless, entrusted to our human parental care. We embrace him, burp him, wash him, feed him, and pat him gently to sleep, and he sleeps always to grow up. This all-embracing care is “love” that nurtures this baby to grow up without daunted fear.

This parental care is our unconditional obedience to the First Commandment, to worship our Love-God alone without any other gods. Incarnation of this obedience to the First Commandment of Ultimate Love, and no other god, is the launch-out of humane community where each of us all is revered, baby-cherished, and stimulated by constructive inter-criticisms. Critical dialogues thrive here to enlighten and enliven each of us into authentic humanity. Such is our parental care one of another. The First Commandment of parental love gives birth to enlivening humane community.

Muddled persons again:

What is contrary to stimulation alive is a person who is a petrified fossil now turned a zombie. He does move, responds, and speaks, but I am not sure if he means what he does or not. I was so shocked at finding him a moving corpse, a zombie-rambler. At that moment I have lost my *friend*. Nothing is more devastating than loss of friendship. My “friend” is dead, yet he who used to be my friend is quite alive having just celebrated his birthday, and so I cannot attend his funeral to close off my communication with him.

“We lose our friends when we cease to be friends, not when they die. . . . Death is no separation compared with that which takes place when we cease to have confidence in one with whom we have walked in confidence, when we cease to love one whom we had loved, when we love him no more. When we look for him and cannot find him, how completely is he departed!”⁵ My loss has no closure because he is still physically alive. Friendship turns deathless precisely when it is lost. All this is so sad. From now on, I am his empty yes-man, never honestly and critically chiming in with him as my friend. Friendship is such paradise, and losing it is such torture of sheer pain.

These fossil-people prance around to fill the region of the dead far outside human community. They move around feeling and talking, totally

⁵ These heartfelt words, nowhere to be found in China, are from Henry D. Thoreau, *I to Myself*, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 44. He must have personally experienced such loss himself.

incapable of being stimulated into sensibility jumping alive as human. They roam-around to sprinkle sheer chill into my living days. I am chilled into a non-human, as dead as they, mere zombies. They pervade me with shivering chill of zombies in the eternal winter freezing into fossils whatever is encountered. Human warmth of the community is absolutely far. In fact, it is so far away that no one can even hail at it at a distance.

Human community again:

“What then is *human* community, then?” Such community is all too spontaneously applauded with rumbling spring-thunders by Lao Tzu, as he concludes his terse *Tao Te Ching*. He mumbles in Chapter 80 that there is “a tiny region and a few people. Let them have utensils, they do not use them. Taking death seriously, they go not far. Let them have boats and carriages, they never ride them. Having armies and weapons, they never display them Delighted in meals, beautified in clothing, they just live where they just live. Hearing dogs bark, overhearing cocks crow, people till they die never go out of border to visit.” O, how blandly he describes the idyllic realm not bland!

This realm is secluded far away hidden unnoticed, immune from either enemies or curious visitors, for it has nothing worth robbing or looking. Here people are so bland, poor, and placid as to be left alone to live to die, happily ever after. Here is idyllic “Cherry Blossom Spring” that has no cherry, no spring, and much less blossom of any sort. People just dwell here so uncouth as to be so nonchalant. They are so happy that the word “happy” does not apply to them.

They are children all unkempt and soiled. They are always jumping alive. They are so loving of Granny so much that they could not care less about Granny’s wrinkled smiles. They are so happy beyond being happy and so alive beyond being alive, ever quarreling and mutually criticizing, as they forever laughing one with another. We call such casual happy togetherness “human community” mutually enlivening that continues to mutually enlighten, happily ever after. *What* composes the community is also *how* this community is thrived. It is loving dialogue in mutual respect inter-cherishing that composes and maintains vibrantly this human community. #The so-called “democracy”:

This inter-enlivening community we usually call “democracy.” Democracy concocts no lethal

“nation.” Instead, democracy is people-power to rule together with mutual respect, as it was supposedly to have taken place in small “polis” of ancient Greece. There, Socrates so poverty-stricken rambled around just *asking* common folks questions of which people were not even aware. Such is a democratic community without power to command, without authority to force obedience, and without money to buy favor of whatever sort. Such *lack* of insidious power, authority, and money spells the popular community where simple people are so happy together.

Sadly, the so-called democratic society in USA today is quite otherwise. The “democratic party” ought to assiduously educate the people out of money-obsession toward real people-power. Instead, claiming that politics and money do not mix, the Democratic Party today keeps requesting donations of money to out-elect Republican officials. In this way, Democratic Party joins Republican Party as parties of money-crazy (plutocracy), not people-crazy (democracy). Plutocracy is the power of the Leviathan that squeezes people to death. Lethal nationalism is thriving here, not human community where everyone is poor yet quite free and inter-critical inter-cherishing.

Here in this humane community free exchanges of questioning and answering thrive on without cost, to stimulate people into their common days each humanly alive. Lively human community consists in such lively and inter-respectful criticisms back and forth. In this critical dialogue, we all inspire—without even aware of stimulating—each person into lively humanity, as each person is cherished as authentically human. No higher humanity can be cherished than humanity itself so alive and intelligent. Still, we hear no self-conscious praise here. Every one of us is just oneself cherishing every other person as person as one is oneself. Nothing is the matter as everything silently matters.

Fit forgets:

When everything matters, everything is forgotten. “Forgetting” so casual is quite crucial. Chuang Tzu the ancient bum in China casually declared 19/63-64, “Forgetting the foot is the fit of the shoe. Forgetting the waist is the fit of the belt,” and then he continued, “Forgetting right-wrong is the fit of heart-mind. No inner change, no outer following, is the fit of times. Beginning at the fit

without no-fit is the fit that forgets the fit.”⁶ Forgetting things shows things fitting.

And the converse also holds. When we forget the fit of any thing fitting, we ourselves appear so casually fit always, self-forgotten. “I am fit” of course means “I’m healthy” so casual, self-forgotten. Forgotten fit—so healthy fit as to forget healthy fit everywhere—describes how healthy Alice is, healthy and fit enough to afford to casually ramble around in her casual Wonderland.

Alice has no Wonderland, for she herself *is* Wonderland. Actually it is so wonderful that Alice never thinks it wonderful at all. Real wonderment is forgotten wonder. True wonder has no wonderment. Idle noises praising the “noble nation” simply expose themselves as a sham, displaying “nation” as worse than nothing, as just a lethal Monster Leviathan.

All this is why Alice can afford to casually wander in this Wonderland, never paying attention to how wonderful this land is. “What? What is so wonderful? Where is it?” She would look around in wonder. What an irony! No wonder is real wonder, while real wonder simply wonders at where the wonder is. This irony replays the irony of oneself that is the real self to one yet invisible to one. One’s self does not exist to oneself. Alice is Wonderland, and so Wonderland does not exist to Alice.

Now, non-existence to non-existence, here in non-existent Wonderland, there is no room for monster Leviathan where blind obedience to death is unconditionally enjoined to stay as blindly obedient, to rot everyone to death. Monster nation deadens us all in our blind loyalty, into ceasing to exist. All this while, democratic community enlivens each of us.

All of us here turn into children who are so happy as to forget how happy they are. Their happiness is no-happiness. They—we all—just roam around casually accompanying Mr. Frog to scold the Queen of playing cards that children do not even understand. Everyone is so happy as to *forget* “happiness.” What a contrast this casual and playful community is with killer-nation solemnly praised to the sky!

⁶ See *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, tr. Burton Watson, NY: Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 106-107. *Chuang-tzu*, tr. A. C. Graham, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p. 138. *Wandering on the Way*, tr. Victor H. Mair, NY: Bantam Books, 1994, p. 184. Mair is best. Graham is worst. I packed Mair.

Kid-stuff:

Now here is an important reminder. We proud adults tend to be so proud as to disdain playful community as a kid-stuff, unworthy of serious consideration. Adult pride tends to overlook things important staring at us in silence. We never realize how much *fun* any kid-stuff is, and how entirely we live for fun. No fun, no life. Fun is the totality of life. Fun is the essence of life. No wonder, the kid is always jumping alive, simply because all-kid is all fun.

In addition, importantly, we forget that we ourselves are forever all-*kid* at heart, however old, “mature,” and even senile we grow up. One look at Granny’s wrinkled smile is enough to convince us of this important fact, to wit, all of us are all-kids, nothing else. After all, thirdly, being the kid is what sustains us *alive* as kids, on and on. No one dislikes being alive as kid, as everyone sleeps “like a baby” each night, to refresh ourselves as a kid, cleaned and refreshed by Granny constantly being splashed all over by kids so noisy, devil may care.

This point can never be stressed enough, that life is kid. We die without such kid-heart. Those sneaky and grabby adults appear “alive” but are actually dead. They are zombies already dead but keep being pulled string by greed so dark, as greed is itself moving dead. These dead people moving are a dark pit absolutely no fun. In sharp contrast, kid, fun, and life are three in one, one as three. Taking to one takes to the other two. We are inherently kids, so we are inherently kid-alive in kid-*fun*. We are never zombies moving dead. Nation in fact is the place of zombies killed many times over. These zombies alive offer their loyalty to nation to be killed and to extol loyal-deaths.

Death is no fun, and so killing is no fun. This is why no kid kills. Only adults kill, as only adults organize nations to kill. We do not know why only adults engage such no-fun killing. In contrast, it is fun playing jumping alive, as all kids do. Nations kill, while community plays. We had better play community to have kid-fun. Nations kill with dead-set rules and regulations. Community plays as kids and plays kids.

Fourth, kid-community plays with kid-*imagination*s. Kid-imagination make kids grow. Imaginative plays give birth to new inventions to push the society ahead. Imagination play as kids to make progress so much fun, as kids imagine constantly to grow, constantly, so much fun.

Kids, play, fun, imagination, growth and progress—they all involve one another. Living one lives all others, all alive. Again, imagination, alive, and growing progress are inter-involved, three in one, one as three so much alive.

In all this, there appears a stark contrast between life and death. We must repeat. Only adults kill. Only kids play. No adult nation plays; it only kills. No kid kills. Kid-community plays, never kills but grows as kids. Progress is growth. All kids grow as they play so much fun, as all kids grow up so much fun. Kids grow by playing imagined fantasies to grow—to make progress. Kids play their imaginations. Adults play their game called “critical dialogues.”

Make no mistake about this all-important fact. We are all kids. “Yaian” is lions. “Yamanol” is animals. “Doggie” is giraffes in the zoo so exciting. “Fafa” is flowers. “Filala” is philosopher. “Pi(nasal)-na-na” is piano. “Baby” is other kids. And the list goes on of such words irresistible. These joyous words so extremely powerful are landmines. When we step on them—bump into them—we are exploded. We are now caught up into kids, being exploded into kid-future ever jumping alive, forever giggling.

Explosions make an exciting kid-progress onward never ceasing, as kids never cease to grow. Kids guide us adults ahead. All music, Bach’s, Beethoven’s, or Bartok’s, is to be kid-understood to be real music alive. Music is *our* primal kid-word. All kid-words come alive only by kid’s Mom who understands them, and understanding-them bespeaks dialogue so critical and personally concerned. Kids, words, music, and future are four in one kid, thanks to pan-dialogues critical and loving.

And so, this is the fifth feature of “kid-stuff” so much fun so much alive. It is that the kid-community plays critical *dialogues* to grow to make progress. Growing kid-progress is fun. Kid-stuff is fun, fun is life, we are kids, kids are life, imagination plays to grow, and one way to play life is critical dialogue. Such exciting description portrays how much fun and how much alive “kid-stuff” is, to constitute the community that is Alice’s Wonderland so happy everywhere that happiness is nowhere. Everything is casually in critical dialogue in Socratic midwifery giving birth to new kids new persons.

Music:

Have we noticed how music jumps kids alive? Kids throb music in hopping rhythm, as they sing songs they themselves have made, absolutely wobbly. That is how all nursery rhymes came about. Music skips, hops, and jumps kids. Kids are made of music to make music, for nothing except for the joy of sheer kid-life. Kids are alive. Kids define life, and the life of kids keeps singing music alive. Kids are alive, singing music alive to sing life raw. Nothing is more alive than the music of kids shouting aloud constantly to turn their noises into rhyming songs so tuneless so attractive, and so enthralling without rhyme or reason.

Violence and caring:

The reason is unknown on why violence erupts in the first place. We know only how violence *ends* sooner than later. The reason is simply that killing people soon exhausts people to kill. This is why violence must start all over from scratch again and again. It is just that we do not know why people love to kill people, and so people have to begin killing people from scratch, by organizing the Leviathan-nations again to kill people gloriously and honorably.

This fact is therefore closely related to repeated eruptions of brutal nations. Assyria, Babylonia, and soon after the glorious Roman Empire, and so on, came and went as these devastating killer-monsters arose only to die away, and new butchery had to start all over again. China's history repeats such series of dynastic violence unceasing, so lethal and so extensive—only to die away, never everlasting, while shouting and bragging about dynastic eternity each time the universal butchery arrives. Exhausting people to kill exhausts killing, and the nation collapses as its noisily glorious lordship over killing vanishes with the no less noisy and bloody demise of each national dynasty.

In total and conspicuous contrast, caring kindness often motherly lasts discreetly, quietly, tirelessly, continuing day after day. The reason is quite heart-moving. Caring renders persons alive. Rendering-alive is a chain reaction of grateful reciprocity. Caring has no dynasty so proud so vociferous. Caring is nameless, ever going on each silent today again and again. Such caring lasts forever imperceptible incorruptible, and in silence. Caring is quite plain and ordinary. Caring is no hero at all to be extolled. Instead,

caring makes heroes from behind them and claps hands from behind.

Life is noble silence. No mother shows off her daily care. Care is precious, and what is noble and precious is hidden, tucked away in a corner from public view. Care is a midwife ever standing *beside* maternal care, smiling in silence. Midwife makes us feel warm as she silently supplies for our needs. Midwife supports us in quiet silence, totally away from limelight. Such hidden care is so precious so indispensable. This is why caring beside us lasts as long as we are alive, all thanks to her care.

Washing your feet, not (just) your hands, whoever “you” are, is a dirty job that cleans you all over from below. Washing your feet supports you, to wit, to sub-port you, to *carry* (-port) you onward from *below* (sub-) you. This fact describes how powerful midwifery is, in silent feet-washing. Nothing warms more of you from the bottom of your heart and soul. Feet-washing, dirty as it is, lasts forever, because your feet get dirty so often so soon every single day, and you must be washed constantly to be alive. Constancy bespeaks eternity here.

The contrast:

The nation-community contrast is a matter of death so awesome. The nation proudly and honorably kills people from above. The community constantly washes our feet from below. The nation keeps talking and touting about itself. All this while, the community silently stoops down to wash our feet. The nation soon vanishes and has to be rebuilt noisily. The community lasts forever in complete silence. Noisy killers exist side by side with silent caretakers.

We do flock to the killer-nation and perish honorably. We naturally rally to the community and are cleansed up from our feet below, to come alive into ourselves. Coming home to ourselves has no fanfare at all. Likewise, coming home to the community is nothing honorable. Coming back home to our community is just the thing to do, to come back home alive into ourselves. A midwife washes our feet to help birthing us, and gets no credits for our birth. But birthing must rely on the midwife to take place. Midwifery is the essence of the community that brings forth our births to keep us birthing, birthing, without ceasing, every single day.

Now, here is one more interesting and important point proposed by my son John. This entire contrast can be seen in terms of “border”! The nation is always built with “border” around it, to implicate defense, conflict, and lethal fight! “Borderless” means the community that extends wide open hands to accept to inter-care. Jesus’ community welcomes anyone who cares to come in and to be cared for.

This is holiness that includes us all without exception and totally without border at all. And then here comes exclusive holiness to border itself off as “holy” from anything not holy. This exclusive holiness, bordered itself off, inevitably clashes with inclusive one, as seen in the self-bordered Pharisees fighting borderless Jesus, even to death! “Who died in the end” is another important question with deep implications, to be seen soon.

Two sorts of bordering can be seen here in this fight that turned ugly and lethal. One is the pharisaic bordering that keeps jealously excluding the Pharisee-separatists themselves from those not-holy. Another is the bordered people clashing with the borderless people. The *clash* here shows bordering at work belligerently defending the border. Impressively, Jesus of borderless holiness resolutely includes all to the bitterest end—even to die on the cross assigned by exclusive holiness, self-bordered by the separatist-Pharisees.

This radical conflict—to end in inclusive holiness accepting and including death—is called the Good News of Christianity. This life-and-death drama dramatically presents the contrast between the nation and the community. Meanwhile, occasional readings, casual and random, of Taoism, the Bible, and others, all so elusive, will wham us with delightful kid-insights. And then, we will be refreshed through difficult days wandering between the nation and the community.

Conclusion

It is thus that this paper has brought out to our attention two sorts of society otherwise totally unnoticed in this world of sociality ubiquitous and various. These two societies are the *nation* the noisy killer par excellence, on one hand, and the *community* casual and quiet that playfully enlivens. For reasons unknown to us all, people just flock to the lethal nation with utmost accolades so various and complex.

Even astoundingly many musical compositions are harped on the nation, continually extolling the sky-high glories of this noble nation to be loyal to

at all cost—to death. In sheer contrast, the calm community is all unnoticed and bypassed, in need of being brought out by this paper. Or else, even after brought out to be noticed, such community so playful is looked down upon with snobbish adult-disdain that it is a childish fantasy, undeserving of serious consideration. Only deadly nation is worthy of adult consideration and praise!

All this while, those children keep casually rambling around in their Wonderland-community to be playfully enlivened. These children on their part could not care less about the adult-noises of praises of *their* killer-nation. Adult praises are too complex and too difficult for children to understand, anyway. Actually, complexity is usually noisy nonsense, and children in their innocence are astute enough to see national-nonsense through its praises so complex and so variously difficult to understand.

Cacophonous touting of “something so noble and admirable” can display a real nothing. Something real can show itself in casual silence, with a roadside flower tiny and nameless. Silence can display a nothing. Silence can also impregnate actuality full and substantial. Just standing, kids show how ready giggles and skipping are to jump out. Just standing, an old man shows how ready anytime he is to sit down, if not to lie down to take a rest.

Just walking down the street, folks under dictatorial regime ooze tensed atmosphere, while people in casual community have the gait of being relaxed and at home in themselves. Thus, nothing for nothing, silence for silence, various modes of sociality appear on the horizon to capture our attention and spread a specific feeling of the milieu. Here, sociality for sociality, all of us are starkly confronted with two sorts of sociality as this paper has been showing.

On one hand, complexly lethal nationalism, so variously applauded, demands our total loyalty to death, no ifs or buts. On the other hand, discreetly simple community of children under no less discreet parental care appears spontaneously. These children gather together and wander all over playfully. They casually show themselves to draw Granny’s wrinkled smiles, while these children could not care less about Granny or no-Granny watching them.

These children just casually trade their precious pebbles casually strewn around them, and then leave these pebbles back on the ground to let them

lie around them, forever. All this while, adults buy and sell *their* precious stones with long serious faces and hide them as their keepsakes, which then get stolen sometimes. “Did your stones get stolen?” children would ask with incredulity! No less incredulously, adults would say, “O, well, kids don’t understand!” Wow! Who does not understand whom? Such is a *critical* dialogue between the child and the adult.

Now, these two natural scenes of sociality portray humanity as social, nakedly and essentially. No single human person can escape such sociality so awesome. Let us consider them one by one. To begin with, no one is an island, and so no one is living a loner Robinson Crusoe. Each of us was born and raised socially to grow and live in a society. We are innately social, constantly living in society from day to day since we were born.

As we live our days, we have no choice but to choose between at least two basic sorts of society, nation and community. Either sociality is our basic mode of attitude to live our days, either blind unthinking loyalty (to death) or thinking protesting in tender mutual concerns (to life). Let us consider cold absolute nation first, and then warm flexuous community.

One society is an indifferent absolute *nation*. Nation is an organized pack of money-rule (plutocracy), power-rule (dictatorship), and contrivance-rule (technocracy). This organized nation demands absolute blind loyalty to death always, no ifs or buts. The nation is always clad in glowing pomp and circumstance of “of the people, for the people, and by the people.” Taiwan calls itself “People’s Nation 民國.” Tyrannical China is the proud “People’s Republic of China, the nation of harmonious people 人民共和国.” “People” in these slogans actually means iron-clad clamping down of all people under the nation that is *the* absolute monarch constantly demanding obedience to death.

Another totally different sort of society is *community* humanly concerned. Here each person is revered and cherished as the *person* with integrity and dignity all its own. Here people keep asking, challenging, and criticizing one another in dialogues to stimulate one another—to turn each person alive as truly human. It is thus that nation enslaves and kills people, with glorious applauds so noisy, while community enlightens and enlivens, constantly and blandly, all in silence as if nothing is the matter.

Set side by side, both sorts of sociality stare at us in the face point blank, demanding us to choose between them. We are caught in the crosscurrents of two sorts of sociality. In their midst of turbulence, we can never shirk their demand to choose. Not to choose but just to follow what goes on is already to choose one way. It is the way of blind loyalty to death.

And so, we repeat this life-and-death choice between the crucial facts contrasted to starkly exhibit to confront us each day. Spontaneous mass-killing monster, Leviathan-nation, arises in all its solemn glories of national pomp and circumstance. All this while, Socrates freely rambles in casual people-reverence of critical dialogues, constantly asking and stimulating to enliven each of us. We must choose between lethal nationalism and enlivening community happily inter-critical and dialogical among common folks into becoming truly human.

Do you hear kids romping and shouting music, devil may care, even in abstruse and hard-to-listen Bela Bartok’s “Sonatas for Violin and Piano”?⁷ Bartok has no tune but O, how jumping alive as kid his sonatas are! Kids rhyme with Bartok! Music must be kid-understood to sing naughty kids who shout so noisily to turn their noises into music of their own, totally tuneless and wobbly.

They could not care less about Mom shee-ing to try to quiet them, for their baby sister is sleeping. “O he sleep away!” They shout and rush out. They shout music and they run dancing music, anywhere any time, as they are always rushing *out*. Their inside always overflows outside! That is why they are so alive, ever ready to shout out to laugh aloud. They never whisper or pick their steps. Even their silence is alive. This is why they keep wrinkled Granny constantly in wrinkled smiles. She can never get over these kids so sweat soiled, so chocolate messy, and so impossibly alive! *They* keep shouting music so loud and alive as to keep Granny alive, ever.

Kids and music are one-alive. Music is kids who keep singing onward. Their random shouting and random running, all so full, somehow sing sonorously so fully. “No kids” tells of no music singing and dancing alive. “No music” shows no kid around jumping and shouting, for they are asleep with their baby sister. Again, music and kids are one-alive. “Kids singing, dancing, and

⁷ Bartok: Sonates pour Violon et Piano, Yehudi Menuhin, Jeremy Menuhin, *Disques Ados*.

jumping music all so naughty so alive” compose their Wonderland, their irresistible community of Alice running around. The community is always kid-alive so musical, or else there is no community, ever.

All these features are so much *fun*, hopping kid-alive, ever. We, all of us, had better leave any adult-nation that kills while being abjectly applauded, and follow kids to play in their kid-community so casual so alive, dancing with Mr. Frog. The choice is starkly kid-clear—to join adult-nation to kill one another, or else hop with Alice into the community so kid-alive, to play the game of critical dialogues to inter-enliven, to win-win you with me together, ha-ha-ing in growing progress all the way unlimited. This whole matter is stupendously life-indispensable, but all such community actually happens all so naturally and all so casually, as if nothing is the matter.

All hearty dialogues weave back and forth throughout people mutually beloved, between kids and adults, between adults and adults, and the community is born so delightful, cordial, and so casual. All this takes place in spontaneous whiffs of neighborliness. Joes and Janes meet often and

often chat to reciprocally correct one another, and then leave one another, leaving them alone. All this while, all kids jumping alive are hugged and hugged around, all so messy all so precious.

Such a natural community of personal caring is amazingly intimate, strong, and tightly knit together. Mind you. In addition, personal care is hidden from anyone’s view. Care is performed casually and constantly, as if nothing is the matter. Such silent caring is all that composes the community, absolutely hidden from public view. All this while, honorable applauds continue to erupt among national monuments, paraded and celebrated in ostentatious public orations during Memorial Day thanksgiving.

Noisy applauds in the city halls throughout the nation always hide national death-stench that pervades all over. All this while, caring as parents and as intimate friends are always performed in sheer silence. Silence is gold here so solid. Again, it would be sheer insanity if anyone dares to *refuse* to leave killer-nations and rush with kids to throw oneself into this caring community so topsy-turvy and so precious, and so casual, for whatever reason no one would even care to cite.