The last two chapters focused on the question of where we are headed. This chapter and the following one will focus on the claim that the world is becoming increasingly multicultural. What I would like to do is describe what might be called the dynamics of multiculturalism. That is, I would like to argue that, if we want to try to understand our world as "multicultural," we must think through and with the coexistence of many different independent cultures sharing a common space or territory. While it is true that the world has always contained many different cultures, what our "multicultural" world points to is the close proximity, indeed, the quotidian coexistence of different cultures.

Having said that, we must admit that the concept of culture generated by the picture of "multicultural coexistence" is itself too abstract, too neat, or, put another way, too artificial. The relation that each of us maintains with "culture" is actually quite nebulous and diffuse, and our relation to a "multicultural" world is even more so. We need to recognize that the "multi-" in multicultural reality expresses the intermingling and quotidian interaction of different groups of people, and not the confrontation, peaceful or otherwise, of clearly demarcated cultural units. This is worth insisting on because it poses a challenge to our conventional ways of thinking about how the world divides itself. For example, Will Kymlicka implicitly recognizes this when, in his paper "Multicultural States and Intercultural Citizens," and elsewhere, he switches from using the "multi-" prefix in order to speak of intercultural citizenship, dialogue, and communication, because he wishes to preserve the self-identity
of the interacting cultural groupings. Yet a large part of the challenge of an increasingly multicultural world resides in the fact that the demarcations between cultural groupings are increasingly less well-defined.

Someone might want to point out here that I have said that we are talking about the intermingling and quotidian interaction of different groups of people. What demarcates and identifies these different groups, both as groups and as different, are cultural factors, are they not? Why not speak clearly and call these different groups “cultures,” so that we can move on to the harder and more pressing work of determining how to ensure their peaceful and prosperous coexistence?

Such an approach is much too hasty and begs too many questions. More importantly, it fails to capture the dynamics of cultural identification, or cultural appropriation. The focus should not be on the different groups of people, understood as separate collectives, but on the intermingling and quotidian interaction that are manifested and result in more or less clearly demarcated groupings of people. It is through our quotidian interaction with each other that such groupings are formed and maintained. To put it in other terms, groupings are constituted by the repeated forms of gathering together that human beings engage in as they interact with one another.

What do we see when we focus on the dynamics of these interactions, and how are we to interpret what we see? I want to suggest that a fruitful approach would be to track, among these dynamics, the particular dynamic of what might be called the familiar and the unfamiliar. There are many ways of doing this. If one thinks of the various groupings that form and are manifested through our daily interactions with each other, when viewed from the inside as it were, the glue and attraction are the patterns of familiarity they exhibit. Of course, such patterns of familiarity are set against what is unfamiliar, hence the attraction.

One need only think of those professional gatherings called “meetings” or “conferences.” One enters, scans the room for familiar faces, responds accordingly, and the response, varying from a slight nod to starting or joining a conversation, depends on, or is directly related to, the otherwise surrounding unfamiliarity. Or think about sitting in a restaurant in a country where you do not understand the language and then overhearing your own language being spoken at the next table. You immediately find yourself, not at home, but at least in less unfamiliar circumstances.

Thus, groupings manifest and constitute themselves through the recognition of familiarities. Now, if we focus our attention on our interaction with one another within a multicultural context, something interesting and, perhaps, novel, as far as the dynamics of human gathering are concerned, is revealed. A multicultural public space has the following distinctive feature: people are gathered in groups that are constituted, on the one hand, around the recognition
familiarities and, on the other hand, within a space that itself strives to recognize the coexistence of other groups constituting themselves around the recognition of other familiarities. That is, we might say that there are two dynamics of recognition at work within this multicultural space. Because it is a cultural space, one can see quite obviously that recognition of familiarities that is distinctive to particular cultures. However, because it is also a multicultural space, there is the recognition from any given set of cultural familiarities of other, differing sets of cultural familiarities, which are then, by definition, unfamiliar. It is this second mode of recognition that is the distinctive feature of the multicultural space. It is one that fosters, to put it somewhat paradoxically, the recognition of unfamiliar familiarities. I say "unfamiliar familiarities" because what is being recognized is another distinct grouping constituted around a set of familiarities that one also recognizes as unfamiliar from the perspective of one's own set of familiarities.

What I am pointing to, then, is a distinct form of recognition. I use the seemingly contradictory expression "unfamiliar familiarity" because what is being recognized is neither that which is familiar nor that which is unfamiliar, but both at once. Or rather, and this is captured by the expression as well, we are indeed talking about a particular kind of familiarity, born of the particular kind of proximity afforded by our multicultural space of interaction, and characterized by the daily encounter with unfamiliar ways of rendering the world familiar.

Recall the everyday experience of riding the bus home from work or school seated next to a group of people, who are, perhaps, familiar from the workplace or from the campus, now speaking a language that one does not understand. Within a multicultural space such an experience does not typically carry with it the negative feelings of exclusion or fear—what are they saying? are they talking about me?—that often accompany experiences of unfamiliarity.

This goes against Will Kymlicka's generally negative reading of what he calls intercultural relations, which stand in need of local intercultural education, as opposed to the overprivileged preoccupation with what he calls global interculturalism. I think that Kymlicka's discussion here is seriously hampered by his switch to the "inter" prefix, which presupposes too neat a distinction and demarcation between cultures. His model remains one that privileges relations between what he calls "societal cultures," rather than the efforts of those committed to various groupings to live together within multiple cultures. My suggestion is that such negative feelings are absent because the unfamiliarity here is at the same time familiar. It is an unfamiliar familiarity.

This mode of recognition bears a family resemblance to the notion of "tolerance," in the sense that it accepts that public interaction needs to be respectful of basic differences between people. However, I would argue that, as
a form of recognition, tolerance is deficient because it leaves the kinds of negative feelings that can accompany such encounters with the unfamiliar intact and, more importantly, as we shall see, it does not engage the unfamiliarity itself.

It is here that we will be able to address Kymlicka's desire to downplay the need for what he calls "deep mutual understanding," which he deems "utopian". In the paper I mentioned above Kymlicka writes (p. 165):

the aim of intercultural education should not primarily be deep mutual understanding, but rather acknowledgement of the (partial) opaqueness of cultural differences, and hence the necessity for groups to speak for and govern themselves, and the necessity of finding ways of coexisting that can be accepted by all. This, I would suggest, is a more realistic goal, which lies in between the tokenist teaching of superficial cultural differences, and the utopian quest to understand deep cultural differences. Here again, the quest for a particular form of (deep) intercultural knowledge, rooted in a model of the ideal intercultural citizen, may go beyond, and perhaps even conflict with, the sort of intercultural relations required by a just multicultural state.

Kymlicka shows here that his primary theoretical concern is with the stability of the state form as a guarantor of just relations. My concern, however, is not with the state form itself but with understanding the multicultural dynamics that increasingly challenge it.

I would like to insist that unfamiliar familiarity is a distinct feature of multicultural societies as opposed to monocultural or traditional societies, that is, those societies whose extended social relations reflect or mirror familial relationships (a point made by John Russo in his book Human Experience, to which we shall return in a moment). Daily interactions in multicultural societies are structured around and include the encounter of both the familiar and the unfamiliar. In other words, there is in multicultural societies an implicit and irreducible recognition of the coexistence of different ways of rendering the world familiar. Of course, monocultural or traditional societies can also recognize that there are other ways of rendering the world out there familiar, but these different ways do not coexist.

This is how I think we should conceptualize what is often called "pluralism" in the context of contemporary societies, the idea that there are irreducibly different ways of living "good" lives. It is at the level of the everyday that this needs to be understood. We should not underestimate the importance of the everyday in understanding the dynamics of history and the multicultural dimension of history. The "multicultural" in history requires that we understand a particular
social dynamic, one with its own characteristics, and to understand a social dynamic is to understand the structures of “everydayness” and the realities that such “everydayness” must confront.

Will Kymlicka doubts that we can achieve what he calls “full mutual understanding” and argues that, on the contrary, we should recognize an inclinable “opaqueness” to the differences we encounter in others. That such opaqueness exists is no doubt true, but it should not be treated as a conclusion about the extent to which we can understand others around us. It should rather be treated as a premise, leading us to question not only the differences displayed by others, but also our own self-understanding as we encounter those others. This is because the opaqueness in the differences displayed by others is actually a kind of challenge posed to our own unreflective and familiar self-understanding, as this manifests itself in the structures of our everyday life. Indeed, this might be a good way to define what is meant by “everydayness.” It describes the world as we habitually and unreflectively encounter it in our day-to-day activities, which is itself, in a certain way, opaque even to ourselves.

In this regard John Russon, following Heidegger, insists on the unreflective dimension of our being-in-the-world. In his paper “Hegel, Heidegger, and Ethnicity” he writes (p. 516):

Becoming a member of society requires becoming habituated to a series of practices which do not structure a dynamic of recognition along intelligible lines, but which do not appear as such to the practitioner; in other words, becoming a member of society—becoming self-conscious—really requires not knowing who one is, not knowing what it means to be a member of society, not being explicitly self-conscious in one’s social identity.

The world, then, on this view, is opaque because it is the familiar world that we have literally grown up to recognize as our world, the world as it has accepted us and formed us, and given us our bearings and the sense of significance that carries us forward. It has the opaqueness of family life.

This is why it is important, when trying to understand the dynamics of social life, not to start either from the perspective of distinct individuals or from that of the social whole itself. Rather, we must look to the formation of selves within the context of familiar/unfamiliar others. In Human Experience (p. 65) Russon gives the following excellent account of the beginnings of such a formation of oneself:

One’s natural body is not an unbiased, universally uniform, fully transparent, or fully comprehensive accessing of reality, but is a perspectival, particular, opaque, and determinate hold on, posture in, and taste of being. We do not begin, as it were.
fully connected to reality, but have a particular opening, a particular clearing within which we can develop and expand, and the form in which we develop—the forms in which we transcend the limitations that initially define ourselves—are always shaped and figured by this original determinacy. The same is true of our initial participation in the reality of intersubjective life. We do not begin as full participants in a fully formed “we,” but have, rather, a particular and determinate contact with others that is the arena within which we can establish routes for grasping, posturing ourselves in, and tasting human reality as such. We enter intersubjectivity through becoming familiar with particular others, and these familiars are our original vision of intersubjectivity, of “who we are.” It is our family—our group of familiars—that first defines for us where we fit into intersubjective relations and, consequently, what will count as the values by which “we” must approach the world, by which we must contact reality. Our family defines for us our proper place, and, indeed, the place of propriety—of value—itself.

However, even though the family provides the original context, our introduction to the world, by familiarizing us to an everydayness that can structure livable lives, the familiar world that it sustains does not exhaust our humanity, nor does it completely describe our contact with reality, which (as discussed in earlier chapters) is the way we experience the “present” within the past-present-future complex. In fact, our familiar world is in many ways a world that defines itself against this “contact” with a reality that surpasses it. However, this contact includes contact not only with what our familiarities do not comprehend, but, precisely, contact with “unfamiliar others.” As Russon says (p. 67):

> Even as, for each of us, our family defines itself as the definitive sphere of human relations, it also has the function of opening us out onto other human situations. As much, then, as our identities are constitutively defined by a relation with familiar/familial others, our identities are constituted by an opening out onto non-familial others. Emerging as a human subject is, thus, to be initiated into a world defined by a double openness of relations to familiars and relations to strangers.

This is especially true in an increasingly multicultural world. If families initiate us into the world, both by providing it with significance and by giving each of us a sense of what we are capable of within it—and, of course, different families do this differently and with different degrees of success—families also contrast with a wider, beckoning world, to be explored and discovered. We grow up within our families, but we also break away from them, even if only to eventually reconstruct ourselves within other families that maintain close relations with members of our original family, those who contributed to our original sense of the significance of the world and of our own significance within

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it—or not. This contrast Russon articulates as the contrast between family life and “transfamilial” social life, which displays a larger sense of the diversity of humanity, in the sense that what one encounters in this wider transfamilial social life is a wider diversity of ways of making sense of the world, of seeing its significance and the significance that one has within it.

Of course, this encounter with a wider diversity, especially in an increasingly multicultural world, is not abrupt or unexpected. After all, the adults in any particular family participate both in family life, with its developmental concerns, and already in a wider social world, which contains purposes and expectations not necessarily directed to the developmental concerns of family life (although of course, such purposes and expectations cannot be entirely alien to those concerns, insofar as social life is constituted around the activities of adults themselves generated by, and, for the most part, responsible for, particular families). In fact, as Russon argues, the contrast between family life and social life is a dynamic one that impacts on both the ways in which families are formed and the way in which the social world is organized, which in turn impacts on how one understands oneself as a developmental being attempting to live out one’s life. Born within a family, one makes one’s life in a social world. Russon writes (p. 71):

It is as a social member that one is someone—that one can be recognized by one’s others, and thereby recognize oneself, as someone—and the very capacity that one has to pose the issues of identity and so on is itself a product of participation in that society and its ritual structures of education into human identity. The difference between the phenomenon of the family and the phenomenon of the society is that within the family the familiar narrative into which one is born is automatically decisive, whereas in the society the ruling narrative can override familial narratives and, indeed, has as its particular function the integrating of a multiplicity of families. One’s identity in the family is simply one’s role as a member—son, mother, and so on—and as a representative agent of the family narrative. One’s identity in the society is as a single, equal adult, and as a representative of the transfamilial narrative [my emphasis]. To become a member of a larger society, then, requires that one adopt a stance of challenge to the legitimacy of the family narrative.

Thus, on Russon’s account, to “become a member of a larger society” essentially means to become an adult who, along with all other equal adults, is called upon to “represent” what he calls the “transfamilial narrative” that organizes and structures social life. What is required of adults is the ability to affect a “self-transcending critique” in their encounters with other adults, in such a way to promote forms of mutual recognition, which for Russon can also be understood as forms of what he calls (p. 60) “mutual education.”
It is important to understand that what is meant by “self-transcendence” is the openness at the core of experience, that is, experience—or, better put, experiencing—is precisely this opening out onto and into a world. Now, to grasp why experience, understood developmentally, is self-transcending critique, we need to remember that experience is structured by that which is familiar and by that which is unfamiliar. Russon captures this dynamic between the familiar and the unfamiliar when he writes about the “figured contact” that describes the structure of experience. Interaction within the world is premised on a familiarity that, in effect, figures or configures our access to a sensible world. Yet that interaction is always also a contact with a reality that tests that familiarity. The unfamiliar is that which tests the familiar, that which demands of the familiar that it account for itself. Critique is precisely this accounting, the justification that familiarity gives of itself in view of its contact with the unfamiliar that describes social (and political) life, as opposed to family life, whose purpose is to provide a context for habituation and confirmation of one’s ultimate significance and importance.

What I find particularly valuable in Russon’s approach is the way in which it allows us to see how critique fails precisely when it fails to be “self-transcending,” that is, when it fails to be open to the unfamiliarity that challenges its own familiarities, which remain necessary because they provide critique with its sense and direction. In other words, Russon allows us to see how critique must be both open and grounded—open to the unfamiliar, but grounded in the familiar. On the one hand, a critique that fails to be open to the unfamiliar is merely a turning away from “contact” with reality, a retreat into one’s habitual world, with all the dysfunctions that such habituality can imply. On the other hand, a critique that fails to ground itself in its own familiarities is merely abstracting from reality, and constructing ideal and ideological worlds.

This can be illustrated with the recent—indeed, ongoing—question of the recognition of same-sex marriages. There are a considerable number of homosexual couples, and people who support them, who insist on having their unions recognized as marriages in the same way that many heterosexual couples have their unions so recognized. From within the groupings of those who are in favour of such a view, the recognition demanded stems from a familiarity with marriage as the expression of the freely chosen commitment of two people to spend the rest of their lives together. From outside these groupings, the marriage or union of two people of the same sex is seen as profoundly unfamiliar. I say “profoundly” only to capture the marked sense of discomfort exhibited by some, leading them to declare such unions “unnatural,” thus contrasting it with a sense of the natural as something more comfortably experienced as “the way things are” and, presumably, were meant to be. However, what I think needs to be pointed out is that the articulated demand to have same-sex unions...
recognized as marriages is one that is based on a context of familiarity with the concept of marriage as a freely chosen commitment shared by two people, a concept of marriage that contrasts with, say, the concept of marriage as a union arranged for the mutual benefit of two families.

When this concept is stressed one can see how the unfamiliarity that some people have with the practice of two people of the same sex making such a commitment is not a radical unfamiliarity but one that qualifies this more basic familiarity with the practice of freely choosing one's spouse, as opposed, again, to a practice where the choice is made by someone else. It is on this basis that there is, for everyone involved—those who support same-sex marriages as well as those who oppose them—an implicit recognition of their existence, indeed of their coexistence with other forms of union within the wider network of social relationships that make up the social world. What the demand for recognition does is render explicit this here-to-fore implicit recognition, which has the effect of challenging the familiar ways we have for rendering and accounting for the terms of our coexistence. In other words, this articulated demand for recognition reveals a situation that calls for "re- recognition," a rethinking of the ways in which we relate to each other. This, I believe, is why it is important to attend carefully to demands for recognition. Such demands usually lay bare certain implicit features that regulate and structure the dynamics of social life—they question the predominant account of the "transfamilial narrative," as it were.

Charles Taylor has done much to help us understand the crucial role that the notion of recognition plays in the ordering and disordering of social life. In his influential essay "The Politics of Recognition," he links the demand for recognition on the part of minority groups to the notion of the very self-identity of those groups. He writes (p. 25):

The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

To put this in terms of the dynamics of social life as I have been describing them here, non-recognition and misrecognition have both implicit and explicit dimensions. Implicit non-recognition or misrecognition can, and often does, lead to demands for recognition. Such demands have the effect, if they are sufficiently persistent, of rendering explicit those implicit forms of non-recognition or misrecognition. Such explicit non-recognition or misrecognition can of course, as Taylor points out, inflict harm and be oppressive to those
demanding recognition. However, if we want to move beyond this situation, we need to move beyond the dynamics of simple recognition, or lack of it, and engage a process of "ne-cognition," or, in Russin's term, of "self-transcending critique," rethinking the situation in light of the demands being expressed and their graded levels of acceptance or rejection.

It is not enough simply to accept or reject a demand for recognition. To remain at this level signals a failure to engage a new situation, a situation that cannot, can no longer, be fully recognized along familiar lines, neither along those that generate the demand, nor along those that the demand addresses. At the heart of demands for recognition one can discern a questioning of the conditions of coexistence that sustain different ways of life, different ways of making sense of the world. It is this questioning that needs to be addressed and it requires us to rethink those conditions of coexistence that sustain everyone involved. This rethinking involves the effort to move beyond, without abandoning, one's familiarities and to engage this same effort issuing from another set of familiarities.

In other words, simple coexistence must rearticulate common ground. This is difficult work, largely because it is initially disoriented and disorienting, and there is a great temptation to retreat into one's familiarities, rather than question them in light of the demands being made, or to reduce those demands to terms that do not question those familiarities, that do not pose the problem and challenge of rearticulation. For example, in the assertion that same-sex unions cannot be considered marriages, because marriage means the union of a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation, so such unions will just have to be considered something else, there is no attempt to rearticulate common ground. There is merely an attempt to return to simple coexistence along previously familiar lines, ignoring the changed conditions that the demand has created.

What seems to me to be important about this account is that it helps to see how the failure to engage in critical self-transcendence is not merely a lack, but is in fact a retreat from reality, a retreat into one's familiarities, in a way that can only exacerbate the sense of surrounding unfamiliarities. We cannot escape from the social dynamics that structure and challenge social life, any more than we can ultimately escape from reality. A social dynamic that promotes certain familiarities over others is one characterized by the retreat of some from real contact with others—the example of the creation of gated communities comes to mind—and cannot be said truly to respond to actual conditions.

John Russon provides us with a very rich conceptual framework for making sense of our social dynamic, which recognizes that we are grounded in the concrete familiarities of lived experience, but that this groundedness is structurally open to the unfamiliarity that contact with a developing world invariably reveals. Indeed, his account allows him to formulate what in fact
can be explicitly articulated as the telos of social life. If, as he writes, we are to understand the human condition or human life as necessarily “structured by specially figured social familiarities,” then, as he puts it in *Human Experience* (p. 72), “the society that is universally open to the human condition must be one that accepts this necessity of social diversity as its premise.”

Note, however, that Russon says “premise,” not “conclusion.” Social diversity merely describes the various familiarities that human beings have established in making sense of the world. These familiarities also establish a contact with the world that is, essentially, openness to it. In Russon’s words:

> The givenness of this variety, though the starting point for intersubjectivity, is not the finished state of human contact... [The] universal human condition is to be a plural situation of cultural narratives, each of which is inherently propelled towards transcending and transforming these given differences through establishing a communication between them.

Thus, for Russon, transcendence is transformation, and our openness to and within human contact is a transformation of the given into a richer sense of reality.

Russon (p. 69) further articulates the two poles that frame his understanding of the organization of social life, in which “the move from family life to social life can take forms that approximate more to the particularism of the family or more to the universalism of cosmopolitan life.” He goes on to write (p. 72) that it is this “cosmopolitan extreme that marks the most fully fledged social structure,” for the simple reason that it shows us “the *terminus ad quem* of the development of human self-identity,” in the sense that it reveals “the form of the inherent goal of the human project of mutual, equal recognition.” It should be pointed out that Russon is here discussing the *form* of the inherent goal of mutual, equal recognition, and his account shows how the *substance* of such recognition has yet to be fully played out.

In order to grasp the substance of this working out of the telos of mutual recognition we need to follow the dynamic interaction of the familiar and the unfamiliar. That is, we can see how the cosmopolitan ideal is actually at work in contemporary attempts to create the conditions for multicultural coexistence. The importance of looking to the multicultural, rather than merely postulating the ideal, is that it illustrates, graphically and plainly, the dynamic of the familiar and the unfamiliar. Indeed, it can be said to embody this dynamic, in the sense that it explicitly recognizes how familiarity figures one’s sense of oneself, while at the same time it explicitly recognizes that one’s contact with others demands that one negotiate that familiarity.
In other words, I am suggesting that multicultural societies embody at the level of lived experience the dynamic that Russon describes, complete with the telos of mutual, equal recognition, which does not appeal to the abstract universality that renders the cosmopolitan ideal so problematic. In addition, however, the struggles within multicultural societies also reveal the ways in which this telos is occulted, precisely because of the failure to engage the process of self-transcending critique that Russon identifies, the failure to test one's familiarities against reality. Too often, our multicultural reality is interpreted, not in terms of both the telos and the dynamics that it exhibits, but strictly in terms of familiar narratives, whether explicitly, in terms of a dominant culture's values and traditions, or implicitly, by appealing to a framework that claims to be neutral but is in fact the familiar cultural narrative of universal humanity, which assumes that the common ground of coexistence always already exists, either beneath our differences, within a shared human nature, or above them, as a regulative ideal, that is, something that we strive for while knowing that its achievement will never be fully realized. In either case there is a refusal to engage in self-transcending critique, a refusal to see that actually engaging the demands of the world is, in effect, to participate in changing it. This multicultural reality I refer to is not an ideal, nor a given, but a social configuration that embodies the dynamic of the familiar and unfamiliar in a way that enables us to see more clearly the telos of mutual, equal recognition. To see it is to enact it, as in the therapy and pedagogy described by Russon (p. 141): "simply the self-conscious taking up of this project of recognition, such that one pursues being recognized through facilitating the recognizing of others."

To reformulate all of this in the terms of the speculative philosophy of history I have introduced, what Russon offers us—and in this he can be said to be following Hegel—is a reformulated telos that arises out of the actual dynamics of history. That is, the telos of mutual, equal recognition through mutual education and communication arises out of the dynamics of human development, as these manifest themselves in the self-consciousness provoked by the self-transcending critique of the limits of familial social relations, themselves provoked by the encounter with unfamiliarities, and, even more explicitly in an increasingly multicultural world, of the daily encounter of unfamiliar familiarities. If this sounds too smooth, it is because the whole process is being described at a very high level of generality, which, again, is the task that philosophy sets itself.

However, one need only think of the dynamics of one's own family life to see how the process is anything but smooth. Yet if the dynamics of family life are not smooth, it is because, as Russon argues, the recognition afforded within families is largely implicit and, because it is implicit, is left unquestioned and/or
taken for granted. These “family narratives” are, in a sense, basic—they give each of us our original orientation to the world—but that orientation is not a self-conscious one until it encounters a reality that challenges it.

There is a marvellous expression in French: “petits enfants, petits soins; grands enfants, grands soins” (“small children, small worries; big children, big worries”). The realities that children encounter, say, at school, shake up their confidence in the world, effectively disorienting them, but they return (hopefully) to family lives that, through the unquestioning support and comfort they provide, mitigate the effects of that disorientation and, through the unquestioned familial narrative they provide, permit the children to reorient themselves when returning to school with, in Russon’s terms, their sense of “I-can” suitably reinforced. Thus the “small worries” that traverse their relatively restricted lives are not debilitating. Part of the difficulty of being a “big child”—an adult—with an adult’s worries is that the unquestioning support and comfort provided by one’s family, and the unquestioned familial narrative it provides, play much smaller roles in defining how one is called upon to orient oneself within, and respond to, one’s encounter with extrafamilial others. Adulthood requires self-consciousness, which itself requires a critical ability to question oneself in one’s relation to others, such that mutual recognition is achieved.

Again, as Russon points out, to step outside the unquestioned familial narrative into a social space traversed and structured by extrafamilial narratives is not to step out of one world and into another. It is, in fact, to become increasingly self-conscious about the social space one orients oneself within, which includes recognizing—indeed, is largely defined through the recognition of—others who themselves of course presuppose particular narratives. The typical story we tell ourselves of this process—call it the story of “socialization”—is that family life prepares its members for functional roles within the wider society, where they are called upon to “make a living.” Is this typical story we tell ourselves adequate to an increasingly multicultural world?

Let us look again at how Russon describes the logic of the dynamics of social life, and then we will contrast it with the concern raised by Kymlicka with regard to the limits to relying on what Kymlicka calls “mutual understanding” for guaranteeing “social stability.” Russon writes (p. 69):

Typically, one is not born into a family simply, but into a family within an already determinate social environment, and the narrative the family enforces through its behavior will have to find a way to reconcile itself with the larger narratives enforced by the society as a whole, just as the narratives of individual family members must fit into the narrative of the overall family power structure if the individuals (the family in the former case, the family members in the latter) are to be able to function. The family is thus both an autonomous form of intersubjective experience and also an
agent for initiating the family members into the larger form of social experience. It certainly is true that there can be families that do not function well, and it certainly is true that there can be societies with sufficient complexity or looseness of definition that the precise familial narrative is very far removed from the precise social narrative, but it still must be the case that there be some ground of reconciliation [my emphasis] of the family and the larger society if the family is to be able to function within that society that contextualizes it. While there can be extreme variation, then, the logic behind the structure of the family and its relation to society means that it is normally the case that the narrative enacted within familial behavior equally serves to reproduce the larger social narrative.

Many people, typically those who are worried about where we are headed within our increasingly multicultural world, might be wondering to what extent this logic still holds. It is the continued viability of this logic that clearly worries Kymlicka. One might describe his effort to make sense of our increasingly multicultural world in terms of granting a form of recognition to minorities that possess a “societal culture” and ensuring the fair integration of individuals who do not, or rather have left their societal culture behind, as a way of defending the viability of the logic described above. Minorities possessing societal cultures are granted minority rights that allow them to distinguish themselves from the majority culture because they respect the dynamics of the social logic that allows familial behavior to “reproduce the larger social narrative,” at least as far as the latter is embodied in the basic institutions that support the modern state form. It is for the same reason that particular immigrating individuals and their families should expect, not the specific minority rights afforded to societal cultures, but fair terms of integration into the larger social narrative that they have chosen to join through immigration.

If Kymlicka seems to accept the basic logic that Russon identifies, one might say that he would define present multicultural societies as in fact displaying a situation where familial narratives can in fact, as Russon allows, be quite “far removed” from the predominant social narrative. This distance is encapsulated in Kymlicka’s use (again, in his paper “Multicultural States and Intercultural Citizens”) of the idea of “pluralism,” which, in this context and using Russon’s terminology, might be understood as a convenient way to express the varying distances that exist between familial and social narratives, such that one cannot rely on any smooth transition from one to the other. Indeed, it is precisely because such smooth transitions are lacking that Kymlicka downplays the significance of developing what he calls “intercultural citizenship,” because of the tensions that animate the relations between cultures. Kymlicka argues (p. 166) that when one considers what he calls intercultural citizenship and multicultural justice:
three possible areas of tension have been raised between the two: (1) that the intercultural citizen may prefer global interculturalism, while multicultural justice requires focusing on local interculturalism; (2) that the model of the intercultural citizen requires a level of intercultural exchange which may unfairly burden some isolationist groups; and (3) that the model of the intercultural citizen requires a level of mutual understanding that is either tokenistic (if focused on superficial cultural differences) or utopian (if focused on deep cultural differences), while justice requires acknowledging the limits of mutual understanding and accepting the partial opaqueness of our differences.

Kymlicka seeks to promote the principles of justice that will afford a more stable social context within which the transition from familial to social narratives can take place. As long as the state form guarantees the basic rights of all and does not forcibly assimilate or exclude duly recognized members of a given multicultural society, which of course is the social narrative that Kymlicka contributes to, then sufficient space can be given to various familial narratives as long as they do not undermine the larger social narrative.

However, part of the point of Russon’s account is that the larger social narrative itself grows out of and develops from the familial narratives. This is why Russon insists that “it still must be the case that there be some ground of reconciliation of the family and the larger society if the family is to able to function within that society that contextualizes it.” For Russon, as for Hegel, that ground of reconciliation is to be found in the process of recognizing one another. Remember that the recognition afforded by families is implicit and (largely) unquestioned. In contrast, the recognition required and afforded by social life itself needs to be explicit and a function of the “self-transcending critique” of those self-conscious efforts that render such recognition explicit. It is this movement of rendering explicit what is lived implicitly within the familial/familial narratives that links the dynamics of coexistence to the telos of mutual, equal self-conscious recognition. It is because Kymlicka understands the dynamics of coexistence much as Kant does, as largely conflictual or “unsocial,” that he turns our attention away from them in order to focus on the telos which, again as with Kant, concerns principles of justice that can be placed above conflicts in order to mediate them. It is in the name of such principles that Kymlicka downplays the fruits to be born of “mutuality,” which he otherwise considers to be admirable. He believes that what he calls “mutual understanding” too easily becomes “either tokenistic (if focused on superficial cultural differences) or utopian (if focused on deep cultural differences), while justice requires acknowledging the limits of mutual understanding and accepting the partial opaqueness of our differences.” In urging us to acknowledge the “limits of mutual understanding,” Kymlicka is in fact betraying the social logic.
described above by refusing to see within his telos of justice the dynamics of social life. Now, however, we are in a position to ask: if the telos of justice does not arise out of the dynamics of social life, where does it come from?

In order to answer this, I think it is important to point out the fundamental difference between the conception of "mutual understanding," as Kymlicka describes it, and the "mutual recognition" that Russon identifies as the *terminus ad quem* of social life. Kymlicka does not believe that any kind of "deep mutual understanding" should be the basis for ensuring a stable social order, given the pluralistic conditions of contemporary societies, or put more simply, given our increasingly multicultural world. If Kymlicka is concerned with ensuring a stable social order within contemporary pluralistic conditions, it is because he sees within those conditions considerable unrest and instability. What if what he deems to be factors of "instability" are merely certain consequences emanating from the way in which the dynamics of social life are manifested within those current conditions? What if the concern for "instability" is one that arises more out of the attempt to stand outside the actual dynamics of (historical) social life in order the "better" to judge it from the perspective of its ultimate telos, Kant's "cosmopolitan point of view"? What happens if we try instead to view the contemporary "pluralistic" conditions of social life from the perspective of their telos as emanating from their dynamics?

Arguably, this is what Russon is attempting to do by identifying the *terminus ad quem* of social life as "mutual, equal recognition." Such a notion captures not only the telos of social life, it also describes its dynamics. For Russon, social life both aims at mutual, equal recognition and is driven or animated by the actual process of recognizing others through contact. This is what Russon calls "the human condition." The human condition contains within its development or unfolding the conditions of a "universal" society, which we need to understand as (Russon, p. 72) "creating itself as networks of self-transcending intersubjective contacts from out of specifically figured situations of social familiarity." This is how we need to understand our "pluralistic" conditions, not as conditions harbouring the potential for ceaseless conflicts that need to be mitigated and mediated by principles that somehow can be articulated as transcending those conflicts, but as generating the real possibility of genuine recognition of actual differences within a developing social whole, what Étienne Balibar would call "ideal universality." Russon writes (p. 72):

The "universal" society, then, is one that acknowledges the experiential primacy of cultural pluralism—of narrative pluralism—and sees the universality of any shared human environment as something to be achieved through learning to make such narratives communicate, rather than as a given, already existent situation of human equality. The human condition is this given variety of narrative differences.
The givenness of this variety, though the starting point for intersubjectivity, is not the finished state of human contact, for it is itself—like the body and like the family—a self-transcending situation of openness, in that...the goal of achieving this universal is inherent to the form of every social narrative qua social narrative.

The universal human condition is to be a plural situation of cultural narratives, each of which is inherently propelled toward transcending and transforming these given differences through establishing a communication between them [my emphasis].

One should read this last sentence as giving us a fuller sense of what we mean—or should be made to realize we mean—when we say that the world is “increasingly becoming multicultural.” The world increasingly recognizes that “the plural situation of cultural narratives” describes the context within which we need to understand and make sense of the contact between people. Rather than see this as a conflict-ridden situation that must be mitigated if we are to avoid what are deemed to be disastrous consequences, the contact of these narratives propels them towards an identification and ultimate reconciliation of differences, precisely because contact establishes and maintains communication between those differences. The point is not to deny the presence of conflicts, but to contextualize conflicts within the dynamics within which they take place.

I can picture many people shaking their heads here, because they are incredulous. Perhaps, however, their incredulity is less a function of the incredible nature of what is being said than a consequence of being asked to consider such a carefully worked-out speculative framework. Perhaps there are people who are shaking their heads because they are thinking of the “facts of the matter.” For them, the conflicts that one finds throughout this increasingly multicultural world speak for themselves. Yet of course they do not. Neither the facts, nor the conflicts, speak for themselves. We do that, we speak through and with them. What the speculative effort is all about is providing a wider framework within which we can speak about them, and through and with them. Remember that speculative philosophy does not deny facts. Like everyone else, it appeals to them, but not to this other, no less speculative but insufﬁciently philosophical idea that facts “speak for themselves.”

What we might ask of Russom’s speculative framework, however, is how it fits, or how it should be articulated, within the speculative framework of the past-present-future complex. That is, although Russom does allow us to talk about both the dynamics and the telos of social life, what happens when we ask how social life itself is articulated with history, understood speculatively as the past-present-future complex? I think this is an important question because Russom has done us an invaluable service in showing how this project of recognition is at the heart of individual or familial development. At the heart of
this development there is a social dynamic at work. However, part of the force of Russon's argument is that, because the focus is on individual self-development, understood within its wider familial and social context, it can rely on the experience of maturation that each of goes through more or less successfully. Indeed, Russon gives us a reading of that process that is both profound and far-reaching. However, what is still missing is a more fully developed account of the development of the social dynamic itself, which, I would argue, cannot rely on the experience of maturation, but must instead pay particular attention to wider historical considerations. In other words, what is required is a more fully fledged development of the philosophy of history that underpins the telos, the *terminus ad quem*, that Russon has helped us identify within our individual efforts to make sense of our lives. To do that we shall turn to Hegel's speculative philosophy of history.