

## INTRODUCTION: A REAPPLICATION OF ACADEMIC PLURALISM AND SCHOLARLY FREETHOUGHT

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Since its inauguration in 2011, *Journal of East-West Thought (JET)* has published 90 articles and book reviews from a wide range of celebrated scholars and authors throughout the world. *JET* is dedicated to advancing constructive, creative, critical, theoretical and forward-looking thoughts and ideas concerning East-West studies. It aims to provide a forum for the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global and philosophical examination of all issues within this arena. Intellectual pluralism, multicultural pluralism and also academic methodological pluralism are fundamental principles embraced by *Journal of East-West Thought*. *JET* welcomes diverse theories and methods, and encourages dialogue on various, ethical, aesthetical and methodological issues. Its purview includes problems and themes from the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and other fields, including economics, political science, law, business, engineering, and the arts. *JET* aims to combine Western and non-Western perspectives in order to construct an integrative and cosmopolitan perspective in order to benefit an international community of educators.

In the final analysis, academic pluralism should be intellectual, comprehensive, and reasonable, as John Rawls' claim: "A modern democratic society is characterized not simply by a pluralism of comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines but by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines. No one of these doctrines is affirmed by citizens generally. Nor should one expect that in the foreseeable future one of them, or some other reasonable doctrine, will ever be affirmed by all, or nearly all, citizens. Political liberalism assumes that, for political purposes, a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines is the normal result of the exercise of human reason within the framework of the free institutions of a constitutional democratic regime. Political liberalism also supposes that a reasonable comprehensive doctrine does not reject the essentials of a democratic regime" (*Political Liberalism*, xvi). For Rawls, reasonable pluralism is the natural "outcome of the free exercise of human reason under conditions of liberty" (*Ibid*, 144). For this reason, any religious, moral, philosophical, and socio-political discussions should be plural and tolerable. We encourage our authors to contribute their scholarly research from diverse cultural and disciplinary backgrounds.

We strongly oppose any form of "academic hegemony". We support the free expression of academic points of view, as well as encourage the freedom to apply various research methods. In a sense, the core principle of *JET* is trying to provide more plentiful, powerful, justified, and profound "thoughts" with a positive human connotation of social development, rather than confining dogmas and mediocre sermons. More importantly, in his article in the current issue of *JET*, Williams L. McBride criticizes that one social/political philosopher who has been an important figure "in recent hegemonic thinking, John Rawls, evinces a certain lack of complete

agreement with this emerging consensus among philosophers in his late work, *The Law of Peoples*.” He argues that it reflects on the fact that philosophies from some cultures have been marginalized in recent times, “due to the phenomenon of hegemony,” and expresses the hope that this situation is changing now, with the globalization of philosophy becoming an increasing reality. In his conclusion, McBride quotes the words of the fourth paragraph from the end of Rousseau’s *Social Contract*, where, having summarized the few, simple dogmas of the civic religion that he is advocating, he says: “These are the positive dogmas. As for the negative ones, I limit them to a single one: intolerance. It belongs with the cults we have excluded.”

Significantly, *JET* fully embodies the academic purpose. So far, all contributing scholars of *JET*, including American, European, African, Arabic, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and so on, express multicultural and multidirectional points of view. This diversity allows the authors to provide their own thoughtful and argumentative ideas through academic, intellectual and reasonable pluralism in their different research areas.

The fundamental problem of constructively establishing the broadest possible common ground while yet maintaining some boundaries could not be better expressed. In order to effectively promote the two-way interaction between authors and readers, *JET* sincerely welcomes more pertinent and academic criticism or reviews to those published articles. *JET* will publish the readers’ criticisms and authors’ responses at the same time. *JET* admires and aims to adhere to the following brilliant epigrams:

*True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us..... I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think. —Socrates*

*He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger...What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others... He who conquers himself is the mightiest warrior. —Confucius*

*The mind is everything. What you think you become. —Buddha*

*Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth -- more than ruin -- more even than death.... Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habit. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man....But if thought is to become the possession of many, not the privilege of the few, we must have done with fear. It is fear that holds men back — fear lest their cherished beliefs should prove delusions, fear lest the institutions by which they live should prove harmful, fear lest they themselves should prove less worthy of respect than they have supposed themselves to be. —Bertrand Russell*

*You assist an evil system most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil system never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good person will resist an evil system with his or her whole soul. — Mahatma Gandhi*