

7. Ensuring Equality and Objectivity in Intercultural Dialogue

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While there is growing recognition of the need for intercultural ethics, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies addressing methods of navigating ethical questions within a globalized and multicultural world. This chapter, in particular, aims to address the question: Considering the heterogeneity and unequal power relations between and within cultures and how moral perspectives are shaped by contextual-cultural values, how does one ensure equality and objectivity in intercultural conversations aimed at generating moral knowledge? I propose that intercultural dialogue on ethics geared toward the production of moral knowledge must be guided by certain criteria for transformative criticism that would ensure equality and objectivity. The first section establishes a framework for intercultural conversation within a discourse-centered understanding of culture as well as a constructive realist view of intercultural ethics. Constructive realism affirms the existence of an objective reality while emphasizing that we interpret and derive norms from this reality based on our conceptualizations. This framework necessitates transformative criticism of various readings/norms in intercultural conversation. Transformative criticism refers not only to the conduct of intersubjective criticism among equals but also to the transformation of results in response to the criticisms. The second section then briefly discusses the three criteria for transformative criticism identified by US-American Helen Longino, a philosopher of science, and then focuses on her fourth condition, the equality of intellectual authority criterion, as shaped by the thoughts of German critical philosopher Jürgen Habermas. The four criteria, however, are not sufficient to ensure equality and objectivity. The third section discusses a fifth criterion that I added, that is, the granting of