GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

ISSN 2434-5687 ***VOLUME I, NUMBER 01 / 2018***

Publisher

Society for Philosophy as Global Conversation

Editorial correspondence:
global.conversations.ph@gmail.com

ISSN 2434-5687

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

VOLUME I, NUMBER 01, 2018

Inaugural Thematic Issue

Converging Differences:
Global Thinking and Local Existence

To the sufferers of natural disasters around the globe in 2018 – from the earthquakes and tsunami in Indonesia, the volcanic eruption in Guatemala, the floods in India, Japan, Nigeria, North Korea, and Italy, the heat wave in Pakistan, the earthquake in Papua New Guinea, the wildfires in Greece and California, the hurricanes in North America, the landslides in Brazil and Italy, as well as all others...

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Volume I, Number 01 (2018)

Inaugural Thematic Issue

Converging Differences: Global Thinking and Local Existence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 07-10

Editorial

Global Conversations – A New Philosophical Outlet

Global Conversations is a new academic journal for quality work in contemporary philosophy, human and social sciences, as well as any other field, with focus on global thought, culture, and values. It is a philosophical journal in the broadest sense centering on the idea of philosophy as conversation open to any viewpoint, school orientation, intellectual trend, and cultural tradition. It welcomes in-depth philosophical and theoretical discussions of relevant issues, as well as texts on issues in comparative philosophy, critical theory, art criticism, cross-cultural investigations, interdisciplinary research, or transcultural studies. The following are some notes on its origin and inaugural thematic issue.

An Inspirational Beginning

The journal *Global Conversations* was born out of the of enthusiasm of the participants in the International Colloquium in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture with the heading "Converging Differences: Global Thinking and Local Existence," which took place at "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo, March 21-23, 2018. Along with the university, the colloquium was co-organized by the Society for Philosophy as Global Conversation and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and gathered more than 20 participants from more than 10 countries from three continents from around the globe. It featured also an accompanying cultural program, which included a number of local and international artists who did not need more than just the idea to get involved. Amidst a number of intellectually stimulating presentations in a diverse and easy-going cultural atmosphere, many of us felt that the forum had seized upon a wave of enthusiasm that was not triggered simply by our call for papers but was underlain by a more fundamental need of global cultural awareness, exchange, and conversation, which – we were convinced – had become pressing and of import. Consequently, the ideas of regular conferences and a journal got circulated and ultimately embraced. It was agreed that the journal will be published by the Society for Philosophy as Global Conversation in Japan and that it will target articles not only from the area of philosophy but also from the rest of the humanities, as well as from other fields, which in one way or another support and address the idea of global cultural awareness, exchange, and conversation as medium towards a peaceful and prosperous world. It was also agreed that we will organize regular academic forums in different parts of the globe, which incorporate cultural programs featuring artists and other cultural figures, who embrace and support the idea. The cultural program aspect is meant to serve the double purpose of keeping philosophy in touch with the rest of the culture and of showing that the value of conversation can be advanced and affirmed – both globally and locally – in other ways as well.

If you embrace our basic idea of global conversation and you are willing to contribute to it, you are always very welcome.

The Inaugural Thematic Issue – Converging Differences: Global Thinking and Local Existence

Philosophy has always been a conversation, one way or another, which today more than ever has become a global conversation. One can think of a *conversation* as a convergence of differences in this Saussurean sense in which in language there are only differences. One can regard a conversation as *global* when it takes up differences arising locally and shares them globally, or reversely – when it takes up ones occurring globally and rediscovers them locally. One can call a conversation *philosophical* not just in the narrower disciplinary sense, in which we speak, for instance, of Platonic (dialogical) and Hegelian (historical) dialectics, but also in the virtually unrestricted sense, in which any form of reflective difference takes place along the venues of the whole culture.

Whereas 'global' is sometimes understood as planetary, sometimes as universal, we endeavored to explore its postmodern sense as arising in the locality of the particular. This sense, towards which we have been most articulately swayed by Lyotard, has been long since circulated in the cultural traditions of both East and West. One could read it in the Ancient Greek *dialectic* (literally "speaking across, or conversation"), in Augustine's view of *truth*, *good*, and *faith*, in Lao-tse's *Tao* and *Te* relation, or in Hindu *Dharma* alike.

In the contemporary philosophy, the encounter of the 'global' with the 'local' finds its footing via an array of notions. From a certain vantage point, a critical reader could trace it in Kierkegaard's *subjective truth*, Nietzsche's *will to power*, Heidegger's *Dasein* and its *Umwelt*, Jaspers' *truth as communication*, Levinas'*tiers dans le visage de l'autrui*, Gadamer's *hermeneutics* and its *Horizontverschmelzung*, Wittgenstein's *language games*, Habermas' *communicative action*, Rorty's *political pragmatism*, Foucault's *genealogy of power*, Derrida's *différance*, Cixous' *écriture féminine*, Baudrillard's *symbolic exchange*, amongst others. It could be also sought for in much of the rest of the culture – human and social sciences, literature, conceptual art, alternative theater, contemporary music, cinema, contemporary dance, fashion and design, architecture, cultural management, advertising, etc.

Among the selected eight articles addressing various aspects of theme, the first two focus on issues of comparative philosophy. The first article discusses the idea of global conversation as an interplay of both global and local significations. It brings together the philosophical views of three different thinkers from three different continents and times, identifying such significations in their key concepts, including *Laozi*'s *Tao*, *Te*, *Wu-wei*, and *Ziran*; Heidegger's *Dasein*, *Umwelt*, *Being*, and *beings*; and Rorty's *political* and the *greatest happiness for the greatest number*. It ultimately affirms that the single individual – regardless of his or her specific socio-cultural role – is the *modus operandi* of the interplay between the global and the local, who is always and inevitably involved in global conversation on the spot. In the second article, Tomokazu Baba focuses on Emmanuel Levinas' reading of Hegel, which differs from those of the representatives of the so-called French "Hegel Renaissance," with whom Levinas closely interacted. Baba's insightful discussion examines Levinas' main points of criticism of Hegel, which are based on these two thinkers' completely opposite notions of

Judaism, as well as on Levinas' specific understanding of a Heidegger's lecture on philosophy as *Weltanschauung*. Overall, Baba lays bare the steps of Levinas' attempt to demonstrate what is called "elemental evil" as a part of the "philosophy as *Weltanschauung*" of Hitlerism.

Another pair of articles addresses issues of ethics and religion. Jon Mahoney discusses the interlinkage of religion, identity, and violence with the aim to differentiate the collective violence in the name of religion from other forms of collective violence. On a topic that has gained much attention in the last two decades, Mahoney argues that the collective violence in the name of religion is better understood as distinctive when we take into account the extent to which religion is a part of an identity. He illustrates the suitability of his identity approach for understanding religious violence with a case study on the collective violence of Uighur Muslims in northwest China. Micah Daily also addresses ethical aspects of co-existence of differences along Kant's notions of 'love thy neighbor' and 'quarrelsomeness'. She sees a possibility for Kant's moral philosophy and anthropology to provide a framework for understanding and treatment of the modern day hyperpolarization that has become apparent in various contexts. She argues that the natural inclination towards quarrelsomeness can become a subject of cultivation by the application of rational moral principles, so that the tension between quarrelsomeness and love of neighbor is reduced and hyperpolarization as a whole relieved.

A further pair of articles focuses on transcultural influences in literary writing. Francesc Passani explores the global impact of storytelling by drawing attention to two distinct trends of literary influences that – in a geographical sense – have moved in the opposite directions. The trend from East to West is linked with the reception of the stories of *The Arabian Nights* in the European literary culture of the Middle and Modern Ages, but Passani has traced its roots back to the Indian classics of *The Panchatantra* and Somadeva's *Kathasaritasagara*. The trend from West to East is linked with the influence of Nikolai Gogol and Jane Austen on the writers Lu Xun and Natsume Soseki, who have in turn left their marks on the subsequent literary developments of China and Japan respectively. For her part, Petya Tsoneva discusses the narrative perspective of Elif Shafak's novel *Honour*, which is linked to the cultural peculiarities of the Middle East region. Having a multi-cultural experience and adopting a multi-cultural approach herself, Shafak revisits the modern day country of her roots, Turkey, to uncover the multi-faceted encounter of the region's local culture with the global culture. Tsoneva traces the key to unlocking Shafak's perspective to the writer's conjecture of two uneasy to reconcile opposing visions of God – one as punishing and masculine, and another as maternal and all-embracing.

A final pair of articles focuses on attitudinal issues in society and culture. Alexandra Preitschopf takes a critical look at the popular cultural phenomenon of rap music in France and its complex relation with pressing social issues, such as poverty, migration, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia. In particular, the issues in question are often brought up by rappers with Muslim background, who while addressing them in their lyrics would draw on the Islamic religion and solidarity with Muslims around the globe, often at the expense of sensitive matters such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the effect of promoting anti-Semitism. In this peculiar convergence of a local suburban culture with the global Islamic religion, Preitschopf sees reasons for concern and a need for a wider debate on issues of integration, religion, secularism, and multiculturalism, as the phenomenon she focuses on is limited neither to rap, nor to France. For their part, Mitko Momov and Mirena Patseva bring to our attention an

empirical study on attitudes concerning the reception of the notions of 'foreigner' and 'motherland' at different times during Bulgaria's transition to democracy since 1989. In the early stages of this transition the attitudes towards the 'foreigner' have been more positive than those in the later stages more than two decades on; whereas with regard to 'motherland' the tendency has been the reverse. Momov and Patseva correlate the variations in attitudes toward 'the own' and 'the foreign' with oppositions to both the official state policies and a generally perceived crisis of values.

We hope that the articles in this first issue will stimulate the debate on today's complex relation of global and local in an insightful and productive manner. Enjoy!

Rossen Roussev

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 11-38

Comparative Philosophy

GLOBAL CONVERSATION ON THE SPOT: WHAT LAO-TSE, HEIDEGGER, AND RORTY HAVE IN COMMON

Rossen Roussev

> Today a relatively unified world civilization is being built which is meant to secure the survival of humanity, though it is not that such security could be man's first and last task; in this situation it is imperative to have dialogue between the various traditions. Heidegger has provided a significant stimulus for such dialogue; and yet the task to which he applied himself has not been accomplished, it is being handed down to us as something open-ended.
>
> Otto Pöggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-tsu," *Heidegger and Asian Thought*

Abstract

I explore the supposition that any form of philosophical and cultural difference involves an interplay of both global and local significations, or a peculiar kind of global conversation. I maintain that the recurrence of the global into the local and vice versa is not accidental, as it makes for a much sought difference of significance both in the life of the single individual and in a variety of cultural and practical senses. I explore specifically its philosophical sense within the thought of Lao-tse, Martin Heidegger, and Richard Rorty.

In Lao-tse's Tao Te Ching, this sense is tied to the concepts of the Tao and Te. Tao is the eternal and inexplicable source of all existence; Te is its localized actualization in the life of each and every person. Tao ensures the universal harmony of the world; Te is the principle of one's individual relation to that harmony. The same sense could be identified in the work of Heidegger, who transformed the philosophical thinking of the last century by redefining its knowing subject in existence. The subject, thus rediscovered as Dasein (being-there) and as being-in-the-world (in-der-Welt-sein), could disclose the world (Welt) only via its familiar surrounding world (Umwelt) to gradually become aware of its most general (in-

deed global) epistemic concern of the Being (Sein) of beings (Seinde). Similarly, Rorty, who sees the task philosophy and the rest of culture as set by history on the utilitarian goal of achieving the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, demands starting up locally to achieve it globally. His pragmatic approach also demands utilizing the trustworthy resource of the global cultural tradition, as well as the involvement of the individuals in their locality as problem-solvers (as scientists, artists, engineers, and others).
Keywords: *global, local, Tao, Te, Wu-wei, Ziran, Dasein, Umwelt, Being, beings, poetry, political, conversation, the greatest happiness for the greatest number.*

If we suppose that a form of philosophical and cultural difference involves an interplay of both global and local significations, we can call it a contribution to a peculiar kind of *global conversation*. A conversation is indeed an exchange of differences of significance, whereas a difference never stands alone – it is always in relation with other differences, among which it becomes the difference it is. This conversation is always and inevitably held *on the spot*, as long as such a difference cannot but arise locally. And yet, a difference among *the* differences would be a global difference, and any individual or entity that is in the position to make it could bring a change which is socio-cultural and global.

In order for these lines of thought to be fitting together, it is also clear that the initial supposition, on which they hang on, namely, that a form of philosophical and cultural difference involves an interplay of both global and local significations, must be properly asserted. Here I shall attempt to do just that – I shall maintain that *the recurrence of the global into the local and vice versa* is not accidental but is arguably the condition for possibility of any difference of significance both in the life of the single individual and in culture and praxis as a whole. More specifically, I shall endeavor to detect and explore it within the thought of three thinkers as different as Lao-tse, Martin Heidegger, and Richard Rorty.

Laozi's Tao and Te

In the case of Lao-tse's *Tao Te Ching*,[1] the recurrence of the local into the global is most readily detectable in his notion of the peculiar relation of *Tao* and *Te*. This relation is in many ways complex and convoluted with other key Taoist concepts, but before we move into it we need to acknowledge that important challenges to its discussion are posed by difficulties in authenticating the extant versions of the book and its authorship, by its varied cultural appropriation, by the specificity of its language, and not least by the divergency of its translations. I shall thus briefly consider these challenges prior to embarking on our investigation proper.

Traditionally, the Heshanggong version (dated 2 c. BCE) and the Wang Bi version (3 c. CE) have been used most widely for studies and translations, but there have been more re-

[1] There have been various transliterations of the name 老子, including Lao-tse, Lao-tsu, Lao-tzu, Lao-tze, Laozi, as well as of the title of the book 道德經 attributed to him, including *Tao Te Ching, Dao De Jing, Daodejing,* or simply *Laozi*. Though there have been attempts towards more uniform transcriptions of the Chinese names, I shall use here Lao-tse for the authorship, and *Tao Te Ching* and *Laozi* for the title of the book, based largely on their popularity. I shall also quote all translations I am using literally, i.e., using their own terms and transliterations.

cent discoveries of versions that also gained importance, such as those from Mawangdui (2 c. BCE) and Guodian (4 c. BCE), as well as the Peking one (1 c. BCE).[2] As a result, the authentication of the text has currently become more complex than ever and ongoing research and findings could easily lead to substantial changes both in the traditional order of its chapters and in its very content. Likewise, the impact that the book has had on the Chinese culture cannot immediately be used for clearing its authenticity and content, as it has not been uniform. Two distinct approaches to reading and valuing the book have gained prominence throughout history – one more religious and spiritual, and another a more secular and intellectual, known today respectively as *daojiao* (道教) and *daojia* (道家).[3] Although these two traditions are inevitably related based on their common source and at times their differentiation has been questioned, even to the point of describing them as "practically synonymous and interchangeable,"[4] they have only attested to complex philosophic and cultural significance of the book as both a way of life and philosophical doctrine.

Similarly, the language of the text has its peculiarities that have posed a challenge to its understanding and interpretation, and made it a subject to numerous debates and commentaries throughout the Chinese cultural history. Thus, Liu Xiaogan has identified two distinct approaches to understanding *Tao Te Ching*, which he has differentiated with the terms of "linguistic assimilation" and "conceptual focusing," pointing that the emphasis in the former is on "language patterns and style," while in the latter on "philosophical ideas and meaning."[5] We need to note here that for the purpose of this paper, we can only resolve the language challenge by adopting the conceptual approach, as we aim to identify a common conceptual content[6] in three different thinkers, which can be designated with the terms *global* and *local*.

Finally, there is also the difficulty of translation – *Tao Te Ching* is currently one of the most translated books in the world, (second only to the Bible),[7] with translations showing great divergences from one another, including in terms vocabulary, style, structure, and interpretation. This has posed a challenge to the search for and identification of consistencies in both the use and the interrelations of the terms within the text, as it has complicated the access to their original meanings and the motives behind them. However, for the purpose of this paper a targeted hermeneutics will suffice to capture the relevant aspects of the relation of *Tao* and *Te*, as well as of other key concepts that support it, which can be achieved by drawing on

[2] For a thorough discussion of the state of the extant versions of the text see Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 3-4ff.

[3] Alan Chan, "Laozi," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/laozi/>.

[4] Kristofer Schipper, "General Introduction," in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (eds.), 2004, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), p. 6. Shipper has questioned the merits and viability of the distinction noting that it "originated with outsiders and is flawed by the erroneous assumption that *jia* necessarily means 'philosophy' and *jiao*, 'religion'. The distinction has no taxonomic value and serves no other purpose than to divide Taoism into an acceptable and a disdained form—to fundamentalist Confucians." (Ibid., pp. 7-8)

[5] Liu Xiaogan, "From Bamboo Slips to Received Versions: Common Features in the Transformation of the 'Laozi'," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* Vol. 63, No. 2 (Dec., 2003), p. 339.

[6] On the notion of 'conceptual content' cf. Rossen Roussev, *Philosophy and the Structure of Modernity*: *Fragments of Actualization* (Sofia, Bulgaria: East West Publishers, 2005) (in Bulgarian), especially 12ff.

[7] Alan Chan, "Laozi," URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/laozi/>.

several select translations. More specifically, I will draw on the translations of Witter Bynner (1944), Bruce R. Linnell (2015), Gia Fu Feng & Jane English (1997), James Legge (1891), Philip J. Ivanhoe (2001), Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (2003), Rudolf G. Wagner (2003), Stephen Mitchell (2015), Derek Lin (2009).[8]

With these stipulations in mind we now focus on the specifics of the relation of *Tao* (道) and *Te* (德). Most generally, in *Laozi*, the eternal *Tao*, literally meaning and most commonly translated as 'the Way', is understood as the original source of all existence, whereas *Te* has the meaning of its localized actualization in each thing and every individual. As the source of all existence, *Tao* is ontologically significant but it cannot be properly rendered in words, even as it is ever-lasting and unchanging. This is perhaps more straightforwardly put in James Legge's translation, but is keenly detectable in the others as well,

> The Tao that can be described is not the enduring and unchanging Tao.
> The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.
> (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth;
> (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things.[9]

On the more poetic translation of Witter Bynner this is rendered as,

> Existence is beyond the power of words
> To define:
> Terms may be used
> But are none of them absolute.
> In the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words,
> Words came out of the womb of matter.[10]

Gia Fu Fen and Jane English have it as,

> The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao.
> The name that can be named is not the eternal name

[8] *The Way of Life, According to Lao Tzu*, translated by Witter Bynner (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1986); Lao Tsu, *Tao Te Ching,* translated by Feng, Gia-Fu & Jane English, Vintage Books (New York, New York, 1989; *The Tâo Teh King, or The Tâo and its Characteristics*, in *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Taoism*, translated by James Legge (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1891); *The Daodejing of Laozi*, Introduction and Translation by Philip J. Ivanhoe, in Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (Eds.), *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003); *Daodejing*, *"Making This Life Significant,"A Philosophical Translation*, English and Mandarin Chinese Edition, translated and with commentary by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003); Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, translated by Stephen Mitchell (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2015); Lao Zi, *Dao De Jing*, translated by Bruce R. Linnell (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018); Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi's Commentary on the Laozi with Critical Text and Translation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003); *Tao Te Ching,* translation and annotation by Derek Lin (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2009).

[9] James Legge, Ch. I.

[10] Witter Bynner, Ch. 1.

> The nameless (wuming) is the beginning of heaven and earth.
> The named is the mother of the ten thousand things.[11]

Philip J. Ivanhoe's version is,

> A Way that can be followed is not a constant Way.
> A name that can be named is not a constant name.
> Nameless (wuming), it is the beginning of Heaven and earth;
> Named, it is the mother of the myriad creatures.[12]

On the more terminologically-centered translation of Bruce R. Linnell, it is,

> The Dao that can be spoken of is not the ever-constant Dao.
> The name that can be named is not the ever-constant name.
> That which is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.
> That which possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.[13]

On the purposely philosophical translation of Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, it is,

> Way-making (*dao*) that can be put into words is not really way-making,
> And naming (*ming*) that can assign fixed reference to things is not really naming.
> The nameless (*wuming*) is the fetal beginnings of everything that is happening (*wanwu*),
> While that which is named is their mother.[14]

Derek Lin's succinct translation is,

> The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao
> The name that can be named is not the eternal name
> The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth
> The named is the mother of myriad things.[15]

Rudolf G. Wagner's elaborate translation is,

> A way that can be spoken of is not the eternal Way.
> A name that can be named is not the eternal name.
> When there are not [now] names, it [the Way] is the beginning of the ten thousand kinds of entities.
> When there [already] are names, it [the Way] is the mother of the ten thousand kinds of entities.[16]

[11] Gia Fu Fen & Jane English, Ch. 1.
[12] Philip J. Ivanhoe, Ch. 1.
[13] Bruce R. Linnel, Ch. 1.
[14] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 1.
[15] Derek Lin, Ch. 1.
[16] Rudolf G. Wagner, Ch. 1.

Whereas Stephen Mitchell's translation is,

> The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao
> The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.
> The unnamable is the eternally real.
> Naming is the origin of all particular things.[17]

In the sense in which it "cannot be put into words" and thus explained, *Tao* is *wu* (無) or 'nothing', which is its fundamental ontological characteristic that will have its way in its relation to all that originates from it. For its part, the statement that "words came out of the womb of matter" additionally suggests that the 'words' themselves are a much latter product of the eternal *Tao* to be able to capture the essence of their own original source. Thus, any attempt to define *Tao* would present us with a *Tao* that is not the real *Tao*, whereas the essence of *Tao* appears as just *wu* or nothing.

As *Laozi* has it, however, the essential nothingness of *Tao* has not prevented it from being the source of *qi* (氣) – the creative power that would move the creation of all beings and become the positive basis for their individual and collective existence. *Qi* is thus said to be the "one," or in any way it would be the first being that – in our re-constructed ontological order – could be other than *wu* or nothing. *Qi* then produces *Yin* (陰) and *Yang* (陽) – the two opposing powers that would maintain the balance and harmony or *he* (和) of the world. Whereas operating further along *Yin* and *Yang*, *qi* would produce – in a harmonious fashion – also the "ten thousand things" or the rest of the world,

> Dao creates one.
> One creates two.
> Two creates three.
> Three creates the ten thousand creatures.
> The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,
> Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.[18]

Or,

> The Way generates the One. The One generates the two. The two generates the three. The three generates the ten thousand entities. The ten thousand entities [might] carry the Yin on their back [or] embrace the Yang, but they take the ether of emptiness as their harmonizing [factor].[19]

Or,

> Way-making (*dao*) gives rise to continuity,
> Continuity gives rise to difference,

[17] Stephen Mitchell, Ch. 1.
[18] Bruce R. Linnel, Ch. 42.
[19] Rudolf G. Wagner, Ch. 42.

> Difference gives rise to plurality,
> And plurality gives rise to the manifold of everything that is happening (*wanwu*).
> Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its arms
> And blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious (*he*).[20]

Whereas *Tao Te Ching* is likely to be using the terms *Yin* and *Yang* in a less developed form than the one given to them by Zou Yan (鄒衍),(also transliterated as Tsao Yen;) (305-240 BC), it still suggests that the two powers are intrinsically linked to *Tao*, (as well as to each other), and maintain a relation to it. This relation, which has been described as "the rhythm of Dao" and as including "change and exchange," as well as "harmonious mutual complementation,"[21] is ensured by *qi* and cannot be fundamentally disturbed by any subsequent creation. The same applies also to the "ten thousand creatures," each of which remains inherently related to *Tao* as the original source of their existence and orientation in the world.

In this sense, every being in the harmony of the world maintains continuously its individual relation to *Tao*, a relation which *Laozi* designates as *Te*. *Te* is most commonly translated as 'virtue' but Bynner's expression "at the core of life" is particularly revealing of its fundamental link to *Tao*, which he has poetically rendered as "The Way of Life."[22] Very indicative of this link is also Legge's expression "[Tao's] outflowing operation,"[23] which suggests that *Te* in its core meaning is a particular emulation of or orientation towards *Tao* that is essential for all created beings. Whereas Ames and Hall's expressions "particular efficacy" and "character" point also to its localized and globalized presence respectively.[24] As *Laozi* puts it,

> All things arise from Dao.
> They are nourished by Virtue (de).
> They are formed from matter.
> They are shaped by environment.
> Thus the ten thousand things all respect Dao and
> honor Virtue (de).
> Respect of Dao and honor of Virtue (de) are not
> demanded,
> But they are in the nature of things. [25]

Or,

> Way-making (*dao*) gives things their life,
> And their particular efficacy (*de*) is what nurtures them.
> Events shape them,
> And having a function consummates them.
> It is for this reason that all things (*wanwu*) honor way-making
> And esteem efficacy.
> As for the honor directed at way-making
> And the esteem directed at efficacy,

[20] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 42.
[21] Hans-Georg Moeller, *The Philosophy of the Daodejing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 36.
[22] Witter Bynner, Ch. 10.
[23] James Legge, Ch. 51.
[24] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 51, Ch. 54.
[25] Gia Fu Fen & Jane English, Ch. 51.

> It is really something that just happens spontaneously (*ziran*)
> Without anyone having ennobled them.[26]

In the sense in which "The greatest Virtue (de) is to follow Dao and Dao alone,"[27] *Te* can be understood as a localized manifestation of *Tao*. This manifestation, which accords with and "respect Tao" in its "efficacy" and takes place "spontaneously," also "nurtures" the things and essentially maintains their being. In this sense, *Te* can be understood as the term that "denotes this vital potency for life," which finds its expression in the cultivation of the nurtured beings.[28] The manifestation of *Tao*, however, is always complex and necessitates the actualization of *Te* amidst the circumstances of its occurrence. As Ames and Hall put it, "It is only within the complexity of a contextualizing situation that particular events take shape and assume their productive functions."[29] *Te* is thus the actualized invocation of *Tao*, which is to be sought and emulated in all personal, social, and natural worlds,

> Cultivate it [Dao] in the self – your De will then be true and real.
> Cultivate it in the family – its De will then be more than enough.
> Cultivate it in the village – its De will then last forever.
> Cultivate it in the nation – its De will then be abundant.
> Cultivate it in the world – its De will then be everywhere.[30]

Or,

> Let the Tao be present in your life and you will become genuine.
> Let it be present in your family and your family will flourish.
> Let it be present in your country and your country will be an example to all countries in the world.
> Let it be present in the universe and the universe will sing.[31]

Or,

> Cultivate it in your person,
> And the character you develop will be genuine;
> Cultivate it in your family,
> And its character will be abundant;
> Cultivate it in your village,
> And its character will be enduring;
> Cultivate it in the state,
> And its character will flourish;
> Cultivate it in the world,
> And its character will be all-pervading.[32]

We need to note here that, whereas as nonbeing (*wu*) *Tao* can be taken as ontologically unpresent, the created beings maintain their link to it – their *Te* – via its creative energy *qi*. In

[26] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 51.
[27] Gia Fu Fen & Jane English, Ch. 21.
[28] Thomas Michael, *The Pristine Dao: Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), p. 63.
[29] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, p. 210.
[30] Bruce R. Linnel, Ch. 54.
[31] Stephen Mitchell, Ch. 54.
[32] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 54.

the created beings, *qi* is being realized along a harmonious fusion of *Yin* and *Yang*, which in the ways of nature is said to be just naturalness or *ziran* (自然),

> Man follows the earth.
> Earth follows heaven.
> Heaven follows the Dao.
> Dao follows what is natural (ziran).[33]

Or,

> Human beings emulate the earth,
> The earth emulates the heavens,
> The heavens emulate way-making,
> And way-making emulates what is spontaneously so (*ziran*).[34]

It appears that *ziran* (literally 'self so', 'so of itself', 'what itself is so', or 'what is spontaneously so') is a non-compulsive, balanced, natural way of *qi*'s unfolding that asserts the relation of *Tao* and *Te* by passing some of the nothingness/quiescence (*wu*) of the former into the being of the latter as maintained in the created beings. Naturalness (*ziran*) thus becomes an archi-model or archetype of the workings of *Tao* in the individual created beings and is to be emulated in every *Te* both within the world of nature and within the human world.

In *Tao Te Ching*, the human world is tightly bound with the natural world. Human individuals, families, communities, societies, and states all have their *Te*, which can ensure their relation to *Tao* and harmonious existence. *Te* can thus take the form of virtue or wisdom of action, governance, and self-creation alike, whereas its usage has also included the senses of "power" and "moral charisma."[35] As the peculiar expression of *Tao* in the natural world – via *qi* – ensures the harmony of nature as *ziran*, its expression in the human world would ensure the latter's harmony (*he*) by what is called *wu-wei* (無爲). The latter is typically translated as 'non-action', 'inaction', or 'nonbeing', whose meaning has been sometimes understood too literally in Western perspectives. Whereas it has been called "the essence of *Daodejing*" and understood as "serving as an ethical or religious ideal,"[36] its relation to the Western notion of ethics in the sense of a guiding principle ready for practical application would be a far-fetched notion. Rather, as any theoretical explanation has been cast as out-of-touch with *Tao* (Ch.1), practicing *wu-wei* reappears as a peculiar type of creativity that is ultimately not knowledge-based, purpose-oriented, or will-guided and thus remains mystical. As *Laozi* puts it,

> Embracing your soul and holding on to the One, can you keep them from departing.
> Concentrating your qi, "vital energies," and attaining the utmost suppleness, can you be a child?
> Cleaning and purifying your enigmatic mirror, can you erase every flaw?
> Caring for the people and ordering the state, can you eliminate all knowledge?
> When the portal of Heaven opens and closes, can you play the part of the feminine?
> Comprehending all within the four directions, can you reside in nonaction (wuwei)?[37]

[33] Gia Fu Fen & Jane English, Ch. 25.
[34] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Ch. 25.
[35] Thomas Michael, p. 112.
[36] Lei Xie, "Wu-wei and Wu-zhi in Daodejing: An Ancient Chinese Epistemological View on Learning," *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education,* Vol. 7, Issue 1, Ver. V (Jan. - Feb. 2017), p. 56.
[37] Philip J. Ivanhoe, Ch. 10.

Or,

> Carrying body and soul and embracing the one.
> Can you avoid separation?
> Attending fully and becoming supple,
> Can you be as a newborn babe?
> Washing and cleansing the primal vision,
> Can you be without stain?
> Loving all men and ruling the country,
> Can you be without cleverness?
> Opening and closing the gates of heaven,
> Can you play the role of woman?
> Understanding and being open to all things,
> Are you able to do nothing (wu-wei)?[38]

We need to note here that, properly speaking, *wu-wei* does not mean a complete refraining from action, but rather an avoiding of actions moved by desire or *yu* (欲) in both practical and intellectual sense. It is a "non-coercive activity,"[39] which, when effected in this way, manifests itself as a peculiar refraining from acting and naming, and thus as a kind of accordance of the human world with *Tao* in a way that parallels *ziran* in nature. *Tao Te Ching* most commonly exemplifies *wu-wei* as non-action in socio-political terms with regard to rulers, communities, and societies – "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists"[40] – but it also applies to each particular individual. Thus, if the latter wanted a properly harmonious life, he or she is bound to establish his or her individual relation with *Tao* as *Te* that consistently curbs one's desire and ambition for power, pleasure, possessions, and knowledge alike, as these are considered deviations from *Tao*. "Thus, the highest expression of *de* is spontaneous, and is performed without any intended goal. Lowest *de* is also spontaneously expressed, but this is performed with an intended goal – namely, the fulfillment of the formal criterion that defines it."[41] In this sense, one resorts to a peculiar kind of deliberate inaction or only to a natural or effortless action, which essentially means that one maintains one's individual harmonious relation with *Tao*, or one's *Te*.

We can note here that *wu-wei* is essentially an introduction of the essential nothingness (*wu*) of *Tao* within the human world, which ensures the latter's *Te* or participation in the universal harmony (*he*) as issuing from *Yin* and *Yang*. The proper actualization of *Tao* is thus to be found on every level of the human world precisely as *wu* and in various forms. Calling the latter "*wu*-forms," Ames and Hall point out that they "are pervasive in the *Daodejing*."[42] Thus, *wuzhi* (無知), which literary means "no-knowledge," is a "knowledge grounded in a denial of ontological presence," or a kind of "unprincipled knowing"; *wuyu* (無欲), literary "no-desire," is rather an "objectless desire," or a kind of "deferential desire"; *wuming* (無名), literally "no-name" or "the nameless," points to "a kind of naming that does not assign fixed

[38] Gia Fu Fen & Jane English, Ch. 10.
[39] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, p. 54.
[40] Bynner, Ch. 17.
[41] Thomas Michael, pp. 77-78.
[42] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, p. 92.

reference to things"; *wuxin*, (無心), literally "no heart-and-mind," means rather an "unmediated thinking and feeling"; *wuqing*, (無情), literally "no-feeling," is more properly an "unmediated feeling."[43] We can note here that in the overall perspective of *Laozi* the proper function of the *wu*-forms appears to be to neutralize the specifically self-styled human presence in order to give way to the essential nothingness of *Tao* and ensure the harmony of the world.

Laozi's invocation of *wu* in the human world sets the background of an ethical and intellectual culture that secures the harmonious relation of one's individual *Te* with the eternal *Tao*. Unlike in Western perspectives, where the human subject is typically understood as positioned, disclosing, and acting within an objective world, here the relation *Tao* and *Te* is not mediated by specifically identified aspects and achievements of the human nature or subjectivity. Instead, in *Laozi*, the rational and irrational aspects of the human subject, as manifest in its both cultural achievements and actualized presence in world, are kept in constant check by a sense of the essential nothingness of *Tao*, a sense which alone ensures its harmonious coexistence with the rest of the world. This has led Hall and Ames to describe "the classical Chinese" thought as "primarily *acosmotic*," where by this neologism is meant a philosophizing that is not based on the notion that "the totality of things has a radical beginning or that these things constitute a single ordered world."[44] This is indeed in a sharp contrast with the traditional Western worldviews, which have sought to establish certain first beginnings and foundational order, and Hall and Ames believe that such a qualification would enable a suitable separation of the cosmological and ontological discussions of the classical Chinese texts that would facilitate comparisons with Western ones.[45]

The characterization of the classic Chinse thinking as acosmotic is indeed fitting and insightful. But in my view, the separation of cosmological from ontological (no just in a comparative but) in any discussion can be done only conditionally. For, it would be generally problematic in perspectives influenced by Heidegger and other postmodern thinkers, where ontology is seen as too fundamental to be dispensed with. Instead, I suggest a comparative discussion of classical Chinese and Western worldviews in a manner that is less conceptually mediated. Such a discussion could draw on core similarities between key notions, which could be terminologically identified, paralleled, and understood only as pointers to aspects of relation of these notions, rather than as definite concepts that would be less immune against the bias of a particular conceptual perspective. Indeed, concepts are arguably identifiable and necessary in any reflective discussion even as we mean to keep them deconstructed, but there should be not obstacle to retain in them a sense of their deconstruction, viz. to treat them simply as pointers to aspects of relation, in any such discussion. For instance, at this point, it has already become apparent to us that one can straightforwardly seek and identify various aspects of *essential nothingness* (*wu*) in influential Western perspectives as well, including in both classical and more recent ones. Oxymoronic as it sounds, this essential nothingness can be read not only as subverting the conceptual coherency of these perspectives but also as inviting a deconstructive reflection that revisits old dogmas to open up – somewhat paradoxical-

[43] Ibid., pp. 84-96.
[44] David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 184, 300.
[45] Ibid., p. 300.

ly and out of the blue – new horizons for invention and constitution. Equally, it can be seen as an intrinsic epistemic element of these perspectives, which delimits their innovativeness, value, and contribution, and arguably – of their apperception of knowledge with view to practice.

Thus, an essential nothingness of the kind of the Taoist non-ontological or "unprincipled knowing" (*wuzhi*) can be detected in Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* (as opposed to *sophia*), despite being associated with the ontologically significant notion of truth (*aletheia*),[46] as well as in Foucault's notion *savoir* (as opposed to *connaissance*), despite its association with his ontologically significant notion of positivity (*positivité*).[47] Both of these notions are linked to a practical thinking that bypasses in a peculiar way theoretical thinking and scientific knowledge alike. Similarly, it can be detected in Gadamer's *hermeneutics*, which reinvents Aristotelian *phronesis* to account for the precedence of practice over theory in knowledge application.[48] Essentially the same sense could be traced also in Kierkegaard's *subjective truth* or *passion*,[49] Nietzsche's *perspectivism*,[50] Heidegger's *Dasein*,[51] Derrida's *différance*,[52] Levinas' *ethics as first philosophy*,[53] Rorty's *philosophy as politics*,[54] and – in a different way – in the cognitivist notion of *metacognition*,[55] as well as in the related notion of *philosophical competence* (as opposed to *scientific expertise*).[56] Overall, we can note that, like *Laozi*, these notions can be seen as introducing a due nothingness (*wu*) or deconstruction within the theoretical thinking, which facilitates or conditions its transfer to practice.

In the same way, we shall draw on the essential nothingness at the core of the views of our three thinkers here, as we seek to identify the interplay of global and local significations as the condition for possibility of any difference of significance in their respective perspectives, as much as in both the life of the single individual and in culture and praxis as a whole. In the case of *Laozi*'s view, we have encountered core similarities, which point to aspects of

[46] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, with an English translation by H. Rackham (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press: 1999), Book VI, iii-xiii (especially xii-xiii).

[47] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), pp. 183ff, 194.

[48] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 18-20 and especially 310ff.

[49] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by David F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 32-33, 117-118, 169ff, 176-180, 454-456.

[50] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. by Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), §481; cf. *Der Wille zur Macht* (Paderborn: Voltmedia GmbH, 2007), §481.

[51] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York,
Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962); cf. with *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemayer Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1993).

[52] Jacques Derrida, "Différance," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[53] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1998); *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1999).

[54] Richard Rorty, "Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, and as Politics," *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 17-20.

[55] Margaret W. Matlin, *Cognition* (Geneseo NY: Harcourt Brace Publishers, 1994), p. 248.

[56] Rossen Roussev, "Philosophy and the Transition from Theory to Practice: A Response to Recent Concerns for Critical Thinking," *Telos*, No. 148 (2009), pp. 93ff.

the global and the local, as well as to their specific relation. These can be readily recapped within the terms of our investigation such that *Te be seen as the localized actualization of the global Tao*. This assertion must stand even as *Tao* is originally determined as *wu* or – speaking ontologically – as nonbeing, since Tao nonetheless remains the ultimate source of all being and harmony. What is more, within our perspective here, it is precisely because of its nothingness (wu) that *Tao* could be actualized as *Te*, as the ineffable sense of the former could be only deconstructively, i.e., creatively appropriated within the latter. Thus, *Tao* is the eternal, ineffable, and inexplicable source of all existence; *Te* is its local expression in each being and every person. *Tao* ensures the harmony of the natural and the social worlds; *Te* is the principle of one's individual relation to that harmony. Within our terms here, this amounts to the assertion that the relation of *Tao* and *Te* exemplifies an inevitable interplay of global and local significations, an interplay whose possibility is rendered with the help of notions like *qi*, *Yin*, *Yang*, *ziran*, and *wu-wei* among others. This interplay is arguably *the condition for possibility of any difference of significance within Laozi, as the sense of the notions just mentioned is, and can only be posited as, one of mediators between the global Tao and the local Te*.

Heidegger on Dasein, Umwelt, Being, and Metaphysics

Martin Heidegger is said to "have more than any other European philosopher initiated dialogue between the West and the Far East," even as he has done so within the perspective and the necessities of his own thought.[57] This has made his philosophy most eligible for our comparative investigation, though its support for the point we advance here may not be immediately evident. We shall therefore endeavor to identify the interplay of global and local significations in his thinking by tracing it within the sense of a number of his key concepts.

Heidegger transformed the philosophical thinking of the last century by redefining its knowing subject in *existence*. The subject thus rediscovered as *Dasein* (literary *being-there* or *being-here*) could be no longer separated from the world in the manner of the prior philosophical tradition (including of thinkers like Descartes and Husserl). Instead, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduces *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*), which includes in an inseparable unity also its familiar surrounding world (*Umwelt*) and its social world (*Mitsein*).[58] Thus, *Dasein*'s encounter with the world (*Welt*) within the familiarity of its *Umwelt* is initial only in a very conditional sense, as, in Heidegger's view, in the unity of Being-in-the-world *Dasein*, *Umwelt*, and *Mitsein* (being-with) can only be equiprimordial (*gleichursprünglich*).[59] In this sense, *Dasein* is never completely on its own - *Dasein* is in its *Umwelt*, even when it has left it; *Dasein* is *Mitsein*, even when it is alone.

For Heidegger, the world is essentially *Dasein*'s world, as *Dasein* is the only "world-disclosing" (*weltbildend*) being. In his lectures from 1929-1930, he will claim that without *Dasein* the world would be the "worldless" (*weltlos*) world of the inanimate nature or the

[57]Otto Pöggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-tsu," in Graham Parkes (ed.), *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 76.

[58] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 78ff, 91ff, 149ff; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 52ff, 63ff, 113ff.

[59] Ibid., pp. 33, 176, 181, 187, 211, 245, 263, 343, 401; SS 13, 137, 141, 146, 168, 200, 220, 297, 350.

"impoverished" (*weltarm*) animalistic world.[60] As *Dasein* is existence, its disclosure of the world (*Welt*) is inevitably marked by its *Da-* (literary 'there' or 'here') and its thrownness (*Geworfenheit*).[61] These locus pointers have no privileged (let alone foundational) epistemic status in its Being-in-the-world, but *Dasein* can disclose the world (*Welt*) only via its familiar surrounding world (*Umwelt*). It is a key point of Heidegger's in *Being and Time* that what we are most familiar with – the beings (*Seiende*) in our *Umwelt* – is inevitably related to other beings and that by establishing the relations between them we actually expand our world. (An artisan's shop refers to its products, their materials, suppliers, buyers, uses, etc.). In fact, "world" in the key sense in which Heidegger uses it, namely, as "pre-ontological existentiell signification," is intrinsically related to our immediate environment (*Umwelt*), and it is from there that Dasein moves on forming the ontological concept of "worldhood."[62] By further expanding its own world by means of environmental pre-ontological significations, Dasein becomes also aware of its more general epistemic concerns, including of the questions of the Being of beings (*Sein* des *Seienden*) and of the meaning of Being (*Sinn von Sein*).

According to Heidegger, the question of the meaning of Being, which has been forgotten in the Western philosophical tradition, has been still implicitly at work in that tradition under the guise of other questions.[63] One such question is the question of the being or essence of beings as a whole, which has inaugurated and guided the Western metaphysical thinking from the pre-Socratics to Nietzsche. This question focused on the what-ness of beings (*Seiende*) but not on Being (*Sein*) as such. It asked about the nature of beings as such, with answers throughout the tradition raging from water (Tales), fire (Heraclitus), air (Anaximenes), and God (Medieval theology) to will to power (Nietzsche). Heidegger links this question to "the originary broader sense of *phusis*" of the early Greeks, which denoted "beings, as such and as a whole," and understood them as having the "essence and character" of "emerging and abiding sway."[64] One important characteristic of this sense is that it did not issue from a contrast between "physical" and "historical," but instead included the latter as a part of the former.[65] Thus, for Heidegger, the word *phusis* already "means the Being of beings" and the inquiry of "'physics' in the ancient sense, is in itself already beyond *ta phusika*, on beyond beings, and is concerned with Being."[66] However, as in this way "'physics' determines the essence and the history of metaphysics from the inception onward," the metaphysical tradition has focused on the question of "beings as such," whereas the question of "Being as such" remained unasked (or eventually confused with it) and thus in oblivion.[67]

---

[60] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, translated by William McNeill & Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 176ff; *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1983), SS 261ff.

[61] *Being and Time*, pp. 174-175ff, 219-223; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 135-136ff, 175-179.

[62] Ibid., pp. 92-93, 93n; SS 64-65.

[63] Ibid., p. 21; S 2.

[64] Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 14-18; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, *Gesamtausgabe*, *Band 40* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1983), SS 15-19.

[65] Ibid., p.18; S 19.

[66] Ibid., pp. 18-19; S 19-20.

[67] Ibid., pp. 19-20; SS 20-21.

For Heidegger, the fundamental question (*Grundrage*) of metaphysics – "Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?" – focuses precisely on "beings as a whole and as such" (*das Seiende im Ganzen als ein solches*).[68] He calls this question "the broadest," "the deepest," "the most originary," the "first in rank," and "the *question* of all true questions," which "is necessarily asked, knowingly or not, along every question," and which is thus the condition for every (including scientific) knowledge and understanding.[69] But he alleges that this question points to and in a sense "forces us to the prior question (*Vor-frage*): 'How does it stand with Being?'," which otherwise put is the question of "the meaning of Being" or of "Being as such."[70] Heidegger has indeed speculated whether rather this "prior question" is not the one that is the first in rank,[71] but he ultimately asserts that it is included in the fundamental metaphysical question, which he has thus called "our guiding question" (*Leitfrage*).[72]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes Being (*Sein*) as 'the most universal', 'indefinable', and at the same time a 'self-evident' concept, which for him also explains its thematic neglect in the history of metaphysics.[73] Despite neglected and veiled under the guise of the question of beings (*Seiende*), the question of the meaning of Being has nonetheless operated within the workings of *Dasein*, which for Heidegger includes the history (*Geschichte*) of both the individual and its cultural community. For Heidegger, *historicality* (*Geschichtlichkeit*) is "*Dasein*'s specific" capacity of "Being-towards-the-beginning" (*Sein zum Anfang*), of "stretching along between birth and death," and of maintaining the "connectedness of life," a capacity which is grounded in the unity of *temporality*.[74] In effect, this capacity makes it possible for *Dasein* to reinvent – via its projective understanding[75] – past events and to actualize them with view to the future, including to reflect upon itself and beings, as well as to attain resolute visions.[76] Eventually, it will also make it possible for *Dasein* to identify Being as distinct from beings, to pursue the determination of its meaning, and to find its way to authentic existence.

As Heidegger sees it, the question of the meaning of Being is derivative of the so-called ontico-ontological differentiation of Being (*das Sein*) and beings (*das Seiende*), known also simply as *the ontological difference* (*die ontologische Differenz*). Though at work in the metaphysical thinking since the time of the pre-Socratics, the ontological difference has been masked within it alongside the oblivion of Being. More particularly, it has been masked by the tendencies of the traditional philosophers to take Being either as being amongst other beings (*Seiende*), as a mere property of a being, as an abstract generality, or as presence (in opposition to absence) in permanence.[77] Now the identification of the ontological difference is possible only as the question of Being is differentiated from, or unmasked at the bottom of,

[68] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 3-6ff, 13-19; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, SS 4-7ff, 14-20.
[69] Ibid., pp.2-4, 7; SS 2-4, 8. Cf. *Being and Time*, p. 31; *Sein und Zeit*, S 11.
[70] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 35, 44; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, SS 36, 45.
[71] Ibid., pp. 5, 35; SS 7, 35.
[72] Ibid., p.41; SS 42.
[73] *Being and Time*, pp. 21-24; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 2-4.
[74] Ibid., pp.425-427; SS 373-375.
[75] Ibid., pp. 182-188; SS 142-148.
[76] Ibid., p. 376; S 328.
[77] Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 47-48.

the question of beings. This is essentially a differentiating of Being from beings, which is a key event for the human historical *Dasein* – one that inaugurates the philosophical thinking by making ontology possible,

> We must be able to bring out clearly the difference between being and beings in order to make something like being the theme of inquiry. This distinction is not arbitrary; rather, it is the one by which the theme of ontology and thus of philosophy itself is first of all attained. It is a distinction which is first and foremost constitutive for ontology. We call it the *ontological difference* – the differentiation between being and beings. Only by making this distinction – *krinein* in Greek – not between one being and another being but between being and beings do we first enter the field of philosophical research. Only by taking this critical stance do we keep our own standing inside the field of philosophy.[78]

Within the project of *Being and Time*, the ontological difference becomes instrumental for the metaphysical workings of *Dasein*. It is transposed via *Dasein*'s *historicality* into its existence, including within its environment (*Umwelt*), socio-cultural community (*Mitsein*), and overall Being-in-the-world. It is the key for determination of the proper task of the metaphysics, which for Heidegger includes to revisit itself as fundamental ontology[79] that asks the question of the meaning of Being (*Sein*) as distinct from, and indeed as *nothing* amongst, beings (*Seiende*); to identify the being for which this question is a concern (namely, *Dasein*); to start working it out along the horizon of *time*; and to restore its original cultural force that has eluded the tradition.

We can note here that the ontological difference encompasses the significations of the global and the local under the concepts of *Being* and *beings* respectively, and that its metaphysical usage is indicative of their significatory interplay in the whole of Heidegger's early thinking. It is thus precisely within this interplay of the global *Being* and the local *beings* that his concepts of *Dasein*, *Umwelt*, *temporality*, *historicality*, *Mitsein*, *Being-in-the-world*, as well as all others, come to make any difference of significance whatsoever. In this sense, all the differences of significance within his early view can be seen as made possible and determined by the interplay of global and the local significations, within which they now reappear simply as its mediators. In our terms, this means that, as in the case of *Laozi*, the interplay of global and local significations can be seen as the condition for possibility of any difference of significance in Heidegger's early philosophy as well.

Heidegger's philosophy remains relevant to our present discussion, even upon his so-called Turn (*die Kehre*), which took shape in the 1930s and 1940s, and during which he repositioned his view of Being largely by putting it in a new perspective marked by his attempt at a critical overcoming of the metaphysical tradition. In fact, besides divergences in thematics, goals, and style, he himself has acknowledged that his later philosophy is "not a change

[78] Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 17; *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1975), S 22. From the Greek verb *krinein* ("to separate, decide") comes *kritikos* ("able to make judgments"); hence, Heidegger's "critical stance."

[79] *Being and Time*, pp. 34-35; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 13-14.

from *Being and Time*,"[80] thus indicating a certain continuation within his thought, which can be legitimately sought throughout his oeuvre, and which makes possible the usage of works from his different philosophical periods in a compatible and complementary fashion. It is remarkable, though, that if one is to search for a continuation in his understanding on the overcoming of the tradition, one can be struck by the realization that his radical revisiting of the Western metaphysics applies to the view of his magnus opus as well. Heidegger is well aware that his own thought too is born out of this tradition and likewise is to be duly overcome, for he has recognized that the metaphysical thinking is the source of the Western culture as a whole.[81] For him, overcoming the metaphysics is a direct consequence of the identification of the question of Being and the ensuing need for rectifying the directions of the tradition. In *Being and Time*, this overcoming was associated with a specific "destruction" of that tradition ("destruction of the history of ontology," "phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology," "phenomenological destruction of 'cogito sum'," or "historical destruction of the history of metaphysics").[82] In his later work, it is linked to his notion of *nihilism*. The continuation between them is traceable, though, and it is perceivably centering on his view of *Nothing* (*Nichts*)

According to Heidegger, "the oblivion of Being" has brought within the metaphysical tradition a peculiar kind nihilism which essentially consists in the misrepresentation of Being along the tacit but ultimately flawed notion that Being is just a being amongst beings ("where one clings to current beings and believes it is enough to take beings ... just as the beings that they are").[83] In this sense, overcoming the metaphysics requires an overcoming of the nihilism already at work in it. As Włodzimierz J. Korab-Karpowicz has neatly put it, "Metaphysics cannot be rejected, canceled or denied, but it can be overcome by demonstrating its nihilism."[84] Heidegger does it essentially by importing the sense of Nothing (*Nichts*) that has been ignored in the previous understanding of Being ("to go expressly to the limit of Nothing... and to take Nothing into the question of Being").[85] Early on, Heidegger had shown the existential inevitability of *Dasein*'s facing of the Nothing in the anxiety (*Angst*) of its experience of both the world ("the 'nothing' – that is, the world as such – exhibits itself as that in the face of which one has an anxiety") and its own self-understanding ("the possible impossibility of its [own] existence").[86] But later on, he already speaks about *nihilism* as "the fundamental occurrence of the Western history," "fundamental feature of the Western history," and "the lawful-

[80] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," translated by F. A Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray, in D. F. Krell (ed.) *Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 231; "Brief über den 'Humanismus', " *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1967), S 160.

[81] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 2-4, 7; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, SS 2-4, 8. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volumes III and IV*, edited by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), Vol. IV, p. 205; cf. *Nietzsche*, 1. Bd., 2. Bd, (Phullingen: Günther Neske Verlag, 1961). Cf. *Being and Time*, p. 31; *Sein und Zeit*, S 11.

[82] *Being and Time*, pp. 44-45, 63-64, 123, 444; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 22-23, 39-40, 89, 392.

[83] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 217; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, S 212,

[84] Włodzimierz J. Korab-Karpowicz, "Martin Heidegger (1889—1976)," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/, September 20, 2018.

[85] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 2-3, 25-29, 217-218; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, SS 4, 25-29, 211-212. Cf. *Nietzsche, Volumes III and IV*, Vol. III, pp. 25, 127, 188-189, 204-205.

[86] *Being and Time*, pp. 231-232, 321-322, 310, 356, 393; *Sein und Zeit*, SS 186-187, 266, 276-277, 308, 343.

ness of this historic occurrence, its 'logic'," pointing to its "affirmative" Nietzschean sense in the revaluation of all values.[87] In a straightforward passage which can help us recap his view of metaphysics and its nihilism, Heidegger writes,

> *Metaphysics as metaphysics is nihilism proper.* The essence of nihilism *is* historically as metaphysics, and the metaphysics of Plato is no less nihilistic than that of Nietzsche. In the former, the essence of nihilism is merely concealed; in the latter, it comes completely to appearance. Nonetheless, it never shows its true face, either on the basis of or within metaphysics.
> These are disturbing statements. For metaphysics determines the history of the Western era. Western mankind, in all its relations with beings, and even to itself, is in every respect sustained and guided by metaphysics. In the equation of metaphysics and nihilism one does not know which is greater – the arbitrariness, or the degree of condemnation of our entire history heretofore.[88]

The coincidence of metaphysics with nihilism, and indeed its qualification as "nihilism proper," can be traced to its insufficient consideration of the question of Being, which has resulted in its misguided move in direction of the Nothing. And yet, while coinciding with it, metaphysics does not "show" the "essence of nihilism," as it cannot bring it forth as being, (no matter how it understands being). As metaphysics is determinative of history, its inability to heed sufficiently the differentiation between Being and beings, that is, to understand Being as nothing among beings, and indeed as delimited only by Nothing, has led to its "arbitrariness" and "condemnation" alike. Thus, it is by demonstrating its nihilism that the metaphysics can be overcome, which in essence would be a (re-)introduction of its nothingness, or resurrection of the meaning of *Being* as fundamentally determined only by *Nothing*.

Later on, Heidegger would trace the metaphysical tradition to the character of our technological age, in which metaphysics, having lost its originary link with Being, has been reduced to instrumentalism and epistemology. The task of the thinker then would be to restore this link by overcoming the currently dominant "mode of revealing," that of technology, which for Heidegger is essentially an "enframing" (*Gestell*) that ordains nature instrumentally – as "standing-reserve" (*Bestand*) or resource[89] – while fostering "the idea of technology as metaphysics completing itself."[90] Key to this overcoming is the Greek sense of *poiesis*, which Heidegger renders as "bringing-forth" (*Her-vor-stellen*), which is also shared by *phusis* and *techne*, and which reveals that in its originary meaning *techne* "is something poetic."[91] By opposing the originary poetic meaning of *techne* to the technological culture of our age, Heidegger suggests a direction of philosophical thinking that would be eventually more promising for the future of humanity. While fairly pessimistic on the prospects of our era, Heidegger believed that the overcoming of metaphysics is nonetheless possible because Being, the link to which we have largely lost, is still sheltered in the language of the great poets (such as Sophocles, Hölderlin, Trakl, Rilke, and others), whose greatness has issued from the

[87]Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volumes III and IV*, Vol. III, pp. 204 -205.
[88]Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volumes III and IV*, Vol. IV, p. 205.
[89] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings*, pp. 324ff; Cf. Die Frage nach der Technik, *Gesamtausgabe, Band 7*, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 2000), SS 20ff.
[90] Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/heidegger/>
[91] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, pp. 317-319ff; cf. *Die Frage nach der Technik*; SS 12-14ff.

close touch they have kept with the immediately emerging world of nature (*phusis*), a touch which has prompted the ancient Greeks' originary quest for Being. Hence, Heidegger will advance the notion of "the thinker as a poet" who would be able to point to, restore, and safeguard in culture the genuine quest with Being.[92]

Within our terminology, the differentiation of Being (*Sein*) and beings (*Seinde*) is indicative of an original and intrinsic relation of what is conceptually most general, widest, and global (that is, Being) to what is most particular, singular, and local (that is, beings). This relation is perhaps best demonstrated by the manner in which the tradition has obliterated the question of the meaning of Being by pursuing answers to the question of the being of beings. For it has sought being amongst beings, amongst the things that are – it has sought what is most encompassing into what is individually present, what is most general into what is particular, what is most global into what is local. Thus, it has also demonstrated that the quest for the global is essentially and substantially intertwined with the local and that the local can be properly understood only on the basis of the global. In a certain sense, it may appear that this quest has started from the local, from the locality of Dasein's familiar proximity (*Umwelt*) (with all the particular beings in it), and has expanded along its social world (*Mitsein*) to the totality of beings as such and as a whole (*phusis*); that is, to globality and to Being as such. But for Heidegger the equiprimordiality of *Dasein*, *Umwelt*, and *Mitsein* in Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) means that *Being* and *beings*, the global and the local, are equiprimordial as well, and that in the interplay of their significations they are essentially inseparable from one another. Likewise, as we already noted, given the fundamental status of the terms of the ontological difference, all other concepts of Heidegger's early view make their difference of significance only within the interplay of significations of the global (*Being*) and the local (*beings*), an interplay by which they are conditioned, made possible, and determined, and within which they assume the role of its mediators.

In this way, the global and the local could be seen in a peculiar exchange (a conversation) that has been inaugurated in *Dasein*'s temporality and maintained throughout its history. As, unlike the Western metaphysical tradition, Heidegger regarded *Being* as delimited only by *Nothing*, rather than as being amongst beings, in his later work he pursued to overcome the metaphysics by demonstrating the *nihilism* inherent to it; that is, by re-introducing in it the *essential nothingness* of Being, which it had heedlessly ignored. Subsequently, the post-metaphysical thinking he demanded was to supplant what he regarded as the modern technological *enframing* of our existence with a poetic revealing of our genuine link to Being, which was to be found in close touch with *phusis* (beings as such and as a whole). In this sense, *poiesis*, as bringing forth and gathering, is understood as ensuring the safeguarding of our originary, authentic, and genuine concern with Being, which in our terms would be ensuring the safeguarding of the most promising link between the local and the global.

We can now point to certain core similarities between Heidegger's view and that of *Laozi*, which have become apparent in our discussion so far, and which allow us to identify certain aspects of relation between them that ultimately render a dialogue between them pos-

[92] Martin Heidegger, "What are Poets for?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001), pp. 89-139; "Wozu Dichter," *Holzwege*, *Gesamtausgabe*, *Band 5* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1977), SS 269-320.

sible. Apart from aligning in our exposition in a correspondent fashion the notions of *Tao* and *Te*, *Being* and *beings*, *global* and *local* respectively, the first terms of these pairs share what we called *essential nothingness* as an intrinsic aspect of their sense and core determination.[93] This is largely due to the abstract nature of these notions, whose sense, though essentially universalistic and global, could be only arbitrarily and ultimately – as attested within these views – inadequately determined. The essential nothingness of these notions, however, if properly understood, can be seen as bringing merit to these views, particularly when the relation between the terms in each pair is to be properly established. This merit is carried in by the *particular individual*, whose role is to ensure the local adequacy of this relation – be it by way of *wu-wei*, *resolute vision*, or *poiesis* – which in effect is some form of deconstruction along the way of accommodating knowledge to practice.

We can note here that such a deconstruction appears to be a necessary feature of the interplay of global and local significations within the views of Heidegger and *Laozi*, a feature which issues from the essential nothingness intrinsic to their key notions. And yet, within our perspective, whether or not such a deconstruction will take place within a certain view or a way of understanding, ultimately will not preclude the status of the interplay in question from being the condition for possibility of any difference of significance both in the life of the single individual and in culture and praxis as a whole.

Rorty's Philosophy as Politics

Though perhaps again not immediately obvious, the metaphilosophy of Richard Rorty exemplifies the interplay of global and local significations in its own way and advances the notion of philosophy as conversation which is open to the rest of the culture and which is essentially global, even as it is maintained locally.

Revisiting the role of philosophy in its post-metaphysical stage, Rorty focuses on the metaphilosophical question of "How are we to conceive of our relation to the Western philosophical tradition?" In his view, so far three answers have been given to this question, namely, *scientistic* (Husserlian), *poetic* (Heideggerian), and *political* (pragmatist).[94]

Rorty sees the *scientistic* answer in the foundationalist quests of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and of the neopositivist philosophy advanced by Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege, for whom philosophy is supposed to facilitate the accumulation of objective knowledge in all areas of "the rest of the culture" by providing them with a "formal scheme" that effectively serves as their "foundation"; that is, grounds them epistemologically and

[93] In her discussion of related aspects of Taoism and Heidegger's philosophy, Joan Stambaugh has also juxtaposed *Tao* and *Being*, but she places her emphasis on parallels between Heidegger's latter notions of *Weg* (way) and *Gelassenheit* (releasement), on the one hand, and *Tao* and *wu-wei*, on the other. Stambaugh's discussion is very insightful and provides ideas for further investigations on parallels between the two views. It is also complementary with our investigation, even though most of her findings do not immediately relate to our goals here. See "Heidegger, Taoism, and the Question of Metaphysics," *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, pp. 79-91.

[94] Richard Rorty, "Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, and as Politics" in *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers*, *Vol. 2* (Cambridge, UK, New York, NY, Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 9.

makes their advancement possible.[95] The *poetic* answer, on the other hand, Rorty links to Heidegger's critique of Husserlian foundationalism that the very "demand for foundations" is already symptomatic of the "misguided rationalism" of the tradition,[96] which, as we have seen, needs to be overcome with the help of *poiesis*. Finally, Rorty associates the *political* answer with the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey, for whom science and knowledge were inevitably linked with the "social hope" for emancipation and progress. Adopting a Deweyan attitude to knowledge and a utilitarian political goal, Rorty advances his own pragmatist version of political answer for the post-metaphysical role of philosophy that will characteristically blend also elements of scientistic and poetic answers.

In an attunement with the metaphilosophical reflections of the later Husserl, who saw philosophy as leading the effort for cultural renewal,[97] Rorty assigns to philosophy a broader cultural role that goes well beyond its own re-current self-apperception. And similarly to Heidegger, he sees the role of philosophy as being essentially deconstructive for purposes of safeguarding, which in Rorty's case is a pragmatic safeguarding of a politically viable and socially hopeful societal organization. As Rorty sees it, "the task of philosophy is to break the crust of convention" in a way that can "help achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number by facilitating the replacement of language, customs, and institutions which impede that happiness."[98] In this sense, he values thinkers like Husserl and Heidegger, as well as all the great figures of the cultural tradition, most of all with regard to the socio-political purpose thus defined, however distant their contribution to it may seem. Thus, for Rorty, philosophy's role here, though not in disregard of its more immediate intellectual tasks, can only be pragmatic. It is one that utilizes the richness of the cultural tradition as the instrumentarium for its lofty purpose and does so in a self-conscious fashion,

> The pragmatist thinks that the tradition needs to be utilized, as one utilizes a bag of tools. Some of these tools, these 'conceptual instruments' – including some which continue to have undeserved prestige – will turn out no longer to have a use, and can just be tossed out. Others can be refurbished. Sometimes new tools may have to be invented on the spot.[99]

To be sure, Rorty apperceives the political usefulness of the scientistic and poetic answers in different ways. He views the language of the scientistic thinkers as confined to the epistemic realm of *perception* and *inference*, which, on his view, bind the thinker to the logic of language and its immediate relation to reality while disallowing a passage beyond the early

[95] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 8. See also pp. 166-169, 269, 369, 390.

[96] Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, p. 11.

[97] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp.16-18; cf. *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzebdentale Phäenomenologie*: *eine Einleitung in die phäenomenologische Philosophie*, herausgegeben von Walter Biemel, *Husserliana*, *bd. VI* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), SS. 15-17. See also "Renewal: Its Problem and Method," P. McCormick & F.A. Elliston (Eds), *Husserl: Shorter Works* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 326-331; cf. "Erneuerung. Ihr Problem und ihre Methode," *Aufsätze und Vorträge, Husserliana*, *bd. XXVII* (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989), SS. 3-13.

[98] Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, pp. 11, 20.

[99] Ibid., p. 9.

Witgensteinean notion that philosophizing is a 'clarification of thoughts'.[100] For him, this means that the scientistic philosophy remains tied to the foundationalist presupposition that there is a "true, natural, ahistorical matrix of all knowledge and language," and thus to the task of discovering and offering it to the rest of the culture.[101] Consequently, Rorty sees the scientistic philosophy as "escaping from history," as generating "a little influence" and "a little interest" outside itself, and thus as losing its relevance to practice.[102]

On the other hand, Rorty sees Heidegger's poetic response to the tradition as introducing within the philosophical language the *metaphor* as a "voice from outside the logical space."[103] In effect, the metaphorical usage of language allows for revisiting and deconstruction of any foundationalist thinking, by offering a passage outside its logic and its ahistorical perspective into the significations of history. Thus, for Rorty, thinkers like Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Hegel, advance "metaphilosophy... in the form of an historical narrative which places the works of the philosophers within the historical development of culture."[104] In Rorty's view, this historical approach to the contributions of the tradition – unlike the ahistorical one of the scientistic philosophy – leaves philosophy open to and in close relation with the other areas of culture; it likewise makes it relevant to practice and politically significant.[105]

Now, Heidegger, besides his unfortunate political affiliations, never assigned any immediate political purpose to the metaphorical language. He thought of the 'thinker as a poet' as having the broader cultural role of safeguarding Being but this role itself remains broadly outlined and lacking on further specifics. Rorty, for his part, endeavors to adopt his 'poetical' metaphorics for a political goal, which is more specific in terms of purpose but in essence remains broadly defined along the classic utilitarian thesis of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number."[106] The manner of achieving this goal is also fairly broadly defined as "reducing human suffering and oppression" by their "continual exposure" in all their forms.[107] So far as the specifics of the metaphilosophical role of philosophy (including regarding its goal and the manner of its achievement) are concerned, Rorty remains cautious – apparently due to a concern of falling into the trap of the 'ahistorical' scientism, which would confer undue objectivity along its justificatory proceedings. Instead, Rorty seeks to apperceive this role in a way that is effectively historical and better immune against the perceptual and inferential limits of the scientistic language. Essentially, this means that our relation to the tradition can be better understood if we are able to grasp its historical voice along its peculiar historical exchange of metaphors, rather than if we remain trapped within the ahistorical perspective of the scientistic philosophizing. Ultimately, for him, this historical voice is most vividly detectable "in the last two centuries' attempts to realize the ideals of the French revolution"

[100] Ibid., p. 12.
[101] Ibid., p. 25.
[102] Ibid., pp. 23-24; cf. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pp. 9-10.
[103] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[104] Ibid., p. 21.
[105] Ibid., p. 24.
[106] Jeremy Bentham, *A Comment on the Commentaries and A Fragment on Government*, ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 393.
[107] Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, pp. 12-25.

and calls for "contribution to social freedom" and for the creation of a world, in which "every human potentiality is given a fair chance."[108]

We need to note here that Rorty's vision on the use of grasping the 'voice' of the exchange of metaphors in history is nonetheless different from that of Heidegger's. Unlike Heidegger, for whom the thinker as poet aims to revive the forgotten metaphors which still shelter the voice of Being from the contemporary "technological frenzy," Rorty sees the social contribution of the political pragmatist in providing, giving a chance, and letting "new, vibrantly alive metaphors" become "literalized" or "dead metaphors."[109] These new metaphors that will arise, fade, and become literalized – on the way to "realizing the ideals of the French revolution" and achieving "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" – will announce the historical, not merely ahistorical termination of the human suffering and injustice. They will announce the historical, not merely the ahistorical, realization of the social hope.

Like other contemporary thinkers, Rorty saw the political role of philosophy as a kind of social critique, which exposes social injustice in order to facilitates social progress and emancipation. Rorty, however, thinks that 'radical criticism' is not necessary, because "the contemporary democratic societies are *already* organized around the need of continual exposure of the human suffering and injustice."[110] A key point that he makes in this regard is that the issue of "democracy-versus-totalitarianism" is "as basic as an intellectual issue can get" and we cannot simply negate it as a 'phenomenon of modernity', as Heidegger and Adorno did.[111] Rorty's stand is clear here - it is democracy and at that social democracy that can serve best the Deweyan "social hope" for ridding our world of "human suffering and oppression"; whereas philosophers – in their task of exposing and reducing them – become "politically useful in the same way as poets, playwrights, economists, and engineers."[112]

Rorty has expressed a general optimism in the capacity of the humanity race to create a world of social justice and emancipation, in which we continuously achieve "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," including an optimism over the pessimism of thinkers like Heidegger and Adorno regarding the dangers of our relation of technology.[113] But he has also expressed his pessimism regarding the state of the human affairs in our contemporary world, linking their problems to the relations between power and politics across the globe. He has not hesitated to localize various *forms* of "human suffering and oppression," including "those endured by women as a class," "the imminent nuclear holocaust, the permanent drug-riddled black underclass in the US, the impossibility of feeding countries like Haiti and Chad." He has likewise localized various *powers* responsible for them, including "the oilmen of Texas or Qatar or Mexico, the nomenklatura of Moscow and Bucharest, the generals of Indonesia or Chile," the governments of the "rich or the military" in the Third world, the communist governments of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.[114] Still, Rorty would not give in to the pessimistic factology, nor would he to his disillusioning ascertainment that "our political imagi-

[108] Ibid., pp. 18, 25.
[109] Ibid., p. 17.
[110] Ibid., pp. 24-25.
[111] Ibid., p. 19.
[112] Ibid., pp. 24-25.
[113] Ibid., p. 20.
[114] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

nation has not been enlarged by the philosophy of our century."[115] Instead, by dropping the "metaphilosophical scientism," he would advance a political role of philosophy that keeps the debate going "in terms of actual problems" that the democratic societies face in order to rid the world of "suffering and injustice."[116] Many of the forms and sources of human suffering and injustice pointed by Rorty have been already eliminated or contained at the present time, at least in part due to our increased capacity of a philosophical socio-cultural reflection of the type he has described. This has likewise vindicated at least in part his point that, together with the scientist, the artist, the engineer, and everybody else, philosopher can effectively give his or her fair share for achieving the *greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.*

Rorty's metaphilosophy is a result of his pragmatic appropriation of the philosophical tradition. Dropping the scientistic metaphilosophy served him to open the area of philosophy to the rest of the culture and indeed to all culture. The Heideggerian 'poetic' response served him as an instrument to expand the language of philosophy beyond the scientistic ahistorical perspective and into a historical one. Whereas the pragmatist sense of the Deweyan social hope, which he further specified as a realization of the "ideals of the French revolution," served him to orient philosophy towards a goal that is essentially political. Leaving aside any ahistorical philosophizing while resorting to heeding to the voice of history has made it possible for Rorty to insist that this sense of politics, which advances democracy, and specifically social democracy, has a priority to any other task that philosophy could set to itself.[117] He has thus seen knowledge as "solidarity,"[118] as "conversation," and indeed as "the conversation of mankind," rather than as an essentialist exercise that is justified ahistorically,

> If we see knowing not as having an essence, to be described by scientists and philosophers, but rather as right, by current standards, to believe, then we are well on the way to seeing *conversation* as the ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood.[119]

Rorty has thus neatly fitted within our terms here. By rejecting the philosophical scientism in its both positivistic and phenomenological forms he has lined up with *Laozi* and Heidegger in accounting for what we called the *essential nothingness* that lies at the core of any philosophizing. For him, this meant that, rather than searching for an essence, philosophy would be better off maintaining its conversation. In the same way, it also meant adopting a *political* approach to the philosophical tradition, which, while eschewing the ahistorical essentialism of the 'scientistic' one, retains pragmatically the historicity of the 'poetic' one. Consequently, Rorty apperceives the task of the philosophy and the rest of culture as set by history upon the goal of achieving "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

---

[115] Ibid., p. 26.
[116] Ibid., p. 25.
[117] Richard Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, UK, New York, NY, Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 175-196.
[118] "Solidarity or Objectivity?" and "Science as Solidarity," ibid., pp. 21-34, 35-45; cf. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge, UK, New York, NY, Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1989), especially pp. 141ff.
[119] *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 389.

We can note here that it is characteristic of this goal that, besides being political, it is also a global one, and that it can be achieved globally only if it is achieved locally. Rorty believes this could be done by dispelling the various forms of human "suffering and oppression" with the help of a pragmatic utilization of the trustworthy resource of the global cultural tradition, as well as with the active involvement of the individual human beings in their capacity of problem-solvers (including as scientists, artists, engineers, philosophers, and others). Thus, the "social hope" that Rorty advances is in its essence a global one, whereas its true realization needs to go through a peculiar type of philosophical conversation that is indeed enacted and operated locally but reaches out globally. Properly speaking, such a conversation could only take the form of a global cultural exchange, whereas the individuals involved in it can be seen as participants in a conversation that goes well beyond its local significance to attain a global one, thus becoming a global conversation.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the terms "the greatest happiness" and "the greatest number," which I take – within our terms here – to be the most indicative of the significations of, respectively, the global and the local in Rorty's view. For, the sense of the former refers to what is most abstract, far-reaching, and universal (that is, global), whereas that of latter to what is most particular, singular, and individual (that is, local). As in the case of *Laozi*'s *Tao* and *Te*, as well as Heidegger's *Being* and *beings*, these Rorty's terms delimit the sense and meaning of all the others terms he considers resourceful in his metaphilosophical perspective, such as *metaphor*, *progress*, *poetical*, *historical*, *political*, and others. The latter can be thus seen as being simply mediators in the interplay of the significations of "the greatest happiness" and "the greatest number," an interplay which we also characterized as mediating between theory and practice. In this sense, the interplay of the significations of the global and the local becomes again the condition for possibility of any difference of significance in Rorty's view, very much as it does also in the views of Lao-tse and Heidegger.

In conclusion

The above discussion of the three thinkers was meant to show that their philosophical views inevitably involve an interplay of global and local significations. Lao-tse's notion of the relation of *Tao* and *Te*, Heidegger's view of *Dasein*'s ascendance from *beings* to *Being* via its *Umwelt*, and Rorty's pragmatist pursuit of the "greatest happiness for the greatest number" all present us with concepts that express a fundamental and intrinsic relation between what is conceptually most general, widest, and *global* (that is, *Tao*, *Being*, *greatest happiness*), and what is most particular, singular, and *local* (that is, *Te*, *beings*, *greatest number*). Likewise, they presented the human individuals in exchange of differences of significance both in the locality of their own existence and into the global whole of theoretical and practical exchanges, to which they inevitably belonged. These are exchanges of differences in various cultural, axiological, historical, economic, socio-political, intercultural, literary, and other senses. They are indicative of a peculiar type of conversation, which exchanges differences just as the simplest form of dialogical conversation does.

This sense of *conversation* is thus one key conceptual feature that the views of these three thinkers have in common. Their conversationalist character points – in each instant – to a belonging-together of the differences they exchange through and through. For, if "in language there are only differences,"[120] a conversation is bringing differences together, and bringing them in a way that is meaningful. Thus, each of these views is a conversation on its own that purports to be a meaningful conversation, whereas brought together, as is our purpose here, they must form a yet another meaningful conversation. Any conversation itself is also making a difference, whereas making a difference is a contribution of a viewpoint that provides a better chance for what has been viewed to be properly seen and understood. Indeed, the idea that a yet another viewpoint, and indeed multiple viewpoints, is epistemically significant in knowledge justification has been long since appreciated in our intellectual history. Particularly, in the modern philosophical thinking, it got a rationalistic elaboration in the work of Gottfried Leibniz who designated it as *monadology*,[121] a term that was later on adopted by Husserl, who elaborated on it to insure phenomenology with objectivity and universality.[122] Our notion of conversation thus includes the sense of monadology, the interrelations of concepts within a particular worldview or theory, the interdependences of theory and practice, as well as the cultural and the intercultural exchange of differences as a whole.

Equally, a conversation in this sense is also a *global* conversation. For a difference never stands alone – it is always in relation to other differences, and indeed to all other differences whatsoever. Being *global* is thus another feature that the views of these three thinkers inevitably have in common. This sense of global, however, does not just mean widespread around the planet. Instead, it signifies global in the transcendental sense - the sense which Kant tied with the conditions for the possibility of knowledge, the sense of his Copernican revolution, which presumed that "that objects must conform to our knowledge," rather than the other way around.[123] The sense of global 'as widespread around the planet', the geographical sense, only instantiates the transcendental sense; that is, it exemplifies its sense of abstract universality in the empirical way. For their part, the phenomenological and existential approaches would bypass the empirical experience for the sake of transcendental and existential experience, but will only affirm the status of the *global* as a *condition for the possibility of knowledge* once again. For, in their respective epistemic perspectives, whether as the Husserlian universality of the phenomenon or as the Heideggerian emerging *phusis* of beings as such and as a whole, the *global* would still be indispensable in the construction of knowledge.

[120] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1959), p. 120; cf. Cours de linguistique générale, édité par Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye et Albert Riedlinger, (Paris: Payot, 1971), p. 166.

[121] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Leibniz's Monadology: A New Translation And Guide* by Lloyd Strickland (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); cf. *La Monadologie*, édition annotée par Émile Boutroux (Paris: Delagave, 2017).

[122] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 140; cf. *Husserliana*, *bd. I* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), S 167.

[123] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1929), B xvii; *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1952), B xvii.

At the same time, this sense of conversation has also a *local* dimension, for it is always re-enacted and maintained *on the spot*. It is not just a socio-cultural occurrence, nor merely an abstract speculative construction, (even though it could be viewed that way when its concept is taken up for deconstruction). It is a conversation that has a concrete and keenly detectable expression, which makes it bound to particular circumstances and context of understanding. It is thus fitting not only within Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* as temporalizing in its *Umwelt*, but also within Wittgenstein's view of the *language games*, where "the *speaking* of language" is understood as "part of an activity, or of a form of life."[124] Still, in the conversation, the local signifies on a par with the global, and again – not just in a particular geographical sense. It signifies also in the transcendental sense, in which the local is understood as going beyond the immediate environment of its locality to signify as universality, or globality. For, a difference that arises locally is at once also a difference globally, whereas the local and the global are – as significations – mutually implicated. Thus, the local is a *condition for the possibility of knowledge* on a par with the global: they form a fundamental difference which, regardless of its conceptual-terminological expression (*Tao-Te*, *Being-beings*, *greatest happiness-greatest number*), is indispensable for any construction of knowledge.

It is in this sense of *conversation*, *global*, and *local*, that thinkers, as different as Lao-tse, Martin Heidegger, and Richard Rorty, can be seen as participating in a *global conversation on the spot*. Within these terms, they can be also seen as having a lot more in common than it may be initially supposed. However, our contention goes even further than that to assert that this must be also true of and keenly detectable within the work of many other thinkers, including across disciplines and cultures. For, our discussion of these key terms also indicates that, so long as such fundamental philosophical concepts as *Loazi*'s *Tao*, Heidegger's *Being*, and Rorty's *political* are readily representable within them, *any form of philosophical and cultural difference can be represented as an interplay of both global and local significations*.

Our study thus concludes with the purported assertion that *the recurrence of the global into the local and vice versa* is not accidental but is instead the condition for possibility of any difference of significance both in the life of the single individual and in culture and praxis as a whole. A separate study could seek to identify more common aspects of the three views at stake, but in the perspective of the present one two of them, which we consider most fundamental and key to identifying all others, have already become manifest: 1) the *essential nothingness* of the principal concepts of *Loazi*'s *Tao*, Heidegger's *Being*, and Rorty's *political*; and 2) the decisive role of the *particular individual* for the maintenance of the global conversation. What we called the essential nothingness of *Loazi*'s *Tao*, Heidegger's *Being*, and Rorty's *political* stems from their indefinability in positive terms. As we saw, *Tao* as *wu*, *Being* as *nothing*, and the *political* as *non-essentialist* play the principal conceptual part in their respective views but remain beyond the human capacity for determination. It is thus the particular individual that needs to make up for their indefinability by accounting for it and by using crit-

[124] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe/ *Philosophische Unterchungen* (Oxford, UK; Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 23.

ical thought and creativity in a quest for positivity – be it peace and harmony, the meaning of Being, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number. For, the single individual – whether thinker or doer, theoretician or practitioner, creator or appreciator, writer or reader, performer or spectator, teacher or learner, producer or consumer – is the *modus operandi* of the interplay between the global and the local, who keeps the global conversation going, a conversation that he or she is always and inevitably having on the spot.

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 39-58

ELEMENTAL EVIL – LEVINAS RE-READING HEGEL

Tomokazu Baba

Abstract

One of the Russian speaking immigrant philosophers in France, Emmanuel Levinas was close to the milieu of the French "Hegel Renaissance" led by Alexandre Kojève and Alexandre Koyré. His reading of Hegel was rather characterized by a radical opposition to the champion of German Idealism, largely under the influence of German Jewish Philosophers like Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig. In a lecture at the Sorbonne, Levinas insisted that there is paganism of Hegelian philosophy which leads to what he calls elemental Evil. Levinas' peculiar reading of Hegel is rooted in a critique of the Western philosophy and in a confrontation with the Hitlerian Weltanschauung *as a kind of philosophy. Martin Heidegger, one of Levinas' teachers in phenomenology in Freiburg, had indeed defined philosophy as kind of Weltanschauung in a lecture which the young Levinas attended. Thus, for Levinas, to go beyond the Hegelian paganism as a self-identical philosophy and to introduce alterity in philosophy became a genuine life concern. In this paper, I shall endeavor to confirm it throughout his later reading of Hegel.*

Keywords: *Uprootedness, enrootedness, Hegel, Heidegger, Levinas, Simone Weil*

Introduction

In his brief report on the evolution of Hegelian studies in France,[1] Alexandre Koyré pointed that the French reception of Hegel's philosophy was really weak compared to that in Italy or in U.K. Strictly speaking, there was no Hegelian School in France in the 19th century despite the presence of philosophers regarded as Hegelians (like Victor Cousin). At the beginning of the 20th century, the image of the champion of German Idealism in France was still coming down to a conservative philosopher from Prussia, systematic but with extremely abstract thought that is far from everyday human life That image was to drastically change, when Jean Wahl published his Study on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, titled *Unhappiness of the Consciousness in the philosophy of Hegel* in 1929,[2] which unearthed a more human side of the systematic philosophy of the German thinker.

[1] Alexandre Koyré, «Rapport sur l'état des études hégéliennes en France (Verhandlungen des ersten Hegelkongresses, La Haye, 1930, Tübingen, 1931)» in *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard 1971), p. 225.

[2] Jean Wahl, *Malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: Rieder, 1929).

Wahl (1888-1974) is also credited with introducing the existential philosophy in France through his *Studies of Kierkegaard*[3] at a time when the landscape of the French philosophy was dominated by the Bergsonian philosophy of life and the neo-Kantian epistemological philosophy of Brunschvicg. Before the end of the WWII, the reception and understanding of Hegelian philosophy is also linked with two Russian thinkers, Alexandre Koyré (1892-1964), especially with his study "Hegel in Jena" (1934),[4] and with his close friend,[5] Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968), with his famous lectures on *Phenomenology of Spirit*,[6] which greatly influenced young intellectuals as Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan, Raymond Queneau, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Raymond Aron, and Jean Hyppolite (1907-1968).[7] In addition to the works of Wahl, Koyré, and Kojève Hyppolite's translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* (1939-41), as well as his study *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (1946) will complete the "renaissance" of the French Hegelian studies.

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), who spoke Russian in his daily life in his native country Lithuania, was a close observer of this renaissance, as, upon finishing his dissertation on Husserl at Strasbourg and coming to Paris, he became a part of this milieu. Having found no job at university or research institution, Levinas worked for the French Jewish Organization *Alliances Israelites Universelles*, but he stayed in touch with the latest philosophical tendencies in Paris. He participated, for example, in Jean Wahl's seminar in the Sorbonne and he also wrote book reviews for some philosophical periodicals. Among the latter was *Recherches philosophiques* edited by Koyré, with whom he had already worked for the translation of Husserl's lecture series given in Paris[8]
– what we can now read as the 1st volume of *Husserliana*: *Cartesian Meditations*. Levinas, who was a student of Husserl in Freiburg, was one of the two translators of these lectures. And Koyré, who was a student of Husserl in Göttingen, revised this translation.[9] According to a biography of Levinas, he also attended Kojève's lectures.[10]

Based on these historical facts, one might expect that Levinas' interpretation of Hegel would be under the influence of the studies of the French "Hegel Renaissance," because almost all of its main advocates were in close relations with him. But as it is well-known, Levinas' view on Hegel is characterized by a radical opposition to his systematic philosophy, which has in effect minimalized that influence. That said, besides this first general observation on Levinas' view on Hegel, we must also acknowledge his positive mentions of Hegel's philosophy, which are recognizable at a closer reading.

---

3 Jean Wahl, *Études kierkegaardiennes* (Paris: F. Aubier, 1938).

4 «Hegel à Iéna» (*Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 1934), in Alexandre Koyré, *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, pp. 147-189.

5 In 1924 Kojève meets his future wife Cecile Leonidovna Shoutak in Heidelberg, who is sister-in-law of Alexandre Koyré. Since then the two philosophers became close friends. Cf. Dominique Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève La philosophie, l'État, la fin de l'Histoire* (Bernard &Grasset, 1990), p. 427.

6 Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

7 Dominique Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève La philosophie, l'État, la fin de l'Histoire*, pp. 253ff.

8 Husserl Edmond [sic.], *Méditations cartésiennes. Introduction à la phénoménologie*, trans. Gabrielle Pfeifer et Emmanuel Levinas (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947). (Lecture of 23 and 25 Feburary1929).

9 Ibid., VII.

10 Marianne Lescourret, *Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), p. 108.

Hence, here we confront the question, how did Levinas understand Hegel? Surely, this is not a simple question to answer. In fact, Levinas' reading of Hegel shows an evolution, which calls for a more thorough approach to the question. In this paper, we would like to focus on Levinas' later reading of *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its philosophical and political signification, which is directly related to Levinas' lifetime concern with what enabled the rise of the National Socialism.

To search for a relation between Hegel and National Socialism seems to be anachronistic as Hegel is a philosopher of the 19th century and the Nazi ideology itself has nothing to do with the Hegelian philosophy. But Levinas' reading of Hegel in his maturity is characterized by such a perspective, and this is not without reason. Moreover, this reason is not out of date.

In the following sections, we will retrace, in the first place, the general perspective of Levinas' reception of Hegel based on what Levinas says in his first major work *Totality and Infinity* (Section 1). After this work, Levinas focuses on the philosophical anti-Semitism of Hegel, which for Levinas is both political and philosophical concern. To understand Levinas' viewpoint here, we go back to the 1930's when he started thinking about the question of "Hitlerism" as a philosophical problem. We seek the framework of understanding here in Heidegger's only lecture at which Levinas was present (Section 2). Then, we will move on reconstructing Levinas' reading of Hegel based on the critique of anti-Semitism we find in his book review (Section 3) and in his last lecture at Sorbonne (Section 4). Finally, we will discuss Levinas' original reading of Hegel compared to those of the philosophers of the "Hegel Renaissance" in France and will suggest another genealogy offering such a perspective (Section 5).

1. Outline of Levinas' reception of Hegel

1.1 Levinas, critical reader of Hegel

Despite his opposition to Hegel, Levinas also acknowledges the importance of Hegel in the history of the Western philosophy. More specifically, he considers *Phenomenology of Spirit* to be one of the five greatest works in in the Western philosophical tradition.[11] He devoted much of his spare time during his wartime captivity to books reading, with Hegel occupying his focus of attention. When asked about this by Francois Poirié, the first name Levinas mentioned was Hegel,

> Poirié: "What have you read during your captivity?"
> Levinas: "I read Hegel of course, but also many philosophical books of all tendencies."[12]

Hence, his opposition to Hegel is not based on ignorance or insufficient knowledge on the Hegelian system but on a serious reading which implies that his critique should be regarded as important and worthy. Actually, Levinas regards his own philosophy as completely opposed to

[11] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethique et Infini: Dialogues avec Philippe Nemo* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), p. 28. Other four are Plato's *Phaedrus,* Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bergson's *Essay on the immediately Given* and Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

[12] François Poirié, *Emmanuel Lévinas. Essai et entretiens* (Arles: Acte Sud, 1996), p. 95.

that of Hegel's, which he considers to be representative of the philosophy of totality, which is why it is a fundamental task of his 'ethics as first philosophy' to overcome this totality through the infinity of the Other.

When Levinas, in his first major work *Totality and infinity*, focuses his critique on the totality of the Hegelian system, this totality means first of all the teleological structure of a history described as the development of Reason starting from perceptual certainty and ending up with absolute knowledge. This was the history developed in *Phenomenology of Spirit* and understood as a historical movement toward an End, a history which is embodied in the World History starting from the Eastern (*Morgenland*) and ending in Western (*Abendland*) – just like a day begins and ends. This is how Hegel describes the history of Reason in his lectures on World History. Against this idea of teleological History, Levinas introduces the idea of eschatology which goes beyond totality. "Eschatology institutes a relation with being beyond the totality or beyond history, and not with being beyond the past and the present."[13] When Levinas introduces this concept, he explicitly refers to Hegel.[14]

Still, it is not only this concept of History that Levinas targets in his critique of the Hegelian philosophy; another one is that of self-identical consciousness. Levinas asserts that the idea of the self in Hegel is an expression of the universality of the Same (Même) and is identified even with the otherness of the perceived objects. In Levinas' view, the notion of the Same deprives the perceived diverse objects of their otherness. (He quotes here a passage of *Phenomenology* translated by Hyppolite).[15] He further on thinks that, with Husserl and Heidegger, the Hegelian philosophy comes to represents the essence of the Western philosophy, namely, ontology. In Levinas' view, however, this ontology was "a reduction of the Other to the Same, through intervention of an intermediate and neutral term which ensures the intelligence of the being."[16]

1.2. Against Hegel

Against ontology, Levinas opposes his principle of separation.[17] This is the leading concept of *Totality and infinity*, which makes it possible to think of the relation of the self with the Other otherwise than through totality. A totalitarian or holistic philosophy reduces the otherness of the Other in a systematic structure by mediation of neutral and intermediate terms, whereas the relation of separation allows us to show another possible relation to the Otherness

[13] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini Essai sur l'extériorité* (Livre de poche, 2000), p. 7; *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1998).

[14] "Eschatological idea of judgment (contrary to the judgment of history where Hegel saw by mistake the rationalization of the former) implies that the beings have an identity "before" the eternity, before the achievement of the history, before that the times are developed (…)". Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 8.

[15] Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 25. "The Hegelian phenomenology – where the conscience of self is the distinction of that which is not distinct expresses the universality of the same, identifying itself in the otherness of objects of thought and despite the opposition of self to self. "I distinguish myself from myself and in this process, it is immediately evident for me that that which is distinct is not distinct. Me, the homonym, I reject myself, but that which is distinguished and given as different is, as immediately distinct, deprived for me of all difference" (Translation by Hyppolite). Cf. Georg W.F. Hegel, *Phénoménology de l'Esprit tome II (1941)*, trans. Jean Hyppolite (Paris: Aubier, 1992).

[16] Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, pp. 34-35.

[17] Ibid., p. 108.

of the Other. Ethical situations, where the ego is interpellated by the face of the other, are examples of this relation of separation. However, if the ego and the Other are absolutely separated and without any relation, the interpellation of the Other would have no effect on the ego. It is because the ego already has in itself something enabling the response to the Other that the ego can reply to the Other and the interpellation can be interpellation. This something is what Levinas calls 'the idea of infinity'. The precursor of this concept is Descartes' idea of God's infinity. By ridding it of its original theological implication, Levinas has transformed it into an ethical concept. In this way, he essentially clarifies his own method of philosophy.

This notion of separation constitutes the core of Levinas' own method of reasoning, which he opposes to Hegel's method of reasoning. He articulates his methodological opposition to Hegel by drawing attention to what does *not* belong to Hegel's method,

> The whole of this work aims to show a relation with the Other standing out not only against the logic of the contradiction where the other of A is non-A, negation of A, but also against the dialectical logic where the Same participates dialectically with the Other and reconciles with it in the unity of the system.[18]

For Levinas, neither the classical (Aristotelian) logic nor the dialectical (Hegelian) logic can account of the relation of separation. For the relation to the Other as separation can be understood only through the idea of infinity.

Levinas thus introduces an ethical situation, which remains beyond the holistic framework of the Hegelian system. To properly respond to it, he needs and essentially constructs a phenomenology of the "intotalisable."[19] This is the general philosophical sense of the theoretical opposition between Levinas' philosophy of alterity and Hegel's system of totality.

2. Philosophical Analysis of "Elemental Evil"

2.1. Hitlerian Weltanschauung *as "philosophy"*

Our sketch of Levinas' reception of Hegel so far, of course, does not exhaust his reading of Hegel. As Levinas himself regarded Hegel as one of the greatest philosophers, he has inevitably learned and appropriated something from Hegel's philosophy within his own thought. His positive regard of Hegel's early theological writings, and particularly on the identity relationship of parent to child, is well known.[20] In line with the Hegel scholars in France, he would have learned much about the Hegelian philosophical intuition. Levinas and Hegel also share the theme of sacrifice, which can be a good subject for comparative study. Thus a characterization of Levinas' view on Hegel's philosophy only in terms of opposition, negative reception, and critique would be utterly incomplete.

In Levinas' lectures at the Sorbonne just before his retirement, we find a peculiar

[18] Ibid., p. 161.

[19] I borrow this word from Philippe Grosos, *Phénoménologie de l'intotalisable* (Paris: Cerf, 2013).

[20] Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 299. "In the writings of his youth, Hegel could say that the child was the parents; and in *Weltalter*, Schelling – for theological needs – could deduce the brotherhood (filialité) of the identity of the Being." See also, G.W.F. Hegel; *On Christianity Early Theological Writings* (1948), trans. T.M. Knox (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 265.

reading of *Phenomenology of Spirit* in his maturity, which also comes on the background of his rediscovery of Hegel's early theological writings. In his later (re-)reading of Hegel, Levinas searches for the roots of anti-Semitism or of what he calls Hitlerism (cf. infra 3.2). In his own words, he was in the search of the "élément," "élémentaire," or "elemental" Evil. The idea for this search comes up already in the 1930's, with his philosophical analysis of Hitlerism, and particularly – of a "philosophical" intuition of the racist and *völkisch* ideology of Nazism, when the young Levinas wrote an article "Some reflexions on the philosophy of Hitlerism" in 1934 and gave a philosophical analysis of the problem, as Hitler was nominated for *Führer* of the Third Reich.[21]

This article begins with a statement, showing scorn for Hitler's thinking: "The philosophy of Hitler is primary."[22] His ensuing argument is an attempt to illuminate the terrific power of this "primary philosophy" which carries an "elementary sentiment" of Germans. Levinas' intention is clear: to alert the readers of the basic puerility of Hitler' thought and to make them aware of its potential power to bring people into an imaginary communion, thus providing them with the feeling of being rooted and secured in a time of anxiety. Levinas' warning here was aimed at the roots of the danger drawing attention to its depth and calling for its serious philosophical explanation. Basically, in his view, the elementary sentiment evoked by Hitlerism contained a "philosophy."[23] What he calls "philosophy" here corresponds to a word used widely at the time, namely, *Weltanschauung* (literally, 'world view'). Hitler himself in his *Mein Kampf*, as well as his ideologue Alfred Rosenberg in his *Myth of the 20th Century*, employed this term to designate their "philosophy" in its intuitive form. This term, however, was not used exclusively by the extreme nationalists in Germany; it was also used by French philosophers like Simone Weil, who, for instance, in a letter to Jean Wahl, used the German word.[24] It was a widespread, and in fact "normal," but untranslatable German word, which designated a pre-philosophical and intuitive, but also fundamental understanding of the world.

2.2. Weltanschauung *as philosophy in Heidegger*

In the modern German philosophy, Dilthey employed the term in the 19th century in the sense of what is lying at the base of the metaphysics as a "type" of knowledge. He has enumerated several different types of *Weltanschauung*, which have become prominent throughout the history of philosophy (Cf. *Study of Weltanschauung*). In the 20th century, Karl Jaspers gave a detailed psychological analysis of the concept in his *Psychology of Weltanschauung* (the work became the turning point of his interests from psychology to philosophy). Then, Martin Heidegger, a serious reader of this work and a friend of the author,[25] introduced this concept

[21] Emmanuel Levinas, *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlérisme. Suivi d'un essai de Miguel Abensour* (Paris: Rivage, 1997). The article was originally published in *Esprit*, no. 26 (novembre,1934).

[22] Ibid., p. 7.

[23] Ibid., p. 7.

[24] Simone Weil, *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p. 978. "Letter to Jean Wahl," octobre 1942: "J'aurais beaucoup désiré vous voir, principalement pour savoir si vos experiences personnelles ont modifié votre *Weltanschauung*, et comment."

[25] Heidegger wrote considerably long review of this book, which was too long to be published.

into his "metaphysics" of *Dasein* from the late 20's and 1930s,[26] though he would largely abandon this term in his later work. It is clear then that the term was given a serious attention in philosophy from the end of the 19th century and well into the 20th century, something that we need to take into account when reading Levinas' analysis of the "philosophy" or *Weltanschauung* of Hitlerism.

In the winter semester of 1928-9, Heidegger gave a lecture in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, currently published in *Introduction to Philosophy*,[27] where he defined philosophy as a kind of *Weltanschauung*. The young Levinas attended this lecture as a student,[28] and curiously, Jean Wahl devoted a lecture to this Heidegger's lecture just after WWII.[29] Wahl's lecture was based upon notes taken by an attendee today unknown. Given a personal relationship between him and Levinas,[30] they are likely to have discussed the contents of Heidegger's lecture. For us, the important point in the lecture is the place of philosophy in relation to the *Weltanschauung* and the forms of *Weltanschauung*, and we will briefly summarize Heidegger's argument here.

According to Heidegger's lecture, *Weltanschauung* is first of all *Halt* (Shelter) for *Dasein* living in the mythological world. At this particular stage, the world appears to *Dasein* as an "overwhelming power" (*Übermacht*), and this *Weltanschauung* (as shelter) offers a way for the *Dasein* to escape from the menace of the overwhelming nature. One such way are the prayers for divinities, magic, rituals etc.,[31] which offer security in the threatening world. But just as beliefs and rituals provide such a vital security, they themselves become a subject of protection on the part of the believers. In this way, however, the shelter at stake always runs a risk of degradation (*Entartung*).[32] and thus becomes a subject of preservation (*Haltung*). Subsequently, prayers and rituals are being observed in order to be preserved, while their initial signification falls into oblivion.[33] However, at the stage after the mythological shelter, *Dasein* becomes also capable of philosophizing.[34] By way of philosophy, *Dasein* can transcend itself beyond the self it was in the mythological world. Philosophy is thus a way to get out of the shelter of the mythological representation of the world.

What is important for us in this regard, is that the relation of the human being to the

---

[26] In a conference presentation Heidegger gave in Cassel, he mentions this term and its usage in Dilthey. On Heidegger's "metaphysics" of *Dasein*, see, François Jaran, *La métaphysique du Dasein: Heidegger et la possibilité de la métaphysique (1927-1930)*, (Zeta Books, 2010).

[27] Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, in *GA* Bd. 27, 2, Durchgesehene Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001).

[28] For Levinas, this lecture was the only lecture of Heidegger he attended in Freiburg (except seminars). Heidegger has just arrived in autumn 1928 to succeed to Husserl who retired in summer semester of the same year.

[29] Jean Wahl, *Introduction à la pensée de Heidegger* (Livre de poche, 1998).

[30] Until the publication of *Totality and Infinity* (1961), Levinas was not affiliated to university institution. After the war, he was director of Jewish normal school in Paris (*École normale israélite orientale*). It was Wahl who gave him occasion to give conferences in Collège philosophique which Wahl organized. A dozen of Levinas' lectures will be integrated into *Totality and Infinity*.

[31] Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, pp. 357-360.

[32] Ibdi., p. 364.

[33] Ibid., p. 366.

[34] Ibid., pp. 379ff.

overwhelming world of nature is marks the beginning of philosophy. When we define philosophy as transcendence of ourselves embedded in the mythological world, philosophy means the emergence from this world. This is in accordance with the widespread understanding of the beginnings of philosophy in Ancient Greece, which results from the end of mythological thinking with the beginning of the rational explanation of the *kosmos*.

If we follow Heidegger's definition, the Nazi ideology of blood and soil (*Blut und Boden*) can also be regarded as *Weltanschauung* or as *preservation*, which nonetheless does not mean exiting from the world. It is preservation because blood and soil are the *shelter* by virtue of which, on the Nazi view, the Germans can survive in the menace of the world. At the same time, as this is taken to be a precious shelter, its ideologues try to *preserve* it at all costs, even by sacrificing millions of lives at the altar of the *Reich*. Still, this *Weltanschauung* is not philosophy *stricto sensu*. If philosophy is transcendence, it must go beyond both shelter and preservation, whereas the ideological mythology in question remains only a sheer preservation. It is nothing else but a rooting in the material (blood and soil) and in the *ideologically represented* world. On this point, Heidegger's argument is ambiguous, though. According to him, philosophy is also *Weltanschauung* but we cannot say whether it belongs to *Weltanschauung* understood as preservation.[35]

When Levinas uses expressions like "the secret nostalgia of the German soul," or "the elementary sentiment," he appears to point to the problematic dimension which Heidegger had left open,[36] even if Levinas makes no explicit reference to his lecture. This sentiment, says Levinas, expresses "the first attitude of a soul face to the whole of the real and its own destiny."[37] This first attitude of human soul, being an instinctive response, calls for a shelter. Thus, those seized by this sentiment remain thoroughly in the world without any transcendence beyond the world. Levinas dares to call their view "philosophy." This choice of the term is understood when we grasp the elementary but profoundly rooted character of the sentiment in question. We cannot underestimate its character and its social and political dimensions. And surely, by calling it "philosophy," Levinas has meant to attract more readers' attention to this matter.

2.3. Philosophical definition of Hitlerism and Judaism

The world immanent character of this attitude is identical with the essence of paganism in a philosophical sense, which Levinas came up with in the next year. In the article "Actuality of Maimonides" (1935), written on the occasion of celebration of the 800th anniversary the greatest Jewish philosopher of the middle Ages,[38] he draws an essential lesson of Maimonides' thought. Although this Jewish philosopher is generally regarded as a great contributor to the reconciliation of the Aristotelianism with the Biblical Revelation, the young Levinas, fol-

[35] Ibid., pp. 391ff.

[36] The way Heidegger related philosophy to *Weltanschauung* remains ambiguous because from his argument also follows that an ideology is also a kind of philosophy. The possible political implications of this lecture, however, require a separate discussion.

[37] Levinas, *Quelques réflexions...*, p. 7.

[38] Emmanuel Levinas, "Actualité de Maïmonide," in *L'Herne Emmanuel Lévinas*, Catherine Chalier and Miguel Abensour (eds.) (Paris: L'Herne, 1991), pp. 142-144. Originally published in *Paix et Droit*, no.4 (avril 1935), pp. 6-7.

lowing the example of his friend and teacher Jacob Gordin (Cf. infra 5.2), highlights the fundamental difference between the Jewish and Greek philosophers.

For Levinas, the difference consists in the distinction of "creation" from "fabrication." It was Maimonides who separated for the first time "the laws of a thought which takes the world for an object of principles, from a thought which has relation to the conditions of the world." It is "the distinction between a thought which thinks the world and that which goes beyond it."[39]

From this distinction, paganism in the sense of a non-Jewish, including Greek, way of thinking is defined as follows: "Paganism is a radical inability to go beyond the world."[40] Paganism is nothing but an "attachment" to the world. In this sense, the elementary "philosophy" of Hitlerism fits perfectly into this definition of paganism. At the same time, Levinas distinguishes Hitlerism from the Aristotelian philosophy, one of the greatest classics of the philosophical thought, by calling the former neo-paganism due to its violent and brutal character. However, he ultimately classifies both of them under the term as paganism, or as the radical inability to go beyond the world.

Quite the opposite, for Levinas, Judaism is a certain form of *Weltanschauung* (even though he does not use this term), which is defined by its uneasiness in the world, in his words, by "an immediate sentiment of the contingency and of the insecurity of the world, an anxiety of being not at home and the energy that comes with it."[41] It is true that-the *Weltanschauung* of *Dasein* was also its first response to the feeling of being threatened by the world, but Judaism does not seek for a shelter in the world, it rather goes beyond the world. In this sense, for Levinas, Judaism is nothing but "philosophy." He saw a radical division between Hitlerism and Judaism, whereas his interpretation of Judaism is the complete opposite to that of the young Hegel's (Cf. infra 3.2).

2.4. Ineradicability of Elemental Evil Rooted in Human Nature

Over half of a century after this article, in 1990, Levinas recollects an intuition that led him to its writing article,

> The article is the product of the conviction that the source of the bloody barbarism of National Socialism is not in some contingent anomaly of human reasoning, nor in some ideological accidental misunderstanding. There is in this article the conviction that this source is due to an essential possibility of *elemental Evil* [Mal élémental] to which ever good logic can lead and for which Western philosophy was not sufficiently prepared to resist.[42]

What he calls here elemental Evil corresponds to the elementary sentiment that Hitler's "philosophy" evokes. In the passage following this quote, Levinas finds a possibility of this Evil even in the ontology of Heidegger, "the ontology of Being, caring about being – about Being

[39] Levinas, "Actualité," p. 144.
[40] Ibid., p. 144.
[41] Ibid., p. 150.
[42] Levinas, *Quelques réflexions…*, p. 25. This part was originally published as additional notes to the English translation of *Quelques réflexions…* as "Post-Scriptum," *Critical Inquiry* 17. no.1 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 63-71.

"*dem es in seinem Sein um dieses Sein selbst geht.*"[43] The phrase quoted in the original German is a part of the definition of *Dasein* given in *Being and Time*. The structure of *Dasein* itself is essentially self-oriented, even if *Dasein* has also *Mitsein* as a part of it. This is the recurring critique Levinas raises against the Heidgger of *Being and Time*.[44] However, Levinas does not jump hastily to the conclusion that this structure necessarily leads to the cause of elemental Evil. He argues only that the structure of *Dasein* contains its possibility.

Here, Levinas does not claim that Heidegger's analysis is an error. Levinas makes a critique in a strict sense; he discerns the limit of this analysis when it is confronted with elemental Evil. Far from denying *Dase*n's legitimacy, in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas *deepens* the analysis of the structure of *Dasein* through his phenomenology of enjoyment (*jouissance*) and its relation to the "element" (or elemental), which enables the enjoyment. Elements are the things which surround each of us as self-interested ego and offer us a basis for our life: air to breathe, solid ground to walk on, soup to eat etc. These are materials and objects of enjoyment which human beings take for granted in everyday life. But on the other hand, this same kind of element threatens our life because it can become typhoon, earthquake, or rotten food alike. So, the meaning that the element has for the human beings is essentially ambiguous. It enables us to survive but sometimes deprives us of life. Everyone naturally wants to escape from its dangers. Paradise or the Garden of Eden is a symbol of a place where there is no such danger, or labor. But people living with their body and material conditions cannot escape from the element. Thus, people pray to divinities representing nature, so that their daily life not be threatened by natural disasters or by daily misfortunes. In this way, however, people, by praying to the divinities themselves, also forget, ignore, or underestimate the ethical relationship between humans. This is what Levinas calls the "risk of paganism."[45] Human beings cannot escape from this risk because human existence contains its possibility in the very heart of its structure. Thus, they are obliged to run it.

This is the outline of the analysis of enjoyment and element, understood as a deeper structure of the ego. It can be noted that Levinas develops his argument first within the lines of Heidegger's view on *Weltanschauung* as shelter and preservation, then broadens it to the *egological* and ecological conditions along which these phenomena of shelter and preservation emerge. Specifically, Levinas' notion of element corresponds to that of shelter, whereas his notion of the risk of paganism corresponds to that of preservation. In this way, Levinas finds also the limits of the ego-ecological analysis with regard to the question of the ethical relationship between humans. For him, the ethical relationship *goes beyond* the relationship between humans and divinities.

We need to note here that Levinas assumes that ethical relation does not accord with the pagan religious life where it is intertwined with the sacred relationships to divinities, as this can be seen in Hegel's interpretation of Antigone's tragedy (Cf. infra 4.2). This is also what Levinas finds in the later philosophy of Heidegger, and especially in the notion of the fourfold (*Geviert*), explained in the article "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1951).[46] Accord-

[43] Levinas, *Quelques réflexions…*, p. 25.
[44] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), Sechzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), pp. 12, 42.
[45] Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 151.
[46] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1954) Vierte Auflage (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1978).

ing to this notion, the unity of Being is constituted by the humans as mortal, the divinities (Göttlichen) as immortal, the sky, and the earth. Here, the humans remain in the world with divinities, which are understood to be also a part of the world,[47] and Levinas saw in that Heidegger's return to the pagan attitude toward the world, to the *Weltanschauung* as shelter and preservation. Levinas' most virulent criticism on this point is in the article "Philosophy and the idea of the infinity" (1956),[48] but we can find a toned-down form of its also in *Totality and Infinity.* According to this criticism, Heidegger's philosophy has lost completely its transcendence beyond the world, and in this sense it is no longer philosophy but just a *Weltanschauung*.[49] On Levinas' view, this "philosophy" is in a position to evoke the same sentiments which led many Germans to embrace the elemental Evil.

Levinas' criticism of the notion of *Geviert* attests to his sensitivity to the source of the elemental Evil. This sensitivity led him to react in the same way to the theological writings of the young Hegel (Cf. infra 3.2) and to his discussion of Antigone's tragedy in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Cf. infra 4.2).

3. Philosophical Anti-Semitism of the Young Hegel in Frankfurt

3.1. Book Review of Bernard Bourgeois

After *Totality and Infinity*, we find another testament of Levinas' re-reading of Hegel in his book review of Bernard Bourgeois' monograph *Hegel in Frankfurt or Judaism, Christianity, Hegelianism* (1970).[50] Bernard Bourgeois (born 1929), a great specialist of German philosophy from Kant to Marx, is one of the leading scholars of the French Hegel studies of the generation of students taught by Jean Hyppolite at École normale supérieure. To the same generation belong also Deleuze, Derrida, Granel, Balibar among others. Levinas, himself viewed Bourgeois as belonging to the generation of Hegelians, next to the one to which Levinas was personally close.

Bourgeois' book was published in 1970 and Levinas reviewed it next year in the *Bulletin of the Judeo-Christian Friendship of France* (*Bulletin de l'amitié judéo-chrétienne de France*),[51] which is the journal of the organization of the same name. If Bourgeois' book appeared in a book review in this journal, which does not have a philosophical vocation, it was because the book discusses the problematical relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the thought of the young Hegel in Frankfurt. In Frankfurt, the young Hegel wrote theological writings such as "Life of Jesus" and "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate." Hegel's Frankfurt period precedes his Jena period to which Koyré devoted an article we referred to

[47] Ibid., pp. 139-156.

[48] Emmanuel Levinas, « La philosophie et l'idée de l'infini », In *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, Edition suivi d'Essaie Nouveaux, troisième édition corrigé, (Paris: J. Vrin, 2001), pp. 229-259. Originally published in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, no.3 (1957).

[49] The most virulent remarks on this point are in "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinity," Levinas, « La philosophie et …», pp. 236-7. See also, Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, pp. 37-38.

[50] Bernard Bourgeois, *Hegel à Francfort ou Judaïsme, Christianisme, Hégélianisme* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1970).

[51] Emmanuel Levinas, « Hegel et les juifs », in *Difficile liberté*, troisième édition revue et corrigée (Livre de poche, 2003). Originally published in *Bulletin de l'amitié judéo-chrétienne de France*, octobre-décembre, 1971, « à propos du Bernard Bourgeois *Hegel à Francfort ou Judaïsme, Christianisme, Hégélianisme* » (Paris: Vrin, 1970), pp. 352-357.

above (Cf. supra 1). As we saw, Levinas had mentioned the passage of the "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate" positively in *Totality and Infinity* with regard to the relation of father (God) and son (Jesus) (Cf. supra 2.1). But Levinas could not accept the interpretation that the young Hegel made of Judaism, according to which the latter is the negation of the spirit.[52] Levinas detects in this claim a philosophical form of anti-Judaism, which on his view remains also in post-Hegelian German philosophers like Marx. We shall briefly look through the review in question.

3.2. Philosophical Anti-Judaism in "Christianity and its Fate"

We have seen above Levinas' philosophical definition of Judaism vs. paganism from the 1930's (Cf. supra 2,2). But what he found in the philosophical definition of Judaism by the young Hegel had the character of a *paganisation* of Judaism, which was unacceptable for the Jewish philosopher. For Levinas, the young Hegel's attempt to analyze philosophically Greeks, Jews, and Christians was equivalent to the beginning of the Western phase in the World History.[53] Hegel saw Judaism as playing the role of Anti-thesis of the Greeks: Greeks lived in harmony with nature, whereas Jews lived in complete separation from nature. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, represented this separation,

> *The existence of Abraham is thus that of a being who is separated from nature as object of love and who makes it an object of needs.*…the Jew is not attached to an idea "but to an animal existence." (…) Thus, the existence of Abraham was entirely dominated by worrying about the natural vicissitudes…[54]

For Levinas, here Hegel comes up with a definition of Judaism, which is the exact-opposite to his own (supra 2.3). The young Hegel finds in Abraham's separation from nature an attachment *für sich* (not *an sich*) to nature, which allows the Jews to make of nature an "object" of love and needs. Hegel sees the Jewish existence as defined by caring for their survival in nature, a nature which ensures but sometimes threatens their life. For him, Jews do not care for "ideas" beyond the sensible world and thus remain completely in that world. This definition of the Jewish existence corresponds perfectly to the philosophical definition of paganism that Levinas gave in 1935 as the "radical inability to go beyond the world."

Hegel's characterisation of Judaism is philosophical and Bourgeois sees its sense as a "particular anticipation of the universal critique of political naturalism or nationalism, which will be developed in the Hegelian system of his maturity."[55] Levinas finds in both Hegel's argument and Bourgeois' review "a doctrine which corroborates (…) the arguments which have nourished anti-Semitism until today." For him, the presentation of the Jewish stage of the Spirit as one, in which "the [spiritual] universality and [natural] particularity are separated" (Levinas quoting Bourgeois), leads to the assertion that the "Jewish spirit is the negation of the spirit," which is tantamount to an "anti-Semitism based in the System."[56]

[52] Levinas, « Hegel et les juifs », p. 354.
[53] Levinas, « Hegel et les juifs », p. 353.
[54] Ibid., pp. 354-355.
[55] Ibid., p. 354. Levinas quoting Bourgeois, *Hegel à Francfort...*, p. 117.
[56] Levinas, « Hegel et les juifs », p. 354.

3.3. Possible Repercussions of Hegelian Philosophical Anti-Semitism

Levinas ends his review with questions about the post-Hegelian consequences of the philosophical Anti-Semitism he finds in Hegel. He asks,

> (…) whether the *Jewish Question* of Marx (…) reflects only an ignorance of the real structure of the mass of Jews in the 19th century, or whether it [ignorance] is not due to the knowledge by osmosis of the Frankfurt philosophy of Hegel and the impossible pity which it teaches, whether Hitlerian propaganda itself drew heavily from this mine, which, *without taking the least distance for himself*, an admirable French academic opens for us in 1970.[57]

The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate was translated for the first time into French by J. Martin with a preface by Hyppolite in 1948.[58] Then, in 1953, Paul Asveld published a monograph on the young Hegel's religious philosophy,[59] but devoted very few pages to his interpretation of Judaism.[60] Thus, as Levinas states in the last sentence, the attention given in France to anti-Jewish contents of the Frankfurt philosophy of Hegel seems to have been quasi null at least from the viewpoint of the general public.[61] In addition, Levinas suggests that the philosophical anti-Semitism of the young Hegel of Frankfurt might have been the remote cause of Marx' perceived ignorance about the Jews, as well as one of the hidden sources of the anti-Semitic ideology of the Nazi.

Two years after Levinas' review, in 1973, Elisabeth de Fontenay has enlarged the framework of Levinas' conjecture,

> It can never be a question, in this regard, of pointing out some texts of Hegel concerning the Jews, in order to situate them both in [his] system and in [its] beginning. It would be ignoring that Hegel did not fail to inherit from a German anti-Jewish heritage passed down from Luther to Kant; though the invariance of this tradition is still hypothetical, and thus needs to be verified.[62]

Levinas is one of the first philosophers to have raised this question in France. But Luc Ferry, in a reference to a lecture by his teacher Jacques Rivelaygue at the Sorbonne,[63] makes a far more assertive diagnosis of what Levinas was wondering in 1971.[64]

We will return to this problem of a German anti-Jewish heritage in the conclusion.

---

[57] Levinas, « Hegel et les juifs », 355.

[58] Georg W.F. Hegel, *L'esprit du christianisme et son destin*, trans. J. Martin, préface par J. Hyppolite (Paris: Vrin, 1948).

[59] Paul Asveld, *La pensée religieuse du jeune Hegel. Liberté et aliénation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1953).

[60] Ibid., pp. 133-135.

[61] The exception would be Léon Poliakov's monumental work *Histoire de l'antisémitisme, III De Voltaire à Wagner* (Paris: Clamann-Lévy, 1968.), where anti-Semitic discourses of Kant, Fichte, Hegel and others are shown in a section devoted to German philosophy and Jews. According to Léon Askénazi, Poliakov was one of the students of Jakob Gordin, *Écrits. Le renouveau de la pensée juive en France* (Albin Michel, 1995), p. 11.

[62] Elisabeth de Fontenay, *Les figures juives de Marx* (Galilée, 1973), p. 49. « Il ne peut s'agir, à cet effet, de relever quelques textes de Hegel concernant les Juifs pour les instituer à la fois en système et en commencement. Ce serait ignorer que se transmet, de Luther à Kant, un héritage allemand antijuif auquel Hegel n'a pas manqué de puiser ; l'hypothétique invariance de cette tradition demanderait du reste à être vérifiée. »

[63] Jacques Rivelaygue, *Leçons de métaphysique allemande. Tome I De Leibniz à Hegel* (Grasset, 1990).

[64] Luc Ferry, « Esprit juif, esprit allemand », in *Philosophie Magazine* hors n.13, "Les philosophes face au nazisme" (février-mars, 2012), p. 28.

4. Re-reading of Phenomenology of Spirit

4.1. Nothingness in Science of Logic

In one of his last lectures at the Sorbonne (1975-6), Levinas retraces the concepts of being and nothingness in the history of Western philosophy. In this relation, he examines Hegel's *Science of Logic* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, though not indeed chronologically (Levinas begins with the former and then goes to the latter).

Levinas reconstructs Hegel's argument on the identity of Being and Nothingness in Becoming. Nothingness means here nothingness itself, not nothing as opposed to something (i.e. nothing as non-existence of something x). The Nothingness in question means that it is not Being at all. That is, Nothingness is understood as opposed to Being in general. In the ancient history of human thinking, Parmenides saw the beginning in Being, whereas Buddhism saw it in Nothing. The reconciliation of this opposition was prepared by Heraclitus who said that the Being is as little as Nothing, but on the whole everything flows, which otherwise put means that everything is Becoming.[65]

Still, on Levinas' view, the unity of Being and Nothing is part of the biblical (Jewish) thinking, which for Hegel was *not Jewish but Christian* thinking.[66] The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* philosophically represents the passage from Nothingness to Being. For Levinas, this doctrine is a fruit of Jewish thinking, but for Hegel, it is part of the "Christian metaphysic." In this sense, Hegel leaves no room for Jewish biblical thinking in philosophy, and in this exclusion of Judaic thought from the philosophical or metaphysical tradition, Levinas already sees the Hegelian prejudice ~~on~~ towards Judaism.

Levinas also compares the ways in which Hegel understands Nothingness in *Science of Logic* and *Phenomenology of Spirit* respectively. Although Nothingness as described above, is understood as fundamental concept in *Science of Logic*, it still remains abstract and far removed from the actual human life. On the contrary, in *Phenomenology of Spirit* the question of Nothingness is treated in an embodied human context, as death, or as the passage of life from being to nothing. In his discussion of this question, Levinas draws on the Greek family ethics of burial, known from the opposition in the tragedy of Antigone between the law of divinities observed by the family and the law of the state. This Levinas' focus is unique to him. As someone who has heard Kojève's lecture, we might expect Levinas to be more interested in the struggle of servant against his master for recognition, where life and death are at stake. But his reason for focusing on this tragedy is that he detects in it the problem of elemental Evil. We will need to see now in what way for Levinas this problem is related to the tragedy of Antigone.

4.2. Blood and Soil in Greek Family Ethics

Levinas summarizes Hegel's argument on family and state from *Phenomenology of Spirit* as follows. Dialectically speaking, family ethics is a thesis whereas state legislation is an anti-thesis. The family and the state are different in that the family is a "product of what is

[65] Georg W.F. Hegel, *Wissenchaft der Logik. Die Lehre vom Sein (1832)*, Neu herausgegeben von Hans-Jürgen Gawoll mit einer Einleitung von Friedrich Hogemann und Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2008), S 73.

[66] Emmanuel Levinas, *La mort et le temps* (Livre de poche, 1992), p. 88.

common" to its members, whereas the state "goes, by universal law, toward what is common" to its members. The members of the state are to be united; the members of the family are already united. The family unity is "natural," because it is "unity of the blood." For Levinas, "Hegel expresses this by relating the family to the deities of the Earth (mysticism of soil and blood in the family!)."[67] For us, it is obvious here that by the expression "soil and blood" Levinas has in mind Hitlerism.

Levinas further points that for Hegel the state is a "product of self-conscious Reason rising up to the universal," wheras the family remains natural, not self-conscious, immediate, and in itself.[68] The family is the "under-ground of life [sous-sol de la vie]," from where the "human law," i.e. the state legislation, is "separated [se détache]."[69] Nevertheless, the immediate nature of the family is the nature of the Spirit, which "is thus not pure nature" in that it has "an ethical principle." The ethic proper to the family is to "bury the dead"; that is, carry on inhumation.[70]

In death, the dead person returns to "the elemental of blood or earth."[71] The term "elemental" here is employed in the sense that Levinas refined in *Totality and Infinity* in terms of the earth. The earth is not a concrete geographical object like a field or mountain. It relates back to "a fundamental *where*" or "a stable ground."[72] In this sense, the earth is defined as the stable ground from which things are born, thus giving the basis of our life (Cf. supra 2.3). As it is the source of things, it is also taken for the source of being. In the Greek ethic of burial, the dead person is supposed to return to this source of being, which Levinas also calls "a maternal element," or a dimension "situated *under* the phenomenological sphere."[73]

As suggested by the word "mother," humans and the elemental earth are bound together from the very beginning. This is not a bond between two things which were originally separate, because, one of the two things (here, humans) is born from the elemental earth. It is not that there is a separation and then the separated things are united but instead there is first the unity and then the separation. Thus, humans separated from the earth at birth finally return to the original unity. This is the relationship of the family and the elemental earth, according to Levinas' reading of Hegel. In his reading, the relation of the family to its members is the same,[74] probably by virtue of blood. The ties of the earth with the family and ties of the family with its members represent the unity in the beginning. In other words, this is a relationship between a producer and a product whose material is itself made up out of the producer.

Levinas gives also an account of the sense of burial in Greek family ethics in Hegel. When a member of the family dies, he or she is exposed to a process of natural corruption, or "anonymous decomposition." On the Greek view, this is a disgrace for the dead. And so, in order to avoid it, the surviving members bury the corpse in the earth. The burial in the earth means that the dead return to their mother, thus recovering the initial union with the producer.

[67] Levinas, *La mort* ..., p. 94
[68] Levinas, *La mort* ..., p. 95
[69] Levinas, Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 94.
[71] Ibid., p. 101.
[72] Ibid., p. 102.
[73] Ibid., p. 98.
[74] Ibid., p. 102.

The funeral rites save the dead from their disgrace by providing the dead with honor. At the same time, the surviving family members carry on the dead into the "living memory."[75] In sum, the act of burial makes possible the return of the dead to the maternal element, the protection of him or her from disgraceful decomposition, and memorization of the passed-away.

Having reconstructed the Ancient Greek family ethics (divine law) as opposed to the state law, Levinas casts doubt on its "supplementary element," i.e. on that "the region of death is identified with the earth," as well as on the notion of "something not grounded," such as "the relation of the dead and the blood."[76] Levinas casts the same doubt in the chapter on religion in *Phenomenology of Spirit*,

> In this type of thought, death is not only Nothing but a return into the ground. Is it legitimate to interpret death as such? (…) But in this bringing together of the idea of ground, of final ground, of ground of being and of death, there is a certain phenomenal model [modèle phénoménal], which seems to remain in Hegel.[77]

What Levinas regards here as a "certain phenomenal model" is the "supplementary element." Supplementary, because it is not essential to philosophy, but is just added to it without justification. It is a kind of impure philosophy, or, in other words, a culturally determined *Weltanschauung* – the material from which philosophy can start but must transcend. The problem of Being and Nothingness, which Levinas treats in his dialectical analysis of Antigone's tragedy, is thus identified as based upon Greek *Weltanschauung*. In this sense, this understanding is not universal but seems to be common only also to some other nations like Germany.

5. Levinas' Reading of Hegel after the French Hegel Renaissance

5.1. Hegel and Heidegger

As we have seen above, Levinas reads Hegel and Heidegger in the same perspective. First, he sees them both, as ontologists, as representatives of the 'Western philosophy'. Second, he identifies traces of 'elemental Evil' in the philosophical discourses of both of them as well. The question that arises here is Does Levinas suggest a certain causal relationship between Western ontology and elemental Evil? Here, we have to maintain a clear distinction between Western ontology and Hitlerism, which Levinas sees as carrying the philosophical possibility of elemental Evil. The latter is a *Weltanschauung*, whereas the former is a philosophy in that it transcends the primitive and intuitional understanding of the world. In this sense, one can say that the *philosophy* of Hegel or Heidegger itself is not anti-Semitic in its essence.

Levinas' reading of the two philosophers is peculiar and quite different from that of other Hegel readers of his generation. However, finding a resemblance in their views was not so uncommon. It was rather a general tendency within the French "Hegel renaissance," which we will need to briefly discuss here.

The young Levinas' interpretation of Heidegger is entrenched within the early French reception of his philosophy, which is generally modeled on that of Hegel and can be found throughout the works of, Hyppolite, Koyré, Kojève, as well as Alphonse de Waelhens. As we

[75] Ibid., p. 98.
[76] Ibid., p. 99.
[77] Ibid., p. 100.

already pointed, Wahl's monumental work *Unhappiness of Consciousness in the Philosophy of Hegel* (1929) had opened a more *human* interpretation of the Hegelian philosophy through a close reading of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In addition to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the French interpreters of Hegel "discovered" *Jener Systementwurf*, which also added to this perspective. As a result, they were able to establish a connection between Hegel and Heidegger, which is also perceivable in their approach to their works. In a discussion organized in 1946 for the occasion of the publication of the first issue of *Collège philosophique*, Wahl, De Waehlens, Towarnicki, Hyppolite, Vuia, and Levinas, debated the philosophy of Heidegger.[78] In fact, De Waelhens was the only person who had published a monograph on the philosophy of Heidegger before the end of WWII (*Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 1942), and he had already insisted on the Hegelian character of Heidegger's primacy of the future, as advanced in *Being and Time*. "Heidegger's position on the fundamental problem is not without relation to Hegel's position. They both see Being in terms of progress (déroulement)."[79] On this point, De Waelhens draws on the work of the German scholar Clemens A. Hoberg who also emphasized this common aspect in the thought of the two philosophers,

Here, Heidegger probably meets the self-revelation (Selbstoffenbarung) of the Spirit of Hegel. The work of Heidegger has the closest affinity with the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of Hegel.[80]

In this sense, this kind of approach to the two German thinkers is not peculiar only to their French interpreters, and it does not come as a surprise at all that at the end of the discussion, Hyppolite, De Waelhens, and Levinas agreed to characterize the philosophy of Heidegger as a resumption (*reprise*) of "Hegelian phenomenology." On the occasion, De Waehlens says, "I would like to agree with Mr. Hyppolite. I think most of these difficulties (…) lead to a return to the Hegelianism (…)."[81] Levinas also agrees with them saying that "Heidegger arrives (…) to a dialectic of time (…)." This is indeed a dialectic of time that is characterized by an emphasis on the primacy of the future, about which Koyré, in his "The Philosophical evolution of Martin Heidegger" (1946),[82] also says that "On this point [the primacy of future], Mr. Heidegger meets Hegel."[83]

According to Catherine Malabou,[84] Hyppolite, Koyré, and Kojève's reading of Hegel consists in uncovering the paradoxical, even contradictory character of his system. She points

[78] Jean Wahl et al. (De Waelhens, De Towarnicki, Vuia, Hyppolite, Levinas), « Discussion », in *Le Choix, Le monde, l'existence* (Arthaud, 1947), pp. 71-82. See also, Jean Wahl, et al. (Berdiaeff, Gurvitch, Koyré, De Gandillac, Marcel, Levinas), « Discussion », in *Petite histoire de « l'existentialisme »*, Jean Wahl (ed.) (Paris: Édition Club Maintenant, 1947), pp. 65-91.

[79] Alphonse de Waelhens *La philosophie de Martin Heidegger* (Louvain: L'institut supérieure de Philosophie, 1942), p. 313.

[80] Clemens August Hoberg, *Das Dasein des Menschen: Die Grundfrage der Heideggerschen Philosophie* (Zeulenroda : Bernhard Sporn Verlag, 1937), p. 107.

[81] Wahl et al., *Le choix...*, p. 80.

[82] Alexandre Koyré, « L'évolution philosophique de Martin Heidegger », in *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Gallimard, 1971), pp. 271-304. Originally published in *Critique*, no.1-2 (1946).

[83] Ibid., p. 255, n.1.

[84] Catherine Malabou, « Négatif de la dialectique. Entre Hegel et Heidegger: Hyppolite, Koyré, Kojève », in *La chambre du milieu De Hegel aux neuroscience* (Paris: Hermann, 2009), pp. 27-52. Originally published in *Philosophie* « Hegel: études », no. 52 (1996), pp. 37-53.

that their reading shows the Hegelian philosophy has two irreconcilable aspects: logic and the philosophy of history, which are based on the concepts of, respectively, eternity and time, where the former is understood as the principle of unchanging sameness, while the latter represents change, or becoming other than now.[85] For Levinas, however, the evolution of the time of the Spirit has a teleological structure which is ultimately reduced to the self-identical totality of the Same, understood as having no absolute Other. This means that when the spirit encounters the other, it brings the otherness of the other to the sameness of the self. Thus, as we already saw, unlike Kojève, Koyré, and Hyppolite, Levinas reads Hegel in a way that highlights the absence of otherness, rather than the inner contradiction of his system. In order to get to the critique of the reduction of Otherness in Hegel, Levinas needed concepts such as separation and eschatology, which were novelties in the French philosophy at the time. Thus, in his approach to Hegel, he does not stand in the line of the French Hegelians but in that of German Jewish philosophers like Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig.

5.2. Levinas and German Jewish Philosophy – Cohen, Rosenzweig, Gordin

It is well known that Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption* had a great impact on *Totality and Infinity*. As Levinas himself states, this work is "too often present in this book to be cited."[86] Having also authored in his youth *Hegel and State*, Rosenzweig tried to go beyond the Hegelian totality in search for an absolute alterity based on the Jewish philosophical tradition. This was a philosophical orientation he adopted from his mentor, Hermann Cohen. But when Levinas mentions Cohen (indeed only on several occassions), his understanding of Cohen does not seem to go beyond the widespread image of the founder of the Neo-Kantianism as a project of the philosophical foundation of sciences. Levinas does not indeed seem to have studied Cohen's philosophy in depth but he is likely to have been aware of the basic idea of Cohen's philosophical system as something totally and essentially opposed to the closed system of the Hegelian philosophy, through his colleague and friend in *Alliances Israelite Universelle* during the 30's and the 40's, Jakob Gordin (1898-1947).

A Latvian Jew, Gordin had already finished his research on Cohen's concept of infinite judgement, which was published in 1929 as *Investigation into the Theory of Infinite Judgement*,[87] prior to his escape from Nazi Germany to Paris in 1933. In this work, Gordin retraces the genealogy of the concept of infinite judgement in the history of philosophy where its two culminating points are found in Maimonides and Kant. As Cohen has tried to reintroduce this concept into the core of his philosophy following these two thinkers, the result is that his philosophical system remains essentially open and not closed as that of Hegel's. Gordin argues that the Hegelian closed system presupposes its absolute Other, and that in this way Cohen's system has a philosophical primacy over that of Hegel's.

After the premature death of his older friend, Levinas dedicated to him an article[88] in

[85] Catherine Malabou, « Négatif de la dialectique », pp. 27-52.

[86] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 14.

[87] Jakob (Jacob) Gordin, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie des unendlichen Urteils* (Berlin: Akademie für Wissenschaft des Judentums Verlag, 1929).

[88] Emmanuel Levinas, "Jacob Gordin," in *Difficile Liberté*, pp. 252-8. The article was originally published in *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, no.31 (Hiver, 1972-73).

which he made a summary of Gordin's dissertation (regrettably never reprinted since its completion in 1929). In it, Levinas highlights the opposition between Cohen and Hegel.[89] Moreover, Levinas' article on Maimonides (Cf. supra 2.3) was written just after Gordin's article of (almost) the same title.[90] (It was in fact Levinas who published this article of Gordin in France in 1934).[91] We need to note here that Levinas' article on Maimonides, in which we found the definition of paganism, was largely written within the framework of Gordin's argument.[92] It is thus through Rosenzweig and Gordin that Levinas affiliates with the genealogy of the German Jewish philosophers,[93] which let him read Hegel differently from the French Hegelians of his time.

Conclusion

Although he was close to the main figures of the French Hegel renaissance, Levinas did not share their orientation in the interpretation of Hegel's philosophy, which focused on the internal contradiction of the Hegelian system (including of its concepts of eternity and time, logic and phenomenology). Instead, Levinas brought the new perspective of otherness which opened a horizon beyond the framework adopted by his colleagues in France. We have all reasons to say that this was the fruit of the influence which thinkers like Rosenzweig and Gordin (and through him, of Cohen) had on his thought.

The motivation of the later Levinas for his re-reading of Hegel was to enter into a peculiar philosophical fight against the Hitlerism as "philosophy" (or *Weltanschauung* as preservation). The problematic of *Weltanschauung* as philosophy, which he encountered in Heidegger's lectures in Freiburg, was a key to his reading of Hegel. Levinas defined the essence of Hitlerism as complete immanence in the world, and he opposed to it the essence of Judaism as transcendence of the world. Nevertheless, through a deepened analysis of the existential structure of the human being as a being in the "elemental" (supra 2.4), Levinas realized and acknowledged that this desire to be rooted in an element of the world was after all an ineradicable aspect of the human existence.

Later on, Levinas was puzzled by the young Hegel's definition of Judaism which was the completely opposite to Levinas' own view of Judaism. For Levinas, Hegel's view of the essence of Judaism is essentially pagan as it is marked by a radical inability to go beyond the world. Upon reading Bernard Bourgeois' monograph on the young Hegel, Levinas wondered whether a certain philosophical anti-Semitism was one of the remote causes for the rise of an anti-Jewish attitude in the German philosophy, as well as of the rise of the Hitlerism itself. His pointed skepticism toward Hegel's view on Judaism becomes apparent in his lecture at the Sorbonne (1976), particularly in his reading of Hegel's interpretation of the tragedy of Antigone.

Levinas is one of the first philosophers in France to raise the question of the genealogy

[89] Levinas, *Difficile Liberté*, p. 253.

[90] Jakob Gordin, *Ecrits*, p. 123-144. The articles was originally published in *Les Cahiers juifs*, no.10 (Juin-Juillet, 1934), pp. 6-18.

[91] The original manuscript was in Russian and translated into French by Nina Gourfinkel.

[92] Tomokazu Baba, "L'actualité de Maïmonide chez Jacob Gordin. Notes de lectures pour l'étude de la genèse de la vision de l'histoire de la philosophie occidentale chez le jeune Levinas," in *Hitotsubashi Review of Arts and Sciences*, no.5 (2011), pp. 380-404.

[93] Sophie Nordmann, *Levinas et la philosophie judéo-allemande* (Paris: Vrin 2017).

of philosophical anti-Semitism in the German philosophy. As we already saw, the question was later on discussed with various focuses by Elisabeth De Fontenay (Marx), Sara Kofmann (Nietzsche),[94] Luc Ferry (Hegel, Heidegger) and Emmanuel Faye (Heidegger).[95] In the English literature, Michael Mack has given a detailed account of such a genealogy (lining Kant, Hegel, and Wagner), as well as of the German Jewish responses to it.[96] In Heidegger studies, the publication of his *Black Notes* prompted a debate on his (philosophical) anti-Semitism, which embroiled a number of scholars.[97] But this question cannot just remain an object of discussion in Heidegger studies. It can and should be examined in the context of the perceived philosophical anti-Semitism in the German philosophy, including in the young Hegel.[98] It should be noted that Levinas tackled this problem as philosophical. This itself is a point on its own. For, if we treat the question as exclusively political, we will overlook what allowed the problem to arise recurrently in the history of the German philosophy.

In the early 1970's, Levinas raised this question with regard to Hegel, which none of the scholars of the French "Hegel Renaissance" had touched on. However, with regard to other German philosophers, the question remains still open. We conclude with the suggestion that what Levinas called "elemental Evil" is perhaps not the only possible answer this question.

[94] Sara Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs – Nietzsche, les juifs, l'antisémitisme* (Galilée, 1994).

[95] Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger, l'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie : Autour des séminaires inédits de 1933-1935* (Livre de poche, 2005).

[96] Michael Mack, *German Idealism and The Jew – The inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[97] For example, Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, 3., überarbeitete und erzeiterte Auflage, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015).

[98] Peter Trawny made some remarks about how Heidegger has preserved a Hegelian framework of "Volksgeistern" and "Weltgeist" in *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, pp. 34-35.

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 59-71

Ethics and Religion

RELIGION, IDENTITY, AND VIOLENCE

Jon Mahoney

Abstract

I examine three main topics. The first is organized violence in the name of religion. I focus on collective violence by groups whose members share a religious affiliation. Having a taxonomy that distinguishes collective violence in the name of religion from other cases (e.g. an abortion clinic bomber) is important, because the causes of violence in the name of religion vary by type and by context. The second topic is how to frame collective violence in the name of religion. Should we focus on theology, religious convictions, or religious doctrine? Should we discount religious doctrine as a variable altogether? Or should we characterize religion as about identity, a source of community allegiances, and group affiliation? I argue that when we adopt the label 'religious violence' and apply it to organized violence, one of our central focuses should be on ways that religion is an identity. Thirdly, I present a short case study that considers collective violence by Uighur Muslims in northwest China, Xinjiang province. This example is helpful because it illustrates that the identity approach is well suited to navigate some hard questions about how to classify (i.e., as religious, as ethnic, as a response to political domination, etc.) organized violence in the name of religion.

Keywords: *Religious Violence, Identity, Collective Violence, Intersectionality, Xinjiang*

Introduction

There are a number of competing accounts of violence in the name of religion. One well-known example is the civilization thesis.[1] On this view attitudes about the relationship between political and religious authority, a propensity to violence in the name of religion, and commitments to authoritarian or democratic politics, reflect the dominant religious traditions that inform the collective identity of a society. This view also holds that conflict between irreconcilable religious traditions is a major source of violence. Another view, defended by the New Atheists,[2] holds that the non-rational nature of religious convictions, in particular the priority of faith over reason, inspires adherents of religious traditions to commit violence on

[1] Samuel Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer, 1993).
[2] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2005).

the basis of a blind obedience to a conception of religious authority. Both of these views assign causation to religion to explain violence in the name of religion. By contrast, others claim that the very idea of religious violence is problematic, because its rests upon vague or poorly defined concepts. According to one account, the very idea of religious violence is mostly a myth.[3] The current ideological frame for demarcating the secular from the religious is an artifact of the modern nation state and other historically contingent factors. This is said to undermine the idea of religious violence as defended by those aligned with the civilizational approach and New Atheism.

In this paper I defend an alternative to these views on religious violence. The label religious violence is sometimes apt, yet it is a great oversimplification to assign causation to religious doctrine or religious conviction whenever violence in the name of religion occurs. According to what I will call the identity approach, human identity impacts human agency in ways that reflect many kinds of value commitments, including religious, political, and cultural. These value commitments can trigger violent responses based on perceived threats to a collective identity. The identity approach offers a more plausible framework for understanding collective and organized violence in the name of religion compared to the other views that I consider. It is not, however, a general theory of violence in the name of religion. Though I do not rule out *a priori* that one could develop a plausible general theory of violence in the name of religion, we should exercise skepticism about generalities when investigating the phenomenon of religious violence. For example, the role that religion plays in a campaign for national liberation against a foreign occupation may differ in significant ways from the role religion plays in inter-religious violence between groups whose religious identity strongly correlates with ethnic identity. Moreover, given the politically charged nature of debates on religious violence, it is important to avoid the pitfalls of hypotheses on religious violence that serve political aims rather than an effort to understand the causes of a complex issue.

By section the paper is organized as follows. First, I present the idea of collective violence in the name of religion. I focus on violence by groups whose members share a religious affiliation. I consider some competing ways we might frame collective violence in the name of religion. Should we consider such violence as a product of non-rational metaphysical convictions as the New Atheists suggest we should? Is it a fair characterization of Christian doctrine that it contains incipient Lockean notions about the relationship between political and religious authority, whereas other religious traditions, such as Islam, lack such a doctrinal basis for the modern liberal state? This is a central thesis of the civilizational approach.[4] In the second section I defend the identity approach to collective violence in the name of religion. In the third section I offer a brief case study that considers collective violence by Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang, China. This example is helpful for several reasons. First, Uighur identity in contemporary China is a composite of ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity markers. Since all three forms of identity – ethnicity, religion, linguistic – face significant levels of oppression by the Chinese state, violence in response to such oppression cannot in any straightforward sense be called, 'Muslim violence'. Second, the levels of oppression against a

[3] William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Conflict* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[4] For an excellent critique of this view, see Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'," *Journal of Democracy* (11:4, 2000), pp. 37-57.

religious and ethnic minority in Xinjiang represent a paradigm example of how collective violence is a response to repression. And third, collective violence by Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang offers a helpful illustration of the identity approach to violence in the name of religion. I conclude in section IV.

I. Collective violence in the name of religion

Not all violence in the name of religion is collective. The Tsarnaev brothers [i.e. Boston Marathon Bombers], an abortion clinic bomber, a religious migrant in a diaspora community, or an individual who is 'radicalized' by social media, can commit violence in the name of religion that is not collective violence. A general theory of violence in the name of religion would examine these and many other types of cases. Yet an important first step requires having a taxonomy that distinguishes collective violence in the name of religion from these other cases.

Variables that we need to consider when thinking about violence in the name of religion include: geopolitics; the intersection of religious with other identity markers such as ethnicity; the intersection of religious identity and political grievances (e.g. the U.S. and British sponsorship of the coup that overthrew the democratically elected president of Iran in 1953 remains a focal point in contemporary Iranian politics); military occupation; and the strong correlation between repressive state religion policies and violence in the name of religion.[5] These factors contribute to violence in the name of religion in different ways in different contexts. Therefore, the very idea of 'religious violence' is hopelessly vague unless formulated in a way that carefully distinguishes these and other relevant variables, as well as noting the interaction effects between salient variables.

In *On Violence* Hannah Arendt offered the following observation,

> It is…a rather sad reflection on the present state of political science that our terminology does not distinguish among such key words as "power," "strength," "force," "authority," and finally "violence-all of which refer to distinct phenomena… To use them as synonyms not only indicates a certain deafness to linguistic meanings, which would be serious enough, but it has also resulted in a kind of blindness to the realities they correspond to.[6]

Arendt's comments are helpful for two reasons. One is that taxonomy matters to how we think about violence in the name of religion for reasons just mentioned: some violence in the name of religion is collective, some is not; and the causes of violence in the name of religion in one context can differ significantly from other contexts. Second, how we frame violence in the name of religion will, for good or for ill, orient our judgments about what counts as evidence for what we are trying to explain.

Four framing strategies for understanding violence in the name of religion can be evaluated in light of Arendt's comments: 1) New Atheism; 2) the civilizational approach; 3) the myth of religious violence; and 4) the identity approach to organized violence in the name of religion. In the remainder of this section I briefly summarize each.

---

[5] See for example, Brian Grimm and Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York, London: Harcourt Press, 1970), p. 43. There is a nice discussion of this passage in John D. Carlson's, "Religion and Violence: Coming to Terms with Terms," *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence*, Andrew Murphy (ed.) (Blackwell, 2011): (7-22), p. 15.

According to Sam Harris religion is, "the most prolific source of violence in our history."[7] He also claims that, "…faith is precisely what differentiates every Muslim from every infidel. Without faith, most Muslim grievances against the West become impossible even to formulate, much less avenge."[8] This view assigns causation to religious faith, which in turn is construed as an irrational source of belief formation. On this view, faith is immune to salient evidence that might undermine a religious conviction, a source for dogmatism, and a wellspring for all manner of delusions and fantasies. Harris' view is that that religious belief and doctrine beget violence.

In "The Clash of Civilizations?" Samuel Huntington famously claims,

> It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new [post-Cold-War] world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.[9]

Civilizations on this view define and demarcate identities, which in turn serve as the basis for competing ways of organizing government and society. Conflict emerges from relations between powers that represent different civilizational identities. Civilizational identities overlap with nation states, the political units that embody the power that expresses civilizational identities. This view differs from that of the New Atheists, in part because it claims that not all religious identities are sources of non-rational convictions that give rise to intolerance and fanaticism. Partly for this reason, the civilizational approach has gained traction among the American Christian right, many members of whom claim that non-Christian forms of religious identity, in particular Islam, are incompatible with democratic political values.

In his recent book, *The Myth of Religious Violence* William Cavanaugh argues that there are no trans-historical or essential properties to religious belief, doctrine, or identity. We lack an account of necessary and sufficient conditions for something to qualify as religious. Therefore, "[w]ithout a clear distinction between what is religious and what is not religious, any argument that religion per se does or does not cause violence becomes hopelessly arbitrary."[10] On this view, what we now call religion is an artifact, somewhat like the national identities that are artifacts of the modern nation state. Those who attribute causal powers to religion by contrast assume that religion, like a natural kind, has essential properties that can be clearly delineated. Such properties are said to have causal powers all by themselves, independently of confounding variables or other possible explanations. Yet if we don't have a stable conception of what counts as 'religion' that view is unsupportable. Cavanaugh's thesis is motivated largely by skepticism towards prevailing accounts of religious violence.

---

[7] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Terror, and the Future of Reason*, quoted in Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, p. 212.
[8] Harris, quoted in Cavanaugh, p. 213.
[9]" Clash of Civilizations?", p. 1.
[10] Cavanaugh, p. 21.

In stressing the idea of religion as about identity, a fourth position endorses what is sometimes called a functional approach to understanding religion. Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*[11] is the most famous example of a work that defends this view. On Durkheim's view,

> *a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is, things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions—beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single community.*…[A] second element…is not less essential than the first: demonstrating that the idea of religion…must be something eminently collective.[12]

The identity approach also informs a number contemporary positions ranging across disciplines from social science, anthropology, and moral psychology.[13] One thing these views have in common is the conviction that religious identity is a composite of multiple factors, including: religious doctrine, culture, historical memory, and political allegiances, among others. What in contemporary parlance is called *intersectionality,* or the idea that human identity is a composite of multiple factors, is central to this way of thinking about religious identity.

Notice that if we do not heed Arendt's warning, we won't have a reliable means of adjudicating the merits of these incompatible positions on violence in the name of religion. This is a compelling reason to stipulate which kind of violence in the name of religion we hope to understand. Here the focus is on collective violence.

In *The Politics of Collective Violence*[14] Charles Tilly has given us a useful taxonomy for types of collective violence. Tilly distinguishes brawls, scattered attacks, sabotage, riots, violence that emerges from broken negotiations, as well as campaigns of organized collective violence. Making progress in understanding the significance of collective violence depends in part on being able to isolate what triggers a gun fight between cowboys over a card game from what triggers interreligious violence between Hindus and Muslims in modern India. Likewise if the Kurdish PKK in eastern Turkey is supported in part by agents who harbor grievances about past promises that have been reneged (e.g. promises to negotiate on fair terms by the Turkish state, promises by the American government to support an independent state), then what Tilly terms broken negotiations will be an important factor in that conflict. It may be that triggers for organized violence in one context appear in organized violence of another, but that cannot be settled *a priori.* To make progress here we need to examine multiple contexts, such as interreligious violence in a new post-colonial state, violence between a

[11] Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* trans. by Carol Cosman (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912/2008).

[12] Durkheim, p. 46.

[13] Jonathan Haidt explicitly defends a version of the functionalist approach in, "Religion is a Team Sport," *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), pp. 246-273. David Sloan Wilson adapts some features to the functionalist approach in *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Tim Crane offers a number of interesting ideas on religion as identity in *The Meaning of Belief: Religion from an Atheist's Point of View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). And Asef Bayet in *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007) emphasizes ways that religious identity is informed by interpretive practices that vary by cultural, national and regional contexts. Rezi Aslan also emphasizes ways that religion is an identity in his new book, *God: A Human History* (New York: Random House, 2017).

[14] Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

new religious group and members of a dominant religious identity, violence in the name of religion that follows a military invasion by a foreign state, or a charismatic religious leader who calls for mass violence.

Violence in the name of religion can take these among many other forms, ranging from al-Qaeda sponsored terrorism, to organized violence by mainline Protestant Christians against Mormons in 19th C America, to a resistance movement composed mainly of Muslims against French Occupation in Algeria, or Buddhists fighting Hindu soldiers in Sri Lanka. Each of these cases can be classified as violence in the name of religion. Yet 'religious violence' is not a very helpful label if we consider each of these cases without trying to identify the causes that trigger them. The predominately Muslim members of FLN who waged a violent campaign against the French government in Algeria often invoked religious values to mobilize support for their cause. Yet given all the factors in play, the label, 'war for independence' is more apt than 'religious violence'. Likewise, the sarin gas attack by members of Aum Shirinko in a Tokyo subway were conducted by agents who had considerably different motives than the 9/11 attackers who represented al-Qaeda.[15] So one distinction worth paying attention to is violence in the name of religion that lacks a political goal and violence in the name of religion that has a political goal. Moreover, once we settle on a classification of violence in the name of a political goal there are further questions about causation. It may turn out that the propaganda expressed by a group presents religious values as the primary rationale for collective violence, when in actuality the intersection of political variables, such as domination, repression, and resistance, are more salient causes.

Tilly's work is important for my project in part because he sharpens the taxonomical options for how we classify violence in the name of religion. Taking his taxonomical concerns as a cue, my focus is on one species of violence in the name of religion; namely, organized violence by groups. To be sure, this category has fuzzy edges, as well as paradigm cases. A suicide bombing campaign by the Tamil Tigers or a terror campaign by the FLN in the war for independence in Algeria are paradigm cases. A knife assault on a police checkpoint by 20 Uighur men by comparison might look more like a scattered attack or a riot. Yet if there are a sufficient number of such attacks over an extended period of time, depending on the relevant variables (e.g. internal colonialism by the Chinese state, material and moral support from the Uighur diaspora community outside China, ethnic, religions and linguistic differences between Uighur and Han Chinese), there may be good reasons to classify this as organized and not just collective violence.

Matters are in fact more complicated than the brief characterizations here suggest. For instance, for some questions, we need hypotheses that test for multi-causation. This is true of individual case studies (e.g. interreligious violence between Sunni Muslims and Coptic Christians in Egypt, or Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, etc.) as well as comparative studies (e.g. violence between religious groups in democratic and in authoritarian states). The identity approach is intended to offer partial insights into a complex phenomenon.

[15] Steve Clark, *The Justification of Religious Violence* (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2014).

II. How to Frame Collective Violence in the Name of Religion

Some ways of framing organized violence in the name of religion render causes invisible, produce false positives, reinforce confirmation biases, or serve a political agenda. Consider the claim that people join al-Qaeda because they hate the freedom enjoyed by American citizens. Assigning the label 'religious violence' is one thing; properly identifying causes for such violence is another. When we adopt the descriptor 'religious violence' and apply it to organized violence, in some contexts it is helpful to examine ways that religion is an identity. In this section I present the argument in favor of the identity approach.

The identity approach emphasizes unifying and exclusionary characteristics of religious identity. Religion unites by forging shared community identities but also excludes by demarcating non-members. This way of thinking about religion is important to questions about religious violence because it helps us see that organized violence is often triggered by perceived threats to a shared identity. In this respect, religious identity like ethnicity and nationality, can mobilize groups to support violence.

One of the best studies on collective violence in the name of religion is Robert Pape's *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.*[16] Pape's central thesis is,

> The bottom line is that suicide terrorism is mainly a response to foreign occupation. Isolated incidents in other circumstances do occur. However, modern suicide terrorism is best understood as an extreme response strategy for national liberation against democracies with troops that pose an immanent threat to control the territory the terrorist view as their homeland.[17]

On Pape's view, political occupation plays a greater role in motivating support for suicide bombing campaigns than religious belief. His data set for this claim includes every known suicide bombing from 1980-2003.

Here is a condensed synopsis of Pape's research,

> 1. In well over 90% of all cases—across states and across religious identities, the best explanation for what motivates support for a suicide bombing campaign is that such violence is believed to be an effective means to a political end. Religion mobilizes support. But religion is not the trigger. Nor is it the end. Occupation is the cause; freedom from occupation is the end.
> 2. Democracies are more vulnerable to suicide attack, because their constituencies can more easily pressure political elites to withdraw from a conflict.
> 3. Religion is a variable, but mainly when there is a religious difference between occupied and occupier. This factor suggests that we should pay at least as much attention to perceived threats to a community identity as to the religious composition of a group that supports suicide terrorism.

Democracies with militaries perceived as occupiers are more likely to be targeted by suicide bombing campaigns, because such campaigns are political strategies and democratic states are more likely to change tactics in response. Since political elites in authoritarian states are not answerable to public opinion to the same extent, their survival as elites and perceived legitimacy does not depend on domestic pressure, such as mass protests against a military campaign abroad.

[16] Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[17] *Dying to Win,* p. 23.

Consider also for example a post-colonial struggle by a colonized group whose religious identity differs from that of the colonial power. Should we characterize violence by the National Liberation Front in the Algerian war for independence as collective religious violence or a political struggle for independence? The French massacred thousands, and tortured many.[18] When religious identity converts political grievances (e.g. against oppression) into a narrative of struggle against a foreign power, violence in the name of religion is not straightforwardly religious violence.

The social science research identifies ways that the configuration of identity markers within groups and between groups is relevant to whether collective violence in the name of religion is likely to occur. Philosophical accounts of identity can make a helpful contribution in this context. Consider *the intersectionality problem.* Identity is a composite whose elements typically include nationality, ethnicity, language(s), historical memory, political affiliation, and religion or non-religion. What some call 'religious violence' to designate violence in the name of religion might have a political cause or may be a response to a perceived threat to multiple overlapping identity markers, including ethnicity and religion. The religion as identity approach will not tell us everything about organized violence in the name of religion, but it does offer a perspective that is helpful in bringing to light factors that are ignored by other accounts of violence in the name of religion.

The composition of human identity is intersectional: ethnicity, language, religion, political affiliation, nationality, profession, hobbies; all of these contribute to a person's identity in the sense of shaping what matters to her and why. Intersectionality poses a problem for explanations of organized violence in part because this fact about human identity makes it difficult to identity the primary motives that trigger organized violence. It is true that some identity markers play a more significant role in collective violence than others. Collective violence in the name of the nation or of a religion is more likely than collective violence in the name of the Andrie Tarkovsky Film Society or the International Cricket Fan Club.

Yet even if we settle the issue of which identity markers do and which do not have the potential to enjoin support for collective violence, questions remain. Collective violence might have a political end, yet circumstances might be such that framing the discourse in terms of religion is more effective as a means to that political end. Why should we expect discourses that seek a justification for collective violence to be any less prone to self-serving strategies or even self-deception than any other discourse in which power is a central concern?

Likewise, the intersection of religious and political affiliation, for example, can render an agent's religious identity apt to be influenced by her political affiliation, or vice versa. Ethnicity may be relevant too. An obvious example is white Protestant identity in the context of American politics. A white American with a Protestant religious identity may have a Protestant religious identity that differs significantly from that of a German Protestant, or a Latina American Protestant, or African American Protestant.[19] In some contexts, invoking the identity marker 'Protestant' will be less informative than invoking a composition of identity

[18] For a detailed account, see Alistair Home, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York Review Books Classics, 2006).

[19] See Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

markers, or even just non-religious identity makers. For example, in the American context it may turn out that being white is a better predictor of one's conception of religion and politics than being Protestant.

The New Atheists claim that non-rational religious convictions, rather than perceived threats to identity, cause violence in the name of religion. The evidence suggests that this claim is false. The civilizational approach does emphasis identity, and does not in principle suffer from an anti-religious bias. Yet this view construes identity in ways that are not fine grained enough. For instance, generalizations such as 'western Christianity' or 'Confucian identity' are useful for some purposes, such as understanding broad historical trends or the historical roots to self-understanding among large groups of persons. Yet collective violence in the name of religion occurs in many different contexts and under many different political conditions. On this measure, the civilizational approach overgeneralizes to the point of offering a very poor explanation of collective violence in the name of religion. It characterizes political conflicts, such as a war for independence between Algerian Muslims and the French colonial state, as a 'clash of civilizational identities'. Yet Algerian Muslims were motivated to participate in collective violence against the French colonial state, not because they are Muslims, but because they wanted to resist oppression. Moreover, despite the fact that Cavanaugh makes an important contribution insofar as he offers compelling rebuttals to the New Atheist and the civilizational approaches, he has not shown that the idea of religious violence is a myth. A better characterization is to claim that collective violence in the name of religion is complicated, stemming as it does from multiple variables that intersect in ways that vary by context. The case of collective violence by Uighurs in contemporary China is one illustration of this.

III. Collective Violence in Xinjiang

In Northwest China, Xinjiang province, Uighur, face extreme repression by the Chinese state. Despite the many falsehoods that stand behind the 'one China' policy, according to which China is a unified state in which all citizens are equal, the reality is that China is a multicultural and multi-religious society whose state policies promote a conception of national identity that is mostly opposed to this diversity. Uighur citizens are mostly Hanafi Sunni Muslims. Uighur is a Turkic language, and Uighur society is distinct from the Han dominated conception of Chinese citizenship that stands behind official state policy. It is true that some concessions have been granted to Uighurs in China. For instance, during the era of the 'one-child' policy Uighur were given an exemption. Yet the rationale for this was reasons of state power, in particular conflict reduction, not accommodation of distinct religious or cultural practices. As Bovingdon puts it in *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land*,

> …even though Uyghurs have expressed deep dissatisfaction with governance in Xinjiang and pointedly called for policy changes, Beijing…[has]almost never responded by accommodating those demand or entertaining public discussions of the concerns. Instead, officials have strengthened unpopular policies and cracked down on both political speech and spaces for assembly outside party control.[20]

[20] Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), Kindle Version, Loc 2496.

Given these contextually relevant factors we can ask, is organized violence in this context religious, interethnic, mostly a political response to oppression, or triggered by some combination of these or other factors? A brief look at the occasional organized violence committed by Uighurs in Xinjiang will help guide our thinking about how to answer this question.[21]

The following list of some major incidents in the past ten years is helpful for context,

> **July 2009**: significant protests by Uighurs in Urumqi resulted in 140 deaths[22]
> **July 2013**: a car with several passengers drove into a group of pedestrians at Tiananmen Square killing 2 and injuring nearly 40[23]
> **March 2014**: a group of Uighurs armed with knives attacked civilians at a train station killing 29[24]
> **August 2014**: three armed Uighurs killed a controversial imam in Kashgar outside the famous Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar; many believed the imam was too supportive of the Chinese Communist Party and its repressive policies[25]
> **December 2016**: a group of assailants attacked a regional Communist party office, detonating a bomb[26]

This partial list includes collective violence by groups of individuals who may not have had any affiliation with known groups, as well as violence that known groups—e.g. The East Turkestan Liberation Organization—took credit for. Some acts of violence in the name of Uighur identity were likely well coordinated while others where by comparison more spontaneous.

Though not a totally neutral description, for starters let's call this violence in the name of Uighur identity. So how might we move beyond a general label, 'Uighur violence' to one that helps us understand why there is organized violence in Xinjiang? Here is a plausible perspective. Consider the following: the mass surveillance state in Xinjiang imposes a level of repression that exceeds the authoritarianism in most other Chinese provinces, as well as nearly every other authoritarian state. At random check points Uighur are force to surrender cell phones from which all data can be downloaded in a matter of seconds; Uighur are force to make audio recordings at such check points—presumably to assist in identification when cell phones are tapped; some two million Uighur men were ordered to surrender their international passports, effectively undermining the right to migrate or travel abroad; Uighur businesses are forced to sell alcohol, Uighur university students are prohibited from fasting during Ramadan; and an estimated 5% of the Uighur population has been detained in mass 're-education' camps, or more accurately gulags.[27] Too be sure, the mass surveillance state exists in other

[21] See James Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). See also James Millward's recent op-ed, "What its Like to Live in a Surveillance State," *New York Times*, Feb 3rd, 2018.
[22] Tania Branigan, "Ethnic Violence in China Leaves 140 Dead," *The Guardian*, July 6th, 2009.
[23] Jonathan Kaimen, "Islamist Group Claims Responsibility for Attack on Tiananman Square," *The Gaurdian*, Nov. 25th, 2003.
[24] Hanna Beech, "Deadly Terrorist Attack in Southwestern China Blamed on Separatist Muslim Uighurs," *Time*, March 2nd, 2014.
[25] Edward Wong, "Teenager Arrested in Killing of Imam in Western China," *New York Times*, August 25th, 2014.
[26] Reuters in Beijing, "Xinjiang Attack: four 'terrorists' and one bystander killed, says China," December 29th, 2016.
[27] "A Summer Vacation in China's Muslim Gulag," *Foreign Affairs* (February, 28th, 2018).

regions too, including Tibet. Yet by comparison, the scale of the surveillance state in Xinjiang is probably unrivaled anywhere on the planet.

Are these factors relevant to how we frame collective violence by Uighurs in Xinjiang? That's a rhetorical question, of course. But notice that when we frame violence by a Muslim population as 'religious violence' we are prone to overlooking other possible factors that may be more relevant to explaining such violence. And in Xinjiang it is reasonable to explore the following hypothesis: the relation between Uighur citizens and the Chinese state is a primary cause of support for violence; ethnic and religious identity are the means by which support for violence is mobilized. Moreover, we can use the current situation in Xinjiang to formulate hypotheses about what might happen in the future, depending on how oppressive the surveillance state becomes and how effective it is at repressing resistance to it. Total domination would prevent collective and organized violence, but not the will thereto. Although internal colonialism differs from traditional colonialism (e.g. the French subjection of a Muslim population in Algeria), and of course differs from military occupation by a foreign power, there is data which support the claim that violence in the name of an identity, religious or otherwise, is frequently triggered by a response to oppression or some source for a deep and enduring grievance. In the case of religion, "…countries with the lowest levels of religious hostilities have the lowest average levels of religious repression and those at the highest levels of hostilities have the highest levels of repression."[28]

There are two reasons this context is useful as an illustration of the central ideas on religion, identity, and violence that I've presented. First, it illustrates the intersectionality problem. Uighur citizens differ from Han and other Chinese co-nationals along ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity markers. Most are Hanafi Sunni Muslim. Some approaches to collective violence won't seriously ask the question, *'which identity marker is most salient?'* If one is predisposed to believe that religious convictions are what motivate collective violence, then it's easy to ignore other variables that might be more salient. Others, such as the Chinese state, claim, without providing any evidence, that collective violence in Xinjiang is organized by religious extremists and with ties to global jihadists. The case of collective violence by Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang is better understood if we adopt the identity approach. If we assume that religion is what motivates violence by a Muslim population, we will not see the other factors mentioned above. In fact, organized violence in Xinjiang is arguably a paradigm example of violence that is sometimes committed in the name of religion but whose underlying causes are political.

Secondly, contemporary Uighur identity in Xinjiang is partly an artifact of Chinese state power. Identities, religious or otherwise are not formed independently of material conditions. These conditions include: state policies on religion; state policies on language – in Xinjiang Uighur is often written in Arabic script not Mandarin, yet the state actively represses Uighur in favor of Mandarin; education policy – which promotes a secular and anti-multicultural conception of national identity; and economic and status inequalities between Han and Uighur citizens. The Chinese state is committed to re-shaping Uighur identity, by means of extraordinarily oppressive political power, into an imagined identity deemed more

[28]Ari Sarkissian, *Varieties of Religious Repression: Why Governments Restrict Religion* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 19-20.

compatible with the Han nationalist agenda as applied in other contexts, most notably Tibet. These are key elements in the so-called 'one China' policy whereby the state seeks to forge a national identity that reflects an imagined national identity in which religion, ethnicity, languages - are gradually erased as a result of forced assimilation. As Mathew Longo notes in *The Politics of Borders*, when the state worries about citizens along border zones,

> ...the state's attempt to nationalize the periphery is more than just a security measure designed to breed loyalty--it is an attempt to create in its own image the very place farthest from its own likeness.[29]

Longo isn't considering China when he makes this claim—rather his focus is on Western governments, such as the U.S., including efforts by the U.S. to build loyalty among Hispanics after the annexation of Texas and the expansion in the southwest. This is an apt description of one way a state policy towards a religious or other minority group qualifies as internal colonialism. Modern Uighur identity in China is impacted by this, among other factors. For instance major oil fields have been discovered in Xinjiang, a fact that makes energy security another factor motivating Chinese state policy in the region.[30]

IV. Conclusion

I have proposed an alternative to some influential accounts of violence in the name of religion. The New Atheists attribute violence in the name of religion to belief, in particular, belief that is fantastical, delusional, and irrational. We should reject that view. One reason is that if we are interested in understanding violence in the name of religion, we want to discover ways to reduce such violence. The New Atheists offer no help here. They may claim that reducing violence is not their aim, in which case, fair enough. We can then ask whether their project is of any use to political philosophy or other practically oriented projects, and the answer is, no. Second, the social science research on organized violence in the name of religion does not support the claim that religious belief is typically the underlying cause of collective violence. So even if the New Atheists claim they are not interested in reducing violence, there are compelling evidence-based reasons to reject their account of collective violence in the name of religion.

The civilizational approach offers a more plausible framework, in part because it incorporates factors such as historical memory, imagined group identities, and intellectual traditions within the history of a religious doctrine. These are important influences on religious identity. Yet proponents of this view construe civilizational identities in ways that are too general, sometimes Orientalist and chauvinistic, and frequently exaggerate the role that ideas play in explaining conflicts between groups. We need a more fine-grained account of identity than what the civilizational approach offers. It is not unfair to characterize the civilizational approach as based on a conception of power politics we might glean from reading Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* or storied accounts of European colonialism in the 19th C that envision the world as a chessboard on which the great powers determine the fate of the

[29] Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 68.
[30] Edward Wong, "China Invests in Region Rich in Oil, Coal and Strife," *New York Times*, December 20th, 2014.

weaker powers.[31] There are many factors play a role in how agents politicize their religious identity that this approach to conflict ignores. I have combined some ideas from social science with philosophical accounts of identity to argue that the religious identity approach is superior to the civilizational approach.

Cavanaugh argues that the idea of religious violence is mostly a myth, resting as it does on confused or unhelpful definitions of what counts as religious. Though much of what he argues offers a welcome contrast to the New Atheist and the civilizational approaches, there are contexts in which assigning the label 'religious violence' is apt. For instance, even when collective violence in the name of religion is triggered by political factors, such as occupation, religious identity is a salient variable. We can avoid the pitfalls of New Atheism and the civilizational approach, both of which Cavanaugh rightly opposes, without having to jettison entirely the idea of religious violence. For example, a social scientist that seeks to understand interaction effects between ethnic and religious identity markers might discover that religious identity is a salient cause for collective violence, but only under special conditions. 'Religious violence' would be an apt label in that context.

Finally, I hope that this paper can serve as an example of how to approach a complex and politically charged issue with the caution and intellectual humility that the subject matter demands. Too many accounts of religious violence conflate different species of violence, depend upon anti-religious biases, or enlist self-serving characterizations of religious traditions. Responsible scholarship on religion and violence should avoid apologetics as well as punditry.

[31] See for example, Peter Hopkirk's classic, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York, Tokyo, London: Kodansha International, 1994).

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 72-87

KANTIAN NEIGHBORLINESS AND QUARRELSOMENESS

Micah Daily

Abstract

This paper explores Kant's notion of 'love thy neighbor' from The Metaphysics of Morals and 'quarrelsomeness' from the Idea for a Universal History as a way of contending with the hyperpolarization currently riddling conversations on college campuses, online, and in everyday experience. I argue i) that Kant's moral anthropology can provide a useful framework for coping with our current crisis in communication, and ii) that Kant's rigoristic ethics has an application to addressing that crisis. This paper focuses on the natural inclination toward 'quarrelsomeness' as one aspect of Kant's notion of unsocial sociability. The antagonism inherent in quarrelsomeness is not to be overcome but, rather, is to be sculpted with actions motivated by rational moral principles. Framed this way, moral principles may temper and commingle with our natural inclinations. I propose that bringing awareness to the tension between love of neighbor and quarrelsomeness will serve us well in mitigating hyperpolarization.

Keywords: *Kant, moral, neighborliness, quarrelsomeness, hyperpolarization, metaphysics, ethics, anthropology, virtue, manners*

We are currently facing a communication crisis in which extreme polarization is silencing public debate on nearly every topic from politics to religion. Greg Lukianoff introduced the term "hyperpolarization" in his 2002 book Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of American Debate to describe this phenomenon.[1] Since the 1990s, hyperpolarization has been seeping out of the university and into the media and everyday conversations. It has silenced individuals and put neighbors at odds. This has spawned a further repercussion. Biases in politics, science, religion, philosophy, and other disciplines have been accepted as truths, and the holders of these opinions have become self-proclaimed stewards of the Good. The time of debating ideas – between liberals and conservatives, vegans and meat eaters, capitalism and socialism, religion and science and issues around gun control, vaccinations, and global warming – has ended. This has had the trickle-down effect of silencing free speech rights in order to protect people – especially the marginalized – from feeling offended by views contrary to their own or to what they perceive to be their vital, existential interests. While much of this may have developed from good intentions, it has had some rather nega-

[1] Greg Lukianoff, *Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of American Debate* (New York, London: Encounter Books, 2014).

tive consequences. People are afraid to have opinions outside the popular opinions of their neighbors, and it is impossible to be neighborly under these circumstances. To love thy neighbor, we sometimes need to quarrel.

Hyperpolarization is playing out in at least two ways. Firstly, rather than talking through differences of opinion, people are attacking each other personally (the ad hominem fallacy) or isolating themselves and harboring hate toward those with contrary opinions or beliefs. Secondly, people are turning to meditation, yoga, and other methods for quieting the mind instead of using their minds to deal with the discomfort.

In this paper, I shall argue that Kant's moral anthropology can provide a useful framework for addressing our current crisis in communication. To achieve this, I shall describe Kant's moral anthropology and discuss recent scholarly work on the topic. Next, I will explain the key role of Kant's notions of "love thy neighbor" as one aspect of Kant's moral philosophy, and "quarrelsomeness" in relation to his notion of unsociable-sociability. Finally, I will bring all of this together to put moral anthropology into practice to address some of the challenges hyperpolarization presents.

MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant describes "moral anthropology" as the counterpart to the metaphysics of morals, the two parts of the whole of practical philosophy that would like to deal with,

> the subjective conditions of human nature that hinder or help them in fulfilling the laws of the metaphysics of morals.[2]

In other words, moral anthropology is the application of moral philosophy to real life, to everyday experience. While metaphysics is not favored in many academic circles today, Kant thought metaphysics the one true philosophy.[3] Metaphysics deals with what is possible. For Kant, metaphysical possibility is measured by what is morally possible,

> that which is possible according to the rules of morals, and does not conflict with the general laws of freedom.[4]

Freedom, for Kant, is the most important concept. This is essential to mention at the opening of this paper because Kant's moral philosophy is often criticized for the alleged limits to freedom it imposes with its immutable moral laws and obligations. This can seem like a ploy for pervasive, strong moral convictions that might radicalize people along the lines of identity, politics, religion or science, therefore, precluding them from freedom of choice. However, Kant's moral philosophy, properly understood, cannot lead in such a direction. It does not

[2] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary Gregor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6:217.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Logic*, translated by Robert S. Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), p. 37.

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, translated by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 166; 29:812.

operate on laws of morality but rather provides maxims of actions that are categorical in theory, yet, in our imperfect everyday experience, the individual is free to act in accordance with or in opposition to these maxims.[5] The maxims of actions that are derived with the categorical imperative assume the freedom of the individual not to change the maxims but rather to choose his/her actions.[6] I will continue to develop this point throughout the paper.

Kant did not complete the moral anthropology part of his practical philosophy because he ran out of time. While we can only speculate about what Kant's moral anthropology might have looked like, we do have many clues threaded throughout his writings with which to construct a model.

The most recent work in the field of moral anthropology is by Dieter Fassin in his textbook titled Moral Anthropology: A Critical Reader. Fassin, however, introduces his moral anthropology as distinct from Kant's and to be developed in the field of anthropology, not philosophy,

> However, when proposing the expression "moral anthropology," what I have in mind is a radically different project – if not an anti-Kantian, at least a non-Kantian one.[7]

However, notwithstanding his "radically different project," Fassin concedes that it may well be impossible to do without Kant,

> Yet, dismissing the moral dimension of anthropology in its Kantian sense might be less facile to do. The Kantian legacy is indeed more deeply enshrined in the discipline than most of its members would probably admit.[8]

Fassin agrees that it is not only moral anthropology, but anthropology itself which owes a debt to Kant's moral philosophy. While there is much scholarly writing on anthropology and morality, it is most often found in the field of anthropology, not philosophy, and Fassin is an excellent resource for these writings.

One of the reasons Fassin and others have rejected the idea of Kant's moral anthropology is because Kant's rigorist philosophy does not seem applicable to everyday experience. It is often thought to be too ideal or that it is workable only in a perfect world. This is entirely off the mark. Kant was well aware that his moral philosophy was a project in progress because human beings, moral beings, are beings in progress,

---

[5] Importantly noted, Kant describes morals as "the laws" and "the rules" somewhat inconsistently. For the purposes of this paper, Kant's moral philosophy will be understood as providing the "maxims of actions."

[6] 1st Formulation of Categorical Imperative Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. 2nd Formulation of Categorical Imperative - Humanitarian Principle
II. Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.

[7] Dieter. Fassin and Samuel Lézé, *Moral Anthropology: A Critical Reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 2.

[8] Ibid., p. 2.

> Virtue is always in progress and yet always starts from the beginning. It is always in progress because, considered objectively, it is an ideal and unattainable, while yet constant approximation to it is a duty.[9]

There is an ever-present tension in Kant's moral philosophy between ideals and what can be realistically achieved in everyday experience. This is not a mistake or shortcoming of Kant's moral theory but rather what makes it a useful moral philosophy for making moral decisions in everyday experience. Kant, however, has been misunderstood on this front. Therefore, it is not surprising that Kant's moral anthropology has been overlooked by Fassin and other scholars interested in moral philosophy.

Rossen I. Roussev, in his paper *Philosophy and the Transition from Theory to Practice: A Response to Recent Concerns for Critical Thinking*, maintains with Habermas "that at any level of the transition between theory and practice, philosophy plays an indispensable role: the role of mediating interpreter."[10] Roussev's term 'philosophical competence' names a much needed space for solving problems and answering questions that, as Aristotle maintains, do not give fixed answers."[11] Accordingly, instead of making efforts to prove expertise in a field such as moral anthropology that is little understood and explored, one may endeavor with philosophical competence to explore the humanistic aspects of the problem I refer to as the deadlock of polarized opinions.

Universal Moral Principles

At this point, some of my readers might still be wondering, why Kant's and not some other moral philosophy? Firstly, I agree with Barbara Herman that in moral philosophy, it is the best framing we have.[12] Secondly, we need a moral philosophy structured with principles that all people can potentially share. Namely, universal moral principles.[13] Utilitarianism thinks it can know the future. It assumes knowledge of cause and effect. It dictates that one make a moral choice that will result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The notion of the "greatest good," however, assumes universal moral principles which is what we get from Kant's moral philosophy. Virtue ethics depends on one having a virtuous character. Virtue ethics uses universal moral principles to determine as to if one has a virtuous character.[14] And, so, yet again, we return to Kant. Most, if not all, moral theories assume universal moral principles. Therefore, Kant's moral philosophy gets at the root of other moral theories and provides us with some very practical tools for applying universal moral principles to everyday experience.

---

[9] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:409

[10] Rossen I. Roussev. "Philosophy and the Transition from Theory to Practice: A Response to Recent Concerns for Critical Thinking," *Telos*, Vol. 2009, No. 148 (Fall 2009), pp. 93-94.

[11] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated and edited by Roger Crisp (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[12] Barbara Herman, Discussion during Q&A after a talk by Dr. Charles W. Mills, The Racial Contract, a colloquium featuring Dr. Mills on "Racial Equality," May 2016.

[13] Human beings do not share the same beliefs, opinions, feelings, and sensations. Potentially, however, they can develop a shared rational understanding of each other as world citizens.

[14] Robert B. Louden, "Vices of Virtue Ethics," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Jul., 1984), pp. 227-236.

Kant's moral philosophy is not only applicable to everyday experience; it only works in a world composed of imperfect people. With our developing global community, all of its obstacles and differences, it seems only prudent to seek universal moral principles so that all people are included. Those favoring moral relativism might wince at this, but please stay with me at least until the end of this paper as I will propose a way to deal with our differences as well. Kant's moral philosophy is inclusive in ways that have yet to be understood,

> The supreme principle of the doctrine of virtue is to act in accordance with a maxim of ends that it can be universal law for everyone to have.[15]

For example, the duty of beneficence extends to all people, not only those who share one's opinions and beliefs. Later in this essay, we will discuss how it is possible to extend the duty of beneficence universally. The point here is that the universality in Kant's moral philosophy unites us and the hyperpolarized path we are on presently is dividing us.

Metaphysics of Morals

In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant lays out his moral philosophy in two parts: "doctrine of right" and "doctrine of virtue."[16] The doctrine of right deals with laws and the doctrine of virtue, ethics. To show what is morally possible, Kant examines both laws and ethics. I have added a third doctrine, the doctrine of etiquette, to maintain and account for differences in social life. For example, eating with a fork and knife or chopsticks. Universal moral principles have no bearing on the differences that do not threaten the moral way of being of our global culture.

The doctrine of right lays out laws for actions that can be coerced. For example, keeping one's promise in signing a contract. The doctrine of virtue does not provide laws for actions but rather gives maxims for actions that cannot be coerced. For example, the duty not to lie. In a court of law, doctrine of right, one can be coerced not to lie. As a moral duty, however, the doctrine of virtue, one cannot be coerced not to lie. Indeed, the fact that one is free to lie (or not to lie) is what determines the action of not lying as a moral action. For Kant, moral actions are never for some particular end such as fear or reward. If one does not lie because one fears punishment or wants for some reward such as praise, it is not a moral action. If one does not lie because it is one's duty as one member of the whole of humanity, it is a moral action.

In this paper, I will only focus on the doctrine of virtue as it addresses the love of thy neighbor. In the doctrine of virtue, Kant lays out two duties: 1. One's own perfection. 2. The happiness of others.[17] While Kant lists the two duties separately, they are intertwined in that the duty of the happiness of others contributes directly to the duty of one's own perfection (and vice versa). The duty to love one's neighbor belongs to the duty of the happiness of others, but as I shall show, the duty to love one's neighbor includes oneself.

[15] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:395.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 6:386.

Doctrine of Virtue

In the doctrine of virtue, Kant lays out his ethical theory. "Virtue," for Kant, is distinct from how it is typically defined as "conformity to a standard of right."[18] Kant defines "virtue" as the activity of overcoming one's natural inclinations that tempt one to betray what one knows to be the good,

> Virtue is the strength of a human being's maxim in fulfilling his duty. — Strength of any kind can be recognized only by the obstacles it can overcome, and in the case of virtue these obstacles are natural inclinations, which can come into conflict with the human beings moral resolution.[19]

For Kant, one measures one's virtue by the obstacles one actively overcomes. Free, not coerced, moral actions define one as morally good, and only the individual can make this determination for him/herself. Furthermore, a moral person, according to Kant, is not passive. Being moral is active. One has the strength of virtue if one is actively overcoming one's natural inclinations.

As we shall see later in this paper, the two duties in the doctrine of virtue meet with the obstacle of antagonism in social life. This is not, according to Kant, a flaw in human beings but rather that which fuels moral progress. This is reminiscent of a remark Kant makes in the First Critique,

> The light dove, cleaving the air in her free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that its flight would be still easier in empty space.[20]

Just as the light dove needs wind resistance to fly, so, too, human beings need the resistance of natural inclinations, and the other challenges that show themselves in social life, to become virtuous. Kant's moral philosophy as well as his larger philosophical project, the architectonic science of philosophy, is founded upon the notion that conflicts, challenges, and the bumping up against each other of people and things are precisely what makes the world a better place.

> The world is . . . a whole of substances, which are in reciprocal connection, and thereby constitute a unity, a whole; a whole of contingent substances, in that they reciprocally determine each other, thus that one limits the other — the most perfect world is thus only a whole that has more perfection than any other thing can have.[21]

In order to progress morally, human beings need to interact with each other, to talk, to challenge, sometimes to offend. Hyperpolarization has not only silenced people, it has inspired a mass fear of saying things that might offend. A want not to offend, in some cases, might be evidence of acting virtuously or with good manners, but this is not what is happening in our

[18] *Merriam-Webster*, "Virtue," accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/virtue
[19] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:394.
[20] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).
[21] Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 28:212.

hyperpolarized culture. Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt wrote about this in their article "The Coddling of the American Mind,"

> Something strange is happening at America's colleges and universities. A movement is arising, undirected and driven largely by students, to scrub campuses clean of words, ideas, and subjects that might cause discomfort or give offense.[22]

Common questions such as "Where are you from?," have been deemed offensive not only on college campuses, but in everyday experience. Lukianoff and Haidt well describe this movement. Their conclusion, however, is that the students are in the wrong. By taking this position, they are polarizing themselves against the students. And, the students do have valid concerns. For example, in a conversation with my students about the right not to be offended by the question "where are you from?", one of my students explained why she supported this as an offensive question. She grew up in downtown Los Angeles in the center of gang and drug wars. To escape this mayhem, she and her boyfriend moved to a new city. Six months into living in their new neighborhood, they were out for dinner and a seemingly kind stranger asked she and her boyfriend where they were from. Having dropped their guard, they answered. They were then beaten nearly to death. My student showed me the deep scar she wears from being stabbed. So, when someone asks her where she is from, it triggers her trauma. She might describe the experience as being offended or and being triggered by a question. Words and phrases that trigger trauma are real and a cause for concern. Using Kant's moral anthropology, we can recognize that when someone is traumatized, it is a duty to care for the person's moral happiness by being careful with words and questions. Also, be being aware of, as a friend, family member or professor, how what is said, asked and taught affects others. By not dealing with both sides of any issue or movement, polarization develops. By only siding with the students, a sanitized culture comes into being. This kind of silence halts moral progress.

Moral Endowments – that for which one does not have a duty

Kant describes two kinds of love in The Metaphysics of Morals: "Benevolence" is the natural moral endowment to love human beings, and "beneficence" is the duty to love one's neighbor. I shall start with benevolence.[23]

Kant's ethics, the doctrine of virtue, begins with three moral endowments that everyone has if they are to be counted as moral beings, which for Kant is precisely what it is to be a human being.[24] The three moral endowments are moral feeling, conscience, and love of one's neighbor,

> All of them are natural predispositions of the mind (praedispositio) for being affected by concepts of duty, antecedent predispositions on the side of feeling.[25]

[22] Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, "The Coddling of the American Mind," *The Atlantic* (September 2015), p. 8.

[23] Kant sometimes uses benevolence as the duty of beneficence. He points out that there are two contexts in which he uses these terms. Firstly, as moral endowments which are natural. Secondly, as duties of pure reason. Laid out this way, there is no contradiction.

[24] Importantly noted, Kant refers to this section, doctrine of virtue, as his ethics.

[25] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:399.

Moral endowments are feelings that validate concepts of duty. They are not sensations or emotions but rather naturally occurring inclinations of mind. All people, according to Kant, have natural feelings about what is right and wrong.[26] These feelings, however, are not duties but rather these feelings are affected by our duties. While human beings do not have a duty to have the three moral endowments, human beings do have a duty to cultivate them.[27] According to Kant, one cannot have a duty to have moral feeling, conscience or love of one's neighbor because "every human being (as a moral being) has it [these moral endowments] in him originally." Moral endowments do not dictate behavior. If they did, we would all be good, and there would not be a need for moral philosophy. Moral endowments, instead, validate our moral duties. Furthermore, the measure of one's virtue is by one's strength to overcome one's less favorable natural inclinations. "Virtue signifies a moral strength of will." Therefore, if there were not challenges, virtue could not be measured.

A description of how Kant uses the term "conscience" will be useful in elucidating what Kant means by "love of one's neighbor." As is the case with all three moral endowments, all people have a conscience. "Every human being, as a moral being, has a conscience in him originally."[28] In some cases, due to negative experiences, trauma, lack of education, etc., a person might appear to lack a conscience. However, it is not that the person is without a conscience but rather "he pays no heed to its verdict."[29] This is a rather hopeful aspect of Kant's moral philosophy in that it presumes all people can become morally better,

> The duty is here only to cultivate one's conscience, to sharpen one's attentiveness to the voice of the inner judge, and to use every means to obtain a hearing for it.[30]

Kant's description of conscience is distinct from how it is typically defined: "a feeling of obligation to do right or be good."[31] Conscience, for Kant, "is practical reason holding the human being's duty before him for his acquittal or condemnation."[32] While conscience is a natural predisposition of mind and, therefore, prior to the conscious awareness of concepts of moral duties, it does not give one the feeling of obligation to do right or to be good, instead, it provides the subject with a means for drawing a verdict about one's moral choices and activities. Conscience affects what is given prior to experience by the moral law within, i.e., the synthetic a prior principles of morality. In Kant's moral philosophy, the three moral endowments validate our moral duties. They are natural predispositions of the mind, and, yet, human beings do not become conscious of the moral endowments until after they have encountered moral duties in thought or action.

The natural moral endowment I am focusing on in this paper is the love of one's neighbor, i.e., the moral feeling of love for human beings. Kant describes this natural moral

[26] Feelings for Kant are distinct from sensations and emotions and are properly associated with the mind.
[27] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:401.
[28] Ibid., 6:401.
[29] Ibid., 6:401.
[30] Ibid., 6:401.
[31] *Merriam-Webster*, "Conscience," accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscience.
[32] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:401.

endowment as it applies to others as "love of human beings," and as it applies to oneself as "self-respect."[33] For him,

1. Love of human beings is a subjective moral feeling to do good to others.
2. Respect for oneself is a subjective moral feeling to have self-esteem, "a confidence and satisfaction in oneself."[34]

Human beings, as in the description of conscience above, become conscious of the feeling of love for human beings upon encountering the duty of beneficence. Framed in this Kantian way, one becomes conscious of moral feeling, conscience, and benevolence (love of others and self) when one thinks about or acts on one's moral duties. Further, and at the same time, these moral endowments validate one's moral duties, e.g., beneficence, gratitude, and sympathetic participation.

Benevolence inspires one to do good to other human beings and to treat oneself respectfully. The moral endowment of benevolence inclines human beings to treat each other benevolently because it brings "satisfaction in the happiness (well-being) of others,"[35] and it gives one delight and a feeling of well-being,

> Love is a matter of feeling, not willing, and I cannot love because I will to, still less because I ought to (I cannot be constrained to love); so a duty to love is an absurdity. But benevolence (amor benevolentiae) [beneficence] as conduct, can be subject to a law of duty.[36]

Human beings have a natural endowment of mind, a feeling that inclines them to love others. It cannot be a duty because one cannot have a duty to do what one naturally feels. The moral feeling of benevolence, however, affects the duty of beneficence. In other words, one becomes aware of the moral endowment of benevolence when one thinks about or acts in accordance with (or in opposition to) the moral duty of beneficence. Kant makes it very clear that actions motivated by love are not necessitated by moral duties. "What is done from constraint is not done from love."[37] There are, however, duties to love of which we shall examine next.

Duties to Love – that for which one has a duty

As a reminder, the second duty in the doctrine of virtue is the [moral] happiness of others. Within this duty, Kant provides three duties of love,[38]

beneficence
gratitude
sympathetic participation

[33] Ibid., 6:400.
[34] *Merrian-Webster*, "Self-Esteem," accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-esteem.
[35] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:452.
[36] Ibid., 6:401.
[37] Ibid., 6:401.
[38] Ibid., 6:452.

In this paper, I will examine only the first, "beneficence." The duty of beneficence is everyone's duty,

> Beneficence is the maxim of making others' happiness one's end, and the duty to it consists in the subject's being constrained by his reason to adopt this maxim as universal law.[39]

The universality of beneficence also includes oneself, which is to say that I have a duty to treat myself beneficently. It must be universal, also, because one cannot conceive of a duty that is universal, i.e., to treat all people beneficently without holding it reciprocally for oneself and all other people.[40] Also, in Kant's moral philosophy one's duty is also one's end. In other words, I do not treat others beneficently because it delights me. I treat others beneficently because it is my duty as one member of the whole of humanity,[41]

> In speaking of laws of duty (not laws of nature), and, among these, of laws for human beings' external relations with one another, we consider ourselves in a moral (intelligible) world where, by analogy with the physical world, attraction and repulsion bind together rational beings (on earth).[42]

Underlying Kant's moral philosophy is an awareness of the tension between the duties human beings have to one another and natural feelings that sometimes conflict with them. Kant insists that human beings have a duty of beneficence to even the most unlovable people,

> benevolence [beneficence] always remains a duty, even toward the misanthropist, whom one cannot indeed love but to whom one can still do good.[43]

This is particularly difficult when dealing with someone one finds deeply contentious or malicious. Often a knee-jerk response is to deem the person immoral. For example, on college campuses today the claim that "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough" is considered a racial microaggression "because it is like saying "People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder."[44] If a professor makes this claim and a student of color takes offense, the student might think the professor immoral. If we apply Kant's moral anthropology to this example, it might play out differently. Same story, but with this new analysis, both professor and student recognize the duty of beneficence. Therefore, the student and the professor respond differently. Instead of attacking the person (professor) and assuming a racial microaggression, the student might come to recognize the phrase as merely an off the cuff remark of a professor who means well yet perhaps lacks in manners? Or, the student might come to recognize the professor does not have an under-

[39] Ibid., 6:452.
[40] Ibid., 6:451.
[41] Reason can be universalized in a way that feelings cannot.
[42] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:449.
[43] Ibid., 6:402.
[44] Katherine Timpf, "U of Wisconsin Faculty Advised Not to Say 'America is a Melting Pot' Because that's Racist," *National Review*, July 2015, https://www.nationalreview.com/2015/07/melting-pot-racist-microaggression/

standing of her culture and can make an effort to educate the professor. Likewise, the professor, aware of her duty of beneficence, will take care not to offend. One of the liberating aspects of Kant's moral philosophy is that the question as to if other people are moral or immoral is off the table. This assessment belongs solely to the individual. One may judge another for their manners or lack thereof. Also, as to if one has broken the law or not. One may even judge another person's ethical behavior if the expected ethical conduct has been laid out explicitly in the context, in this case, the University. But one person cannot decide as to if another person has acted morally or not. At first this seems stifling but as it turns out it is a burden human beings need not carry. Moral judgments are what one makes for oneself. They are private because the laws are given directly and privately to each individual.

The duty of beneficence necessitates that human beings help each other when there is need. One does not treat others beneficently because one delights in doing so (as in the moral endowment mentioned above) but rather because it is one's duty to humanity to help in ways that one can without oneself becoming needy. If, for example, one sees a homeless person in need of food, one may give the person money, buy them a meal, volunteer at a homeless shelter, etc. Acts of beneficence vary according to the individual acting beneficently and his/her capacity to be of assistance,

> to promote according to one's means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return.[45]

In addition, the duty of beneficence is not dependent on getting something in return such as gratitude or repayment.

While one acts beneficently without expectations, one does benefit,

> Beneficence is a duty and if someone practices it often and succeeds in realizing his beneficent intention, he eventually comes to actually love the person he has helped.[46]

While it is not a duty to love human beings, acting on the duty of beneficence stirs ones love for the one helped. If Kant is right, then even where love does not naturally arise, acts of beneficence can bring about love artificially – which is not to say inauthentically. Returning to the example of the professor and the student, if they both recognize their duty of beneficence, they can override the emotion charge that comes with being offended. And, thereby, perhaps learn to love where the moral endowment to love had not yet been cultivated. The suggestion here is that perhaps we already have what we to deal with these new sensitivities that college students are bringing to the forefront. Namely, kindness, love, and respect of one's neighbor. Therefore, perhaps there is not a need for new laws and ethical codes that restrict free speech but rather there is a need to get in touch with moral feelings and the moral duties already writ into the very nature of rational beings, human beings.

A friend of mine recently told me a story about seeing a homeless person begging on the side of the road. Her natural inclination was to roll up her window and look away. In-

[45] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:453.
[46] Ibid., 6:402.

stead, she decided to act on her duty to do good to others and offered the woman twenty dollars. They started talking about the coming rain, and when their eyes met, this act of beneficence became love. Another fine example of beneficence begetting love happened in a police station as a friend of mine was picking up a police report. Her daughter had been in a car accident, and while her daughter was safe, my friend was not at ease and a bit shook by the event. As she stood in line, a boisterous man entered the station yelling and carrying on with violence in his gesticulations. My friend was fearful and did not find the man particularly lovable. The man was escorted outside, and as my friend departed for her car, she saw the man. He looked broken, sad, and lonely. He looked back at her and apologized for his earlier behavior, explaining that he missed an appointment due to a job and so had lost custody of his child. Her duty of beneficence is what brought her to pause and lend an ear. This act of kindness brought about love in her for this stranger. She hugged him, and they both felt love. They cried together. It seems Kant is on to something with this framing. Not all human interactions, however, play as they did in these examples and this is not necessarily a bad thing.

The interrelationship between the natural endowment, the feeling of love of one's neighbor, benevolence, and the duty of beneficence is important because it shows that Kant's moral philosophy is not merely rational. This aspect of Kant's moral philosophy and the notion of unsociable-sociability that I shall examine next, have been overlooked. The result is that Kant's moral philosophy is under fire by many prominent academics. In particular, Jonathan Haidt,

> Kant was one of the most extraordinary systematizers in human history while being rather low in empathizing. [47]

It is a fallacy to draw conclusions about Kant's moral philosophy based on rumors about his personality. Furthermore, Kant's larger architectonic science of philosophy, of which I can only assume is what Haidt is referring to as "systemizer," is empathetic: "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another."[48] Kant's account of the three moral endowments is high in empathizing. Haidt thinks Kant's moral philosophy is built on what he calls the "rationalist delusion,"

> Western philosophy has been worshiping reason and distrusting passions for thousands of years.[49]

This is a reductive account of Western philosophy. Instead, of being a valid critique, it provides evidence of Haidt's misunderstanding of moral philosophy in general, and Kant's mor-

[47] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), p. 140.
[48] *Merriam-Webster*, "Empathy," accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy
[49] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, p. 34.

al philosophy in particular.[50] Jonathan Haidt's argument against rationalist models of moral philosophy fails with a wider understanding of Kant's moral philosophy. Indeed, it renders his social intuitionist model superfluous.[51] It is important to demystify Haidt's misunderstanding of Kant's and other moral philosophies so that we can benefit from their wisdom.

Kant's notion of unsociable-sociability is yet another essential piece of the Kantian puzzle that is often overlooked when assessing the applicability of his moral philosophy to everyday experience.

Quarrelsomeness – unsociable-sociability

According to Kant, as human beings have entered into society, they have developed an antagonism toward each other,

> Here I take antagonism to mean the unsociable sociability of human beings, that is, their tendency to enter into society, a tendency to be connected, however, with a constant resistance that continually threatens to break up society.[52]

Antagonism, for Kant, is a natural response to our artificial world.[53] People want to connect, to share in life's joys but they also do not want not to be offended or bothered by different opinions. For Kant, this antagonism plays an important role in our development as individuals and as a species. The tension between unsociable sociability and the human being's rational capacity for universal moral principles is what propels change and motivates moral progress,[54]

> Without those characteristics of unsociability, which are indeed quite unattractive in themselves, and which give rise to the resistance that each person necessarily encounters his selfish presumptuousness, human beings would live the Arcadian life of shepherds, in full harmony, contentment, and mutual love. But all human talents would thus lie eternally dormant, and human beings, as good-natured as the sheep that they put out to pasture, would thus give their own lives hardly more work than that of their domesticated animals. They would fail to fill the void with regard to the purpose for which they, as rational nature, were created.[55]

Kant goes further to suggest that human beings should be thankful for their quarrelsomeness, jealousy, "competitive vanity, and for their insatiable appetite for property and even power because without them human beings would lounge on the lawn, grazing with the sheep, nev-

[50] Ibid., p. 34.
[51] Ibid., p. 55.
[52] Immanuel Kant, *Idea for a Universal History, Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, edited by Pauline Kleingeld, translated by David L. Colclasure (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006), 8:20.
[53] As Kant points out, human beings cannot live together for long in a "state of wild freedom." Ibid., 8:24.
[54] One might think the philosopher who has a reputation for never lying and always being on time would not be tolerant of this antagonism.
[55] Immanuel Kant, *Idea for a Universal History, Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, 8:21.

er inspired to develop reason, curiosity, and wonder.[56] The challenge is, according to Kant, how to have a civil society with just enough freedom to antagonize one another and to act morally. It is a delicate ratio that is ever shifting.[57] As a reminder, virtue is the capacity to overcome obstacles. Quarrelsomeness is an obstacle to be overcome but not eradicated. In other words, human beings need their not so favorable characteristics.

Because human beings are competitive and quarrelsome, it is often thought that they are fundamentally malicious. "Hell is other people," wrote Sartre. Instead, Kant is claiming that unsociable-sociability, while most unflattering, brings out precisely what it is to be human – to love, to create, to make beautiful things, to advance technologically, to improve politics, economics, and medicine. Our present communication crisis, however, is preventing us from bringing out the best of humanity because we have stopped quarreling in the Kantian sense. At the University, the extensive lists of forbidden phrases that are deemed microaggressions, e.g., "Where were you born?", have created a kind of covert antagonism.[58] The result is neighbors who are suspicious of each other, not neighbors who love.
While it may be obvious already, in Kant's framing, all people are one's neighbor,

> In accordance with the ethical law of perfection "love your neighbor as yourself" the maxim of benevolence [beneficence] (practical love of human beings) is a duty of all human beings toward one another, whether or not one finds them worthy of love.[59]

It is only when we are faced with someone who annoys us, insults us, lies to us, humiliates us or, heaven forbid, has a different political position, that we need to become rational, to rise out of the hate and indifference and treat the other beneficently to "promote the happiness of the other."[60]

Today, there is much confusion about what it means to be good. For many people, the below-listed sentences all mean "I am good."

I am a Christian	I vaccinate my kids
I am an atheist	I do not vaccinate my kids
I am a vegan	I am a conservative
I eat only organic meat	I am a liberal

In fact, the above sentences describe biases about what is the truth and what it means to be good. This confusion has led people to conflate, for example, "I am vegan" with "I am

[56] Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, edited by Pauline Kleingeld, translated by David L. Colclasure (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2006), 8:21.

[57] A host of people today are willing to abandon their rights to free speech to stop the antagonism. In essence, this would be to develop laws to coerce our moral laws, thereby, undermining the necessary freedom that makes morality possible.

[58] UCLA. Academic Affairs. Tool: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send. 2014. https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_Examples_Arial_2014_11_12.pdf

[59] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:450.

[60] Ibid., 6:388.

good." This is not to say being vegan is not good but rather to show that to be vegan is not to eat meat, not necessarily to be good. One can be a vegan and virtuous or not so virtuous. Kant would call a malicious vegan, morality in appearance only. When people are unwilling to engage about different opinions, it is tantamount to not treating one's neighbor beneficently. None of this entails, however, that one ought to tolerate bullies but rather that one ought not to become a bully in response. As Kant maintains, one must not derive one's morals from experience,

> Experience teaches us what is, but does not teach us that it could not be other than what it is."[61]

In other words, experience shows us how our world is presently but not how it can be different, better or improved. The possibility of a better world comes to life in the moral activity of human beings and this is not given in experience, yet plays out in everyday experience.

Fareed Zakaria wrote an opinion piece in the Washington Post in June 2017 titled, "This country is frighteningly polarized.[62] This is why." Zakaria wrote:

> People on the other side of the divide are not just wrong and to be argued with. They are immoral and must be muzzled or punished.[63]

Within our current communication crisis quarreling and antagonism seem immoral because the good has been conflated with opinions that are derived from experience. To claim that being a liberal is equivalent to being good is to derive one's morals from experience. It would also infer that any other political position is immoral. The moral law within does not play politics. The hope is that rights and politics have moral foundations. The reality is that they do not all have moral foundations. Recall that virtue is always in progress and hyperpolarization in a cog in the wheel of change.

Kant's moral anthropology offers a means for viewing hyperpolarized positions less personally and more objectively. Therefore, it can help us to engage in conversations about sensitive and hyperpolarized opinions in new and fruitful ways. To come together as a global cultural community, we need universally shared principles and Kant provides us with a working toolbox.[64]

---

[61] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 590, A734/B762.

[62] Zakaria has received much criticism over this opinion piece.

[63] Fareed Zakaria, "This Country is Frighteningly Polarized. This is Why," *The Washington Post*, June 15, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-dont-just-think-the-other-side-is-wrong-anymore--we-think-theyre-immoral/2017/06/15/f218c3e4-5207-11e7-be25-3a519335381c_story.html?utm_term=.51b5f966b5d6

[64] The doctrine of etiquette can account for differences locally, in social life, in customs that are ruled by manners.

CONCLUSION

Politeness and Beneficence

In the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Kant writes: "politeness (politesse) is an illusion of affability that inspires love."[65] In my dissertation, I added the doctrine of etiquette to Kant's doctrine of right and doctrine of virtue to account for different social practices. While little studied, Kant threads discussions of manners throughout his writings. This makes room for preserving our differences in our social life while uniting our global culture with rational maxims for actions that can be extended to all people. Therefore, nothing is lost, and much is gained.

Perhaps we can start with being polite to those who do not share our opinions and then the natural endowment of the love of thy neighbor may be unburdened and find light in our hearts and minds. And if being polite is not enough, then the duty of beneficence, since it is rational, can be put into play between those of opposing positions. Kant maintains: "do good to your fellow human beings, and your beneficence will produce love of them in you."[66] While one does not act on the duty of beneficence to attain some particular end, one does achieve something by obedience to that duty, namely, the development of an "aptitude for love," calling to mind Kant's remark, "Virtue is its own reward."[67]

[65] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, translated by Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 44.
[66] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:402.
[67] Ibid., 6:392.

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 88-96

Literary Sways

FROM EAST TO WEST AND BACK AGAIN: TRANSCULTURAL INFLUENCE AMONGST LITERARY CLASSICS

Francesc Passani

Abstract

Since the dawn of man, storytelling has been a mechanism of cultural and intellectual transmission from one generation to the next. At the very beginning, storytelling was solely an oral practice to entertain, to pass time, and to hand down tribal traditions meant to enhance group identity. Later, with the revolutionary creation of writing systems and thus, with the development of the art of translation, it became the main means to spread knowledge between very distant geographical areas.

Cultures, peoples and civilizations have influenced each other through the ages not only via cultural and religious practices but also via literature, be it in the shape of poetry, plays or fiction. We shall investigate these influences by focusing on two literary fluxes: on the one hand, the one linking the Islamic Golden Age with the Modern European narrative via the classical compendium of tales under the well-known name of The Arabian Nights; on the other hand, the one linking the Modern European narrative of Nikolai Gogol and Jane Austen with the Modern Far East narrative of the Chinese and Japanese authors Lu Xun and Natsume Soseki, respectively, who were heavily influenced by literary techniques imported from the West, namely skaz, free indirect style and interior monologue.

Thus, we shall analyze the current that flows from East to West in terms of objective narrative structure and subjective perception of exoticism, whereas the opposite current that flows from West to East will be seen through the prism of rhetorical devices and literary techniques used by the abovementioned Asian writers to push their national literature into the 20th century.

Keywords*: Jane Austen, Nikolai Gogol, Nikolai Leskov, Natsume Soseki, Lu Xun.*

Of the many ways of handing down the cumulative knowledge that allows us to move forward as cultures and civilizations, one not insignificant manner is the literary tradition in its broadest sense, encompassing all possible forms, from epic poetry to memoirs and epistolary fiction. Thanks to the development of the art of translation, literature pervades geography, ages and mind-sets, allowing the transmission of narratives and the blossom of new forms of expression which crystallize, firstly, in avant-garde movements, and secondly,

in stable traditions, to be fully absorbed after the first impact under the shape of novelty. We shall see here how very specific literary styles and themes flowed from one cultural tradition to another, even from one civilization to another, leading to the creation of Modern and Contemporary fiction as we know it on a global scale today. Our voyage will take us from Ancient India to Modern China and Japan following two fluxes. First, we shall see the influence of Eastern literature in European literature via the classic text *The Arabian Nights*; then, we shall go in the opposite direction by travelling from Europe to the Chinese and Japanese Far East.

We shall also investigate how these two fluxes of creativity hold distinct particularities. Whilst the first one flowing from East to West is based on an objective narrative structure – namely the frame story – and a subjective perception of exoticism, the second one flowing from West to East is based on rhetorical devices and literary techniques. Or in other words: the first one focuses on the big picture whereas the second one delves into the details. The former follows an iterative structure wrapping stories in settings that happen to be – it could be otherwise – thoroughly subjective for cultural reasons. The latter resorts to concrete and objective literary techniques related to how consciousness is portrayed in modern fiction.

Before proceeding any further, it must be clarified that this article[1] does not intend to present an alternative literary canon to those already existing, be they Charles Van Doren's *The Joy of Reading* or Harold Bloom's more academic masterpiece, *The Western Canon*. The present intention is to provide the reader with an insight of the status of mutual dependence between culturally distant literary worlds that become connected through the art of translation.

Even accepting the old saying *Omnia exeunt in mysterium* ("All things fade into mystery"), we have to begin the analysis somewhere. The most suitable point is the Ancient Indian classic titled *The Panchatantra*, which means "Five Treatises." This book, redacted in Sanskrit by someone purportedly named Vishnu Sharma and probably around the 3rd century BC, is a morally and politically educational collection of old Hindu animal fables aimed at preparing young princes for the requirements of adult life and governing positions. It displays a structure made up of frame stories – stories within stories. For at least two thousand years, it has been one of the historical Indian bestsellers, not only in local Indian translations but also abroad in translations to other languages. Some of the fables written by the Greek author Aesop (6th century BC) resemble those from *The Panchatantra*. The fables probably spread orally from India or else they constituted a common heritage as old as storytelling itself.

In those times, we also find the innovative structure of frame stories in Lucius Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*. Apuleius lived in the 2nd century CE and his work excels as a Roman masterpiece in the Latin language, displaying a frame story structure that was already a well-known narrative method during the imperial epoch. This framework was likely imported from India. To understand the relationship between the Romans and the East (and by "East" we mean the geographical axis comprising Greece, Persia and India), we must bear in mind that during the emergence of Latin as an intellectual tool of the Roman power, first in a republican form and later in an imperial form,

[1] This article was originally presented as a lecture at the 1st International Colloquium in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture, theme being "Converging Differences: Global Thinking and Local Existence," held at the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria) on March 21-23, 2018.

there were absolutely nothing but "barbarians" to West of Rome. Eastern knowledge and culture had been filtered into Rome through Greece, and Greek was the fashionable language of the wealthy who could afford a Greek private tutor, much as would happen centuries later in the Russian Empire with the French language as a symbol of cultural refinement, diaphanously exemplified by Tolstoy in *War and Peace*, a classical masterpiece with a certain amount of dialogue directly redacted in French for the sake of authenticity and verisimilitude.[2]

The epitomes of the frame story structure are two colossal compendia of tales: Somadeva's *Kathasaritasagara*, also known as *Ocean of Streams of Stories*, which was put together in Sanskrit around the year 1070 CE, and *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1001 Nights*, written by several literati in multiple styles across the entire Islamic Golden Age (8th-13th centuries). The Indian influence on Middle Eastern Arabic storytelling through Persia is evident, not only in the usage of the frame story structure but also regarding the narratives. Moreover, apart from the influence in the field of fiction, the Indian influence in scientific fields has been thoroughly documented through the analysis of the cultural and linguistic policies of the Abbasid Caliphate during the Early Islamic Golden Age, with Baghdad as the brand new world capital of the art of translation,

> Indian scientific material in astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and medicine passed into Arabic mainly through Persian (Pahlavi) intermediaries during the Abbasid period, and as such it is to be seen in the context of the translation movement. Direct translations from Sanskrit appear not to have been made or, if they have, to have been limited mainly to astronomical texts, some of which, according to Pingree, were translated in Sind and Afghanistan in pre-Abbasid times.[3]

The Arabian Nights, as collection of tales, is a titanic work that stands out as one of the most sublime examples of creativity regarding fiction. Its impact on the Western literary canon was huge. It mesmerized European writers for several reasons, amongst them: the manner of linking tales to develop a complex web, the fantastic situations with unfathomable characters that pushed imagination to the extreme and the scenes of erotic and alcoholic debauchery, all wrapped up in a continuous sense of old Oriental exoticism that works as a literary drug for the Occidental mind.

Apparently, some of the tales from *The Arabian Nights* began leaving its imprint in Europe as early as the 14th century, when European translators used to resort to the Arabic language for intellectual purposes. Nonetheless, even if it probably pervaded Italian literature, influencing Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) and his *Decameron* –which follows a frame story structure that was very fashionable in Europe during those times – the main structural inspiration for Boccaccio regarding embedded stories seems to have been *The Panchatantra* itself,

> If, as seems likely, Boccaccio knew the *Panchatantra*, it was probably in the considerably modified Latin version of the work, *Liber Kelilæ et Dimnæ*, otherwise known as the *Directorium Humanæ vitæ*, which John of Capua produced around 1270. John's version was based, by way of a

[2] As it is clear in Richard Pevear's and Larissa Volokhonsky's English rendition (London: Vintage, 2009), which keeps the French text in the main body of the narrative.

[3] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999), pp. 24-25.

> Hebrew translation, upon the eight-century Arabic version of the text, *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, which in turn was based upon a sixth-century Pahlavi, or Old Persian, translation from the original Sanskrit. The names Kalilah and Dimnah were those of two jackals in the first of the *Panchatantra*'s five books, which, designed originally as a Mirror for Princes, or *Fürstenspiegel*, uses the Aesopian device of narrating animal fables in order to impart a moral—in this case, that guile and cunning are essential in the management of human affairs. In view of the prominence accorded to the role of intelligence in the *Decameron*, it could be argued that the affinity between Boccaccio's collection of tales and these oriental fables is not only structural but also thematic.[4]

A few years later, the Londoner Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), influenced by the notion of frame story, composed *The Canterbury Tales*, probably after reading Boccaccio's work during his stay in Italy.

When the orientalist Antoine Galland's (1646-1715) first systematic edition and translation of the *Nights* into French opened new literary ways in Europe, the count Jan Potocki (1761-1815) wrote his masterpiece *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*. Potocki, who had read Galland's translation, did not conform to setting his narratives in the shape of frame stories. He also wished to renew the sense of exoticism by transferring it to 18th century Spain, which he, as a Polish aristocrat writing his novel in French, deemed the quintessential setting available in Europe for that purpose.

Some decades after Potocki's death, Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) would remain so overwhelmed by the creative explosion that was *The Arabian Nights* that he would write the *New Arabian Nights*, a fascinating novel, the title of which clearly intimates the heavy influence of the Arabic collection upon his spirits. In turn, the Welsh novelist Arthur Machen (1863-1947), impressed by Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*, wrote his supernatural classic *The Three Impostors*, imitating the narrative model of the Scottish author.

The abovementioned three literary giants employed their individual approaches to reshape exoticism to fit a literary taste more suitable to the prevailing fashion of the time. If Potocki chose the *mysterious* Spain for his purposes, Stevenson chose to introduce an Indian Rajah and a Bohemian Prince in his narratives, tokens of the British imperial policy in the *exotic* Asia and of the newly Austro-Hungarian power in Central Europe (here it must be recalled that "Bohemian" in English is an adjective that strongly connotes not only a person from Bohemia but also a "free spirit" and a "gypsy"). Lastly, Machen did what he always does: he narratively reintroduced the old Celtic and pre-Christian worlds, seasoned with his personal Decadentist style firmly grounded in the Aesthetic movement to which he belonged together with his friend Oscar Wilde, the true star and enfant terrible of those times.

Hence, we can summarize the influence of the Eastern classics upon European writers in two main points: first, the adoption of the frame story as a narrative structure that can be mechanically imitated; second, the reproduction of a subjective sense of exoticism meant to be exotic for Western readers like themselves.

Let us delve now into the opposite current, the one flowing from West to East. A suitable place to begin is with the novels of Jane Austen (1775-1817), who is credited with being the first author to consistently use free indirect style, also called free indirect speech or free indirect discourse,

[4] G. H. McWilliam, introduction to *The Decameron* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. LIX.

> The other method, called free indirect style, goes back at least as far as Jane Austen, but was employed with ever-increasing scope and virtuosity by modern novelists like Woolf.[5]

A few decades after Austen's literary bloom, Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) would develop a technique named *skaz*, a word derived from the Russian verb *skazat*, which means "to tell." As we shall see, these two narrative devices would have a tremendous literary impact both in Eastern and Western literature.

On the one hand, free indirect style is one of the staple methods to convey a sense of consciousness and individuality to a story. It is a standard narration in third person that suddenly displays elements typically belonging to a narration in first person. The contrast breaks the boundaries between the reader and the minds and the feeling of the characters. One example from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is,

> Elizabeth had frequently united with Jane in an endeavour to check the imprudence of Catherine and Lydia; but while they were supported by their mother's indulgence, what chance could there be of improvement?[6]

The question closing the citation introduces the reader to Elizabeth's innermost thoughts without changing the fact that the narration is told in third person.

On the other hand, skaz is a colloquial narration in first or third person. It has to be noted that the characteristics of the speech differ depending on the grammatical person to which the writer resorts. Gogol himself preferred the former, but his skaz heir in the Russian letters, Nikolai Leskov (1831-1895), preferred the latter, given his clear preference for a narrative tone focused on echoing the old Russian tradition of oral folk tales. According to Walter Benjamin,

> Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn. And among those who have written down the tales, it is the great ones whose written version differs least from the speech of the many nameless storytellers.[7]

Let's begin this part of the analysis by clarifying that, generally speaking, skaz speech relies on a colloquial style to convey a sense of freshness and improvisation. This style can be more or less intense, according to the intention of the author, and it is manifestly more colloquial in the first person, given the immediacy transmitted via the direct impression of consciousness. As an example, we have a few lines from the commencement of Gogol's masterpiece *The Overcoat*,

> In the department of… but it would be better not to say in which department. There is nothing more irascible than all these departments, regiments, offices—in short, all the officialdom. Nowadays every private individual considers the whole of society insulted in his person. They say

[5] David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 43.
[6] Jane Austen, *The Complete Novels* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), p. 326.
[7] Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), p. 84.

> a petition came quite recently from some police chief, I don't remember of what town, in which he states clearly that the government's decrees are perishing and his own sacred name is decidedly being taken in vain.[8]

It is highly remarkable the way Gogol achieves the literary reproduction of a rushed speech that we could be casually overhearing on a train from the lips of an utterly unknown individual. It is a crystal-clear example of how skaz can work.

Regarding Leskov, the usage of skaz is not linked to the rhythm via first person speech as in Gogol, but to the recreation of a fairy tale style with a certain magical air via third person speech. The first lines of his narration *Lefty* illustrate this,

> When the emperor Alexander Pavlovich finished up the Congress of Vienna, he wanted to travel through Europe and have a look at the wonders in the various states. He travelled around all the countries, and everywhere, owing to his amiability, he always had the most internecine conversations with all sorts of people, and they astonished him with something and wanted to incline him to their side, but with him was the Don Cossack Platov, who did not like such inclinations and, longing for his own backyard, kept luring the sovereign homewards.[9]

Hence, it is evident that skaz as a style allows considerable variation in the treatment of literary motifs and plots.

That said, Gogol's tale *Diary of a Madman* had a tremendous influence on the renewal of Chinese literature at the commencement of the 20th century, as we shall soon see. The following extract is another example of skaz in first person,

> These letters will reveal everything to me. Dogs are smart folk, they know all the political relations, and so it is all sure to be there: the picture of the man and all his doings. There'll also be something about her who… never mind, silence! Toward evening I came home. Lay in bed most of the time.[10]

In this paragraph, we find two pieces of evidence of the use of skaz. The first is the usage of the colloquialisms "there'll" for "there will" and "lay" for "I lay." The second is the self-exhortation "silence!" We could certainly argue that the bibliography used is not the original Russian text but an English translation, and thus the evidence cited in the previous paragraph would not be enough because we have not seen how Gogol used skaz in Russian. To that objection, we can reply that we have to rely on the translation skills of Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, as we would have to with any other reputed translators when dealing with diverse languages.

Before moving from Europe to the Far East, we shall round up the exposition by mentioning two masterpieces of Western literature composed in skaz. Both of them happen to be American classics that have exerted an enormous influence on subsequent literature, within

[8] Nikolai Gogol, *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 394.

[9] Nikolai Leskov, *The Enchanted Wanderer and Other Stories*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 2014), p. 348.

[10] Gogol, *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, p. 286.

and without the United States. The novels in question are *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain (1835-1910), and *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger (1919-2010).

Free indirect style and skaz became crucial literary techniques in the renovation of Japanese and Chinese literature during the early 20th century, as we shall see focusing on the Japanese novelist Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) and the Chinese short story writer Lu Xun (1881-1936).

Soseki is the epitome of the Japanese literary renewal during the Meiji Era (1868-1912), a period of openness and approach to the West, intending to break the traditional isolationism of Japan. He lived in the United Kingdom for a couple of years and was heavily influenced by the works of Laurence Sterne, Jonathan Swift and Jane Austen. After his return to Japan, he began a literary career that would change the history of Japanese literature forever. To a certain extent, he may be credited as the progenitor of the Modernist movement not only in Japan specifically but also in the Far East generally. While, chronologically speaking, literary Modernism definitely crystallized in the West right after his death, the way he understood literature, and moreover, the way he understood the social function of his new expressivity, is a playbook example of a programmatic Modernism aimed at transcending itself.

Being an individualist, Soseki focused his work on depicting individuality and subjectivity. To fulfil such purposes, free indirect style and skaz are extremely useful techniques. The commencement of his novel *Botchan*, composed in skaz, will serve as an example,

> From the time I was a boy the reckless streak that runs in my family has brought me nothing but trouble. Once when I was in elementary school I jumped out of one of the second-storey windows and I couldn't walk for a week. Some people might wonder why I'd try such a daredevil stunt.[11]

Two pieces of evidence of skaz can be identified, signaling the style employed in the composition. The first is the lack of commas in places where we would expect to find them in a more formal writing style: after "boy," after "once" and after "school." The second is the colloquialism "I'd" instead of "I would."

Regarding free indirect style, we can resort to his novel *Sanshiro*,

> He took two, three bulging mouthfuls of rice, and still it seemed she had not come back to her seat. Could she be standing in the aisle? He glanced up and there she was, facing him.[12]

As in the previous example taken from Austen, the question we see in *Sanshiro*'s lines reflects the technique of free indirect style.

Regarding the Chinese author Lu Xun, who was in favor of diminishing the power of traditional Confucianism in Chinese cultural life, his knowledge of the Russian language allowed him to read Gogol, whose tale *Diary of a Madman* influenced him to the point of making him believe that it would be a good idea to write a tale with the same title and a

[11] Soseki Natsume, *Botchan*, trans. J. Cohn (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), p. 3.
[12] Soseki Natsume, *Sanshiro*, trans. J. Rubin (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), p. 5.

similar plot. Lu Xun resorted to a less dynamic form of skaz, still praiseworthy though, as we can read in this token,

> If only they could leave it all behind them, how easy, how comfortable their lives would become. Such a tiny thing. But they are all part of it – fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, wives, friends, teachers, pupils, enemies, perfect strangers, pulling each other back.[13]

The interval beginning with "fathers" and ending with "strangers" is an example of synathroism, a rhetorical device which consists of placing semantically equivalent terms in succession, so as to convey a rhythmical sense typically belonging to oral speech.

As far as the representation of consciousness is concerned, Lu Xun also resorts to free indirect style, but not only to that. The opening of the tale *A Happy Family* reads,

> '…whatever he writes – or chooses not to write – is an expression of the self; a shaft of sunlight blazing out from an infinite light source, not the occasional spark struck from a flint. This – only this – is the true art, written by the true artist… while I… What does it all mean?'
>
> He interrupted his stream of consciousness by leaping out of bed. He knew what he had to do: sell some articles to sustain life. *Happiness Monthly* was his organ of choice – because they paid well. But he needed a big idea to get them interested. The right kind of big idea… What are the youth of today thinking about?[14]

In the first line of the second paragraph, we find the expression "stream of consciousness" characterizing the first paragraph. For that to be truly accurate, the first paragraph should lack quotation marks. But in any case, it is a good attempt to perform the brilliant trick of doing what you say and saying what you do without breaking the textual continuum.

Regarding the second paragraph, it closes with a question in free indirect style. Questions are always a good way to embed free indirect style into a story, as we have seen in the example taken from Jane Austen.

As far as we are concerned in this paper, we have already summarised the influence of Eastern narrative styles and themes on Western literature. Thus, we can summarise now the influence of Western classics upon modern Far Eastern writers as the borrowing of rhetorical devices and literary techniques from the West by Chinese and Japanese avant-garde authors to express subjectivity, in order to overcome what they perceived as Asian cultural traditionalism, deeply embedded in fiction. In the particular case of Natsume Soseki, this subjectivity can be somewhat linked to the Modernist movement that swept across Western artistic and cultural circles in the first third of the 20th century. Even if considering the Japanese author the progenitor of Modernism in Japan may be debatable, at least on an explicitly conscious Modernist level, the idea is not entirely dismissible due not only to the Western literary techniques he mastered but also the strong sense of individuality displayed in his novel *Kusamakura*, narrated both in first person and in present tense, thus conveying the immediacy that characterizes consciousness and first-hand experience.

[13] Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China. The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun,* trans. J. Lovell (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), p. 28.

[14] Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China. The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun,* p. 188.

Hence, to complete this exposition, we must not forget that the art of translation is a basic and indispensable tool to wake up local literary traditions and force them to cross frontiers into other cultures and civilizations, eventually enriching foreign literatures and allowing them to push far beyond in the realm of creativity and self-recreation. Literature is, after all, a manner to comprehend ourselves.

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 97-103

WRITING "LIKE A DRAWING COMPASS": CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS IN ELIF SHAFAK'S NOVEL *HONOUR*

Petya Tsoneva

Abstract

The present article is concerned with how Elif Shafak, a contemporary writer of Turkish origin, questions certain presumptions about the Middle East which, significantly, the region has advanced itself. Shafak not only writes about the region's geographically closest parts neighboring Europe; she directs her narrative perspective from there and her writing, which she compares to the expanding circle of a drawing compass, configures the multidirectional relationship between vernacular and world cultures. This approach, at first taken as a symptom of self-Orientalism, has much wider implications. Shaping a response to Kemalist "westernization," it seeks to restore an internally split Turkey to itself, mediating between its excessive seclusion and culturally violent ways of self-assertion, on the one hand, and the willingness to discard its past and traditions altogether in an attempt to emulate western secularism, on the other.

Shafak's quest for a productive pathway out of such confinements yields the perspective of secular Sufism, a more philosophical and ethical attitude than a religious conviction. This paradigm shifts the modes of self-location from external observation of traditional norms that leads to violent practices of cultural control such as honor killings, to inward understanding and appreciation of difference. In a TED talk, she refers the two perspectives to the two conflicting visions of God she came to know from her two grandmothers – that of Jalal as punishing and masculine; and that of Jamal as maternally all-embracing. In a wider cultural context, Jamal and Jalal represent two figurations of Turkey (and, by inference, the Middle East) within national boundaries and beyond them. Jalal apparently refers to a violent, homogeneous version of nationalism and cultural confinement, while Jamal coincides with the ethos of multiplicity and conviviality.

Keywords: *migration, border crossing, secular Sufism, Middle East, vernacular and world cultures.*

Shafak appears to be one of the contemporary authors of Turkish origin (alongside paradigmatic Orhan Pamuk) who endeavor to restore Turkey's silent self to its contemporary cross-border position, but, in doing that, she also seeks to push open a number of tightly-bordered enclosures, homogenizing national and religious discourses and "hegemonic identitarian nar-

ratives."[1] Thus, for instance, in *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), one of Shafak's most debated novels longlisted for the Orange prize, she addresses the problematic "monocultural confinement"[2] of ethnic minorities within post-Ottoman Turkey and insists on the urgent necessity to perceive the kaleidoscopic composition of Turkish identity beyond any monochrome pronouncements. Similarly, in *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2005) and *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), she expands the space of individual and collective self-location in cross-border movements that work against discourses of isolation applied to the Middle East and Turkey, in particular.

Shafak's cross-cultural narratives revisit philosophical, religious, aesthetic and ethical representations that lie within Middle-Eastern self-articulation and yet go against the very grain of radical interpretations of religion that underpin hosts of violent traditions and practices. Keith Critchlow's research *Islamic Patterns. An Analytical and Cosmological Approach* explores the principles that regulate "beauty" in Islamic decorative art to conclude that the beautiful resides in human ability "to see the forms of nature once again as the *vestigii Dei* and multiplicity as so many reflections of the Unity which is both the origin and end of the order of multiplicity."[3] The way this principle operates can be observed in artistic patterns that produce a larger figure out of its miniature collected reflections, arranged according to figural or kinetic geometrical rules (as the figural compositions of the muqarnas dome roofs, Persian glass mosque mosaic, ceramics, tilework and arabesque decoration). In these works, the idea of unity in diversity is translated into the variety of ways of orientation of the pieces to each other and to the whole, and while each fragment constitutes a figure in itself, its significance can only be achieved by referring it to the larger figure of the pattern.

Such optical performance is made possible by the interaction of the observer and the observed, studied with exquisite philosophical luminosity by Ibn al-Haytham, author of *Kitab al-Manazir* (*Book of Optics*, 1011-1021) and one of the brilliant philosophers and theoreticians of visual perception and representation in the eastern schools of thought. According to him, beauty is the outcome of the correspondence of the parts to the whole, "when a form combines the beauty of the shapes of all its parts and the beauty of their magnitudes and their composition and the proportionality of parts."[4] From a contemporary perspective, Claudia Michael points out that,

> the complexity of unity is best described through the geometry of the circle. […] It is a complete form, yet it has no beginning and no end. Its shape symbolizes the perfect unity of filled and unfilled space. […] It has many parts within a whole yet contains a center point that anchors all other

[1] Elena Furlanetto,"'Safe Spaces of the Like-Minded': the Search for a Hybrid Post-Ottoman Identity," in *Elif Shafak's The Bastard of Istanbul*, *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 36, no. 2 (2014), p. 21.

[2] Elena Furlanetto, "'Safe Spaces'," p. 27.

[3] Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns. An Analytical and Cosmological Approach* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1976), p. 6.

[4] Ibn Al-Haytham, *The Optics of Ibn Al-Haytham. Books I-III on Direct Vision*, trans. ed. A.I. Sabra (London: University of London, 1989), p. 205.

> dissections of its core. / The circle exhibits several types of symmetry. It has lateral, radiating and reflective symmetrical properties.[5]

Here, it is necessary to draw a definite distinction between the circle as a line of graphical contour, which, I suggest, is the way Shafak refers to circular enclosure in the opening of one of her TED talks, and the way she employs circularity as a structural mode of narration that coincides with a figure of openness perceived by the contents it includes. Such a distinction is needed to avoid the internal conflict caused by the same trope Shafak employs when she refers to the harmful effects of the like-minded, self-encircled communities, and when she describes the way she sees herself as a writer in the same TED talk,

> There's a metaphor which I love – living like a drawing compass. As you know, one leg of the compass is static, rooted in a place. Meanwhile, the other leg draws a wide circle, constantly moving. Like that, my fiction as well. One part of it is rooted in Istanbul with strong Turkish roots, but the other part travels the world, connecting to different cultures.[6]

While the circle as a ring-folded line may signify seclusion and tightly-bordered identity, the kinetic figuration produced by the drawing leg of a compass is a representation of a "spatial envelope," i.e. "a description of the whole space that provides an instant impression of the volume of the place."[7]

The mobility of Shafak's writing space is remarkably reminiscent of the Sufi model of the universe, symbolically performed in the whirling dervishes' dance. The choreography and religious significance of their movements imply extreme openness towards the four directions of the world and the cosmic universe that surrounds it, as the ecstatically moving bodies of the dancers strive to produce a human equivalent to the mythological *axis mundi*, the pathway to heaven, and the rotating skirts of their robes "embrace" horizontally a multifarious world. In what follows, I will observe how Shafak applies this dynamics to articulate border crossing in her novel *Honour* through the relationships between the characters Pembe and Jamila, their families, Turkish Kurdistan, Istanbul and London.

The narrator Esma traces her familial history back to a 1945-Kurdish village on the banks of the Euphrates. Significantly, the place is located in the margins of Turkey, at a literal and metaphorical crossroads between the "universe beyond the shores of the Euphrates,"[8] identified as a space of "strange things" like "[t]he aftermath of the Second World War, the atomic bomb…" [9] and the "world" beyond Turkey's eastern border with Syria. The border location of the village is metaphorically enhanced by its name, *Mala Çar Bayan*, which, trans-

---

[5] Claudia Michael. "An Interdisciplinary Study of Symmetry in Islamic Geometric Design and Symmetry in Moroccan author Laila Lalami's novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*," last modified January 30, 2016, http://www.macece.org/fhsprojects/CMichael.pdf

[6] Elif Shafak, "The Politics of Fiction," last modified October10, 2016, http://www.ted.com/talks/elif_shafak_the_politics_of_fiction/transcript

[7] Aude Oliva, Soojin Park et al., "Representing, perceiving, and remembering the shape of visual space," in *Vision in 3D Environments*, eds. Laurence Harris and Michael Jenkin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. 111.

[8] Elif Shafak, *Honour* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), p. 6.

[9] Ibid., p. 6.

lated from Kurdish, means "House of the Four Winds."[10] The place is likewise ambiguously represented as a site of rooted belonging where "human beings [are] ordained to be sedentary, like trees and boulders";[11] as a panoptic accumulation of communal life, "[w]hatever took place in one corner was heard, at once, by everyone else";[12] but also as a starting point of self-relocation in a world of larger, cosmic and natural movements. Thus, in spite of the seemingly stagnant, monotonous and repetitive ways of life in the village, there are hints that its location is governed by the winds, and the winds, in their association with the four cardinal directions, appear to convey the same sense of motion and spherical openness as the twirling perimeter of a dervish robe.

The controversial location of the village is confirmed by reminiscences of its multicultural past. When the narrative voice describes Jamila's dwelling place in a hollow-nested hut in the ravine, it becomes evident that the present-day village is just a remnant of a formerly teeming multicultural settlement: "For centuries Christians and Muslims and Zoroastrians and Yazidis had lived here side by side, loved and died side by side. Their grandchildren, however, had long ago left for other lands. All but a handful of peasants remained in the area – and Jamila."[13] Rather than being solely a site of oppressive enclosure, then, the House of the Winds is also located as a place of departure, similar in many ways to the "interval space" of the airport lounge in Kapka Kassabova's meditation on contemporary migrant processes.[14] Such forms of openness obviously operate in the regime of Shafak's rooted and routed writing and self-location. Gaston Bachelard's theoretical inquiry into the phenomenology of space describes such type of mixed, semi-mobile spatial experience through the metaphor of the cosmic house, a largely imagined domestic form which takes shape in the movements of homecoming and home-leaving: "an immense cosmic house is a potential of every dream of houses. Winds radiate from its center […] Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to inhabit [it]."[15] A similar form of imagined domesticity is at the heart of Shafak's negotiation of Turkishness in a wider multicultural context.

For Shafak, the beginning of a family history is extremely important because it represents the "center point that anchors all other dissections to its core."[16] In consistence with the Sufi aesthetic paradigm in this curious case of narrative geometry, the main centrifugal movements that dissect the characters' displacements are performed by the specular splitting of the twin sisters Pembe Kader and Jamila Yeter, born in the strictly patriarchal family of Berzo and Naze as the next two in the row of already six daughters. The proliferation of female offspring that plagues the familial expectations of a son intensifies the manifestations of Shafak's articulation of rural Kurdish culture. An interesting fact adds further strength to this hypothesis – the Kurdish plural form of the word "wind" – "bayan" coincides with the plural

[10] Ibid., p. 6.
[11] Ibid., p. 6.
[12] Ibid., p. 6.
[13] Ibid., p. 35.
[14] See Kapka Kassabova, *Street Without a Name: Childhood and Other Misadventures in Bulgaria* (London: Portobello, 2008).
[15] Bachelard, Gaston, "House and universe," in *The Poetics of Space*, trans. John R. Stilgoe (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, 1994), p. 51.
[16] Claudia Michael, "An Interdisciplinary Study."

form of "woman" in Turkish. This known, the pun makes it possible to translate the name of the village as "House of Women" and consider the "house," in its more symbolic and imaginative significance, as a womb-like figure. We can, therefore suggest that the village on the Euphrates "births" the characters' centrifugal itineraries, while, at the same time, it provides a constant point of orientation in their routes. In a parallel way, Pembe and Jamila's twinship configures the spatiotemporal relationships in the novel both as a centrifugal embrace of difference and as a centripetal retreat to origins. Pembe's marriage to Adem Toprak, their migration to Istanbul and settlement in London represent the wider moving circle in the drawing-compass model of Shafak's narration, while Jamila's physical barrenness, life in the remote village and attachment to the land shape the fixed axis of the narrative. Jamila's journey to England, vigorous intervention to protect her sister offering her life in her stead and Pembe's subsequent return to the village to take her sister's place at the end of her life, reverse the model, thus destabilizing the focal point of reference, constantly mediating between "here" and "there" in a productive dialogue. Prior to her death, however, Pembe reclaims her origins as a "kneeling place" from where she can offer her prayers to the four corners of the world. This spectacular geometrical expansion and retraction of space operates in consistence with the symmetric principle of moving circularity, illustrating the "many reflections of the Unity which is both the origin and end of the order of multiplicity."[17]

The aspect of multiplicity is also frequently visualized by tropes of fluidity (water and air) that, by virtue of their containment properties, evoke the ambience of fetal development and birth-giving. Thus, the four winds that circulate the village and the river Euphrates operate as symbols of extreme mobility that suggests both fertility and evasion, the *plerosis – kenosis* cycle of conception and birth. Within this dynamics, the body of Pembe and Jamila's birthland equally splits between the specularly conjoined possibilities of a triumphant motherhood (Pembe's birth of Iskender as fulfilment of her mother Naze's lifelong wish for male offspring) and barren motherhood (Jamila's barren womb that reciprocates the barrenness of the village). In the Sufi registry of correspondences, physical barrenness is part of the physiology of life while spiritual barrenness is unnatural and signifies ultimate self-enclosure. The narration negotiates between these two extremes of human self-location in a familial dynamics, in which multiplicity is constantly checked and sanctioned by the principle of self-assertion. The ensuing growth and sickness of the family lines operates as a genealogical model of cross-cultural relationships in Shafak's attempt to negotiate difference.

Both the circular and the branching genealogical structures in the novel correspond technically to the complex symmetric relationships that hold between the multiple elements of larger figures in the aesthetic organization of space in Middle-Eastern art and architecture. The dynamically changing routes of the characters' displacements and their willingness or unwillingness to go beyond bordered forms of self, are part of Shafak's larger project of raising ethical questions by means of an aesthetic technique of narration producing a text that will, possibly, instruct contemporary readership on the pernicious effects of violently bordered identities.

In a chain of relationships, the expanding and retracting movements of the characters' self-location configure places, times and positions in specularly reflexive units. Thus, for in-

[17] Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns*, p. 6.

stance, the Kurdish village, urban Istanbul, London and Abu Dhabi, Adem Toprak's final destination, are catoptrically refigured versions of each other. They all share a quality of elusiveness, shape-shifting and instability, which is positively defined by tropes of fluidity within the paradigm of comprehensiveness. At the same time, fluidity is constantly constrained by norms, regulations and traditionally affirmed practices of surveillance defining fluctuation as a deviation that has to be reinserted within the limits of the norm. Thus, while Mala Çar Bayan is the House of the Winds, i.e. a place of extreme openness, it likewise represents the site where communal regulations require the death of Naze and Berzo's eldest daughter Hediye who "taints" family honor. Pembe and Adem's migration exports village and regional culture to London where it enters the diasporic borders of the Muslim community. Similarly, Istanbul is configured as a place of ambiguous experience. Esma's memories of her early childhood there recollect it as a city of water, ever-changing shapes and erosion of firmly-built enclosures (the floodings in the Toprak family's basement flat, for instance). However, the city also enters Esma's narrative through her father's memories of his childhood, loss of mother (who joins the group of family-betraying characters), sober and drunken father and the claustrophobic enclosure of public opinion. London reciprocates the Kurdish village and Istanbul in its methods of surveillance (racism, migration laws, spikes to prevent migrant birds from settling on window sills), but also with its fluidity and the multicultural encounters it welcomes. The latter quest for openness is best illustrated by the squatters' house, a dwelling in suburban London. It represents an aquatic version of the House of the Winds through its association with Noah's ark, "'It is like a floating house',"[18] and operates as another manifestation of embraced diversity. The squatters' unwillingness to observe government laws is, in turn, ambiguously defined as a mock sense of freedom without obligations.

Abu-Dhabi is yet another ambiguous location in the novel. Its city-scape outlined by skyscrapers built on "soft sand"[19] operates as a panoramic spatial projection of Adem Toprak's failure to understand the beauty of multiplicity. In the chapter entitled "Sandstones" we learn about what underpins his inability to embrace difference, "His life had been a maze of mirrors, in each mirror he had seen a different reflection of himself, but which one of them was the real Adem, he couldn't tell."[20] The specular properties of sand grains, magnified by their accumulation in the desert, constitute a natural version of the labyrinth of mirror selves Adem attempts to decipher in the course of his problematic self-assertion. The greatest predicament he faces in this endeavor is his willingness to claim only one of his reflections as his true and only self in consistence with the Jalal-regulated mode of thinking. As he finds this impossible, he prefers to have himself absent, lose himself in the labyrinth. His final escape from choice stages his literal and metaphoric dissolution in the desert space, a symbolic *sparagmos* of his parched self. As a literal and metaphoric location, Abu Dhabi illustrates very clearly Shafak's model of individual and collective self-location. Read parabolically, the city-scape with solid buildings reared on sand foundations operates not only as a configuration of the successfully maintained symbiosis between nature and culture, but also as a spatial projection of the fluid and solid components, the "routes" and "roots" of self-location.

[18] Elif Shafak, *Honour*, p. 63.
[19] Ibid., p. 271.
[20] Ibid., p. 270.

In the novel, places form part of Shafak's mosaic topography – they represent variations on one and the same pattern whose multiplicity yields new, different forms. The same compositional principle underlies character construction. We already observed that the topos of twinned femininity can be attributed not only to the role of symmetry in her aesthetic project, but also to her own experience of relocation as a writer who sees part of herself "pegged" and another part – moving freely across cultures. It is, however, difficult to measure Pembe and Jamila's fixity and mobility separately. In the end, each one of them takes her sister's previously established place, which attests to Shafak's cross-cultural approach. At the same time, neither sister can fully leave the place of her origins, or fully remain there. When in London, Pembe loves to do her shopping on Ridley Road and is fascinated with the multicultural vitality of the place where "one could come across so many different people with skins of all shades of brown, white and black, from places that were, to her, only names on a blurry map."[21] Pembe's displacement may, at first sight, seem to fulfil her childhood wish to become a sailor waking up at a different port every morning. Yet, when she finally arrives in London, she is not in a hurry to see the ocean or the Queen's palace. Rather, she feels comfortable in the multi-ethnic, but predominantly eastern neighborhood of Lavender Grove, and is always anxious to perform her traditionally imposed obligations.

Pembe's likeness Jamila occupies an equally ambiguous position. Seemingly subsumed by the desiccating Kurdish village, she is open-minded, performs her midwife duties in the company of smugglers, and is not afraid of difference – when faced with a villager's superstition about his wife's birth of conjoined twins, one alive, the other – dead, she assures him that the living child is special and needs exceptional parental love and care. Although as children Pembe and Jamila have different dreams about the world and unlike Pembe who wishes to see it, Jamila feels comfortable at home, she undertakes a perilous journey to England, helped by smugglers.

Pembe and Jamila's migrations take shape as vectoral movements that both extend the domestic world of the beginning and reroute it to new forms of self-location. Contrary to the conventionally interpreted myth of the Dioscuri twins whose separation guarantees life's continuation, Jamila's death in her sister's place is followed by Pembe's sickness and death in the village not long afterwards. For Shafak, such forms of conjoined multiplicity organically result in the spread of loss across the entire body of the interconnected parts.

In conclusion, Shafak's novel questions certain presumptions about the Middle East which, significantly, the region has advanced itself. She not only writes about its geographically closest parts neighboring Europe; she directs her narrative perspective from there and her writing which she compares to the expanding circle of a drawing compass configures the multidirectional relationship between vernacular and world cultures. This movement, at first approached as a symptom of self-Orientalism, has much wider implications. Shaping a response to Kemalist "westernization," it seeks to restore an internally split Turkey to itself, mediating between its excessive seclusion and culturally violent ways of self-assertion, on the one hand, and the willingness to discard its past and traditions altogether in an attempt at emulation of western secularism, on the other.

[21] Ibid., p. 337.

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 104-116

Society and Culture

BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL: THE MEANING OF THE BANLIEUE, NATION, RELIGION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN FRENCH MUSLIM RAP

Alexandra Preitschopf

Abstract

Regarding current trends in popular culture and especially in rap music, the case of France is especially interesting, considering that French rap artists often are children or grandchildren of immigrants and/or from Muslim background. Many of them are very critical concerning French policies and France's colonial history or denounce the living conditions in the banlieues (suburbs), discriminations against migrants, racism, xenophobia or Islamophobia. This is often combined with references to Islamic religion and/or a self-presentation of the rappers as Muslim citizens and goes in many cases along with declarations of solidarity with Muslims in other parts of the world, especially in Palestine.

In this sense, local, national and historical belongings (the Banlieue, France, the Maghreb,…) and a transnational, global Muslim identity (the Umma) interact and converge. However, this phenomenon is not found only in rap music; it rather reflects general contemporary socio-political processes in France, and Western Europe. On this basis, the present paper aims to take a closer look at selected lyrics of French Muslim rappers and analyse them in the wider context of ongoing debates on integration, Islam, laicism and multiculturalism.

Keywords: *Muslims in France, integration, identity, protest, rap, Islam, Palestine*

I. Introduction[1]

In contemporary youth and popular culture, politically conscious rap plays an important role as an artistic expression of social protest as well as an identity marker and a means of differentiation. In this context, the case of France is especially interesting, considering that French rap artists often are children or grandchildren of immigrants mostly from former French colonies and/or from Muslim background. Many of them have grown up in poor *banlieues* (suburbs) of large French cities and use their upbringing in this difficult environment as a source

[1] This article is mainly based on my PhD thesis: "*Umkämpfter Raum.*" *Palästina-Solidarität, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus unter MuslimInnen im zeitgenössischen Frankreich* (Universität Salzburg: 2016).

of inspiration. In their music, they often denounce French policy and social problems such as racism, discrimination or Islamophobia.

At the same time, many of them present themselves as proud "banlieusards", and put emphasis on their origins, their religion and identity as Muslims. Often, this goes along with declarations of solidarity with Muslims in other parts of the world, as for instance in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Myanmar or especially in Palestine.

In this sense, local, national and historical belongings (the Banlieue, France, the Maghreb,…), and a global Muslim identity (the *Umma*) interact and converge. However, this phenomenon cannot not only be found in rap music, it rather reflects general contemporary socio-political processes in France, and Western Europe. On this basis, the present paper aims to take a closer look at selected lyrics of French Muslim rappers[2] and analyse them in their wider socio-political context.

II. French rap between social protest, republicanism and Islamic religion

Historically, rap music has existed in France since the early 1980s – after being dominated by US-American musicians,[3] a specifically *French* rap has developed since the 1990s, and was to some extent even promoted by public cultural funding.[4] This has to be seen in the general context of promotion of French music culture by the state.[5] Today, France is one of the largest producers and consumers of rap music in the world.[6] Subsequently, rap culture is relatively widely spread in French media (besides the TV and radio domain especially on the Internet).[7] This is not only of relevance considering the commercial aspects of rap but also with regard to

[2] For this purpose, solely songs of French rappers who are well-known on a national level and whose albums and songs are successfully sold and therefore "heard" by a certain number of people were selected. Nevertheless methodologically, the question how widespread a song effectively is, is hard to answer – given that, besides sales figures of albums and the presence on music channels or on radio stations, the number of legal and illegal downloads, of "clicks" on YouTube and similar platforms etc. ought to be considered as well.

[3] Julien Barret, *Le rap ou l'artisanat de la rime* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), p. 11.

[4] Dietmar Hüser, "Sex & crime & rap music – Amerika-Bilder und Französisch-Sein in einer globalen Weltordnung," Eva Kimminich, ed., *Rap – more than words* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), S 76, and Dietmar Hüser and Linda Schüssler, "Klänge aus Algerien, Botschaften für Frankreich – Der Rai-*Beur* als Musik französischer Jugendlicher aus maghrebinischen Migrationskontexten," Dietmar Hüser, ed., *Frankreichs Empire schlägt zurück. Gesellschaftswandel, Kolonialdebatten und Migrationskulturen im frühen 21. Jahrhundert* (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2010), S 318. See also Mary Breatnach and Eric Sterenfeld, "From Messiaen to MC Solaar: music in France in the second half of the twentieth century," William Kidd and Siân Reynolds, eds., *Contemporary French Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 251 and Pierre Mayol, "The Policy of the City and Cultural Action," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 27, no. 2-3 (2002), pp. 225-228.

[5] Hüser and Schüssler, *Klänge aus Algerien*, 318; Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music. Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 2014), S 208.

[6] Susanne Stemmler, "Rap-Musik und Hip-Hop-Kulturen in romanischen Sprachwelten: Einleitung und Perspektiven der Forschung," Susanne Stemmler and Timo Skrandies, eds., *Hip-Hop und Rap in romanischen Sprachwelten. Stationen einer globalen Musikkultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), S 16, and Samira Hassa, "*Kiff my zikmu*: Symbolic Dimensions of Arabic, English and Verlan in French Rap Texts," Marina Terkourafi, ed., *Languages of Global Hip-Hop* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 44.

[7] Stemmler, *Rap-Musik und Hip-Hop-Kulturen*, S 15.

its role as "carrier" and medium of certain ideas, thought patterns or also resentments. How-However, it must be taken into consideration in this context that (at least the so-called "con-"conscious") rap is an artistic expression of rebellion and social protest,[8] often using stylistic devices such as provocations, exaggerations or a relatively "dirty" language.[9] Thus, to some extent, this can be seen an essential part of the aesthetics of rap music. At the same time, it allows the musicians to point out their own disappointments, frustrations as well as expectations. Significantly, the American philologist Samira Hassa describes rap thus as "a sort of refuge in which a marginalized group or minority can express freely who they are, what they suffer from, and their dreams and hopes."[10]

a) Rapping for multiculturalism and against Islamophobia

This is especially important considering that in France, rap artists are very often, as mentioned before, children or grandchildren of immigrants mostly from former French colonies in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.[11] Many rappers have grown up in poor *banlieues* of large cities like Paris, Marseille, Lyon and Strasbourg and are marked by their experiences in this specific environment: As a result of the great waves of immigration in the 1960s big dwelling houses with modest, cheap apartments were constructed at the outskirts or *banlieues* of big cities to house as many immigrants as possible. Beside the "practical" aspects of this urban planning, the creation of these so-called *cités* or *cités-HLM* also resulted in problems such as "ghettoisation," urban violence and from time to time youth revolts. Many French suburbs gradually have turned out be sites of separation and exclusion since the 1980s, accompanied by high unemployment rates among the inhabitants, pauperisation, criminality as well as experiences of discrimination and racism among the migrant or Muslim population.[12] Accordingly, many musicians denounce in their music (their own experiences of) exclusion in the *banlieues*, racism, discrimination and especially since 9/11 an increasing Islamophobia.[13] In this context it is also interesting that several musicians have converted to Islam since the

[8] See e. g. Barbara Lebrun, *Protest Music in France. Production, Identity and Audiences* (Surrey: Routledge, 2009), p. 4 and Dietmar Hüser, *RAPublikanische Synthese. Eine französische Zeitgeschichte populärer Musik und politischer Kultur* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), S 11.

[9] Georges Lapassade and Philippe Rousselot, *Le rap ou la fureur de dire. Essai* (Paris: Loris Talmart, 1990), p. 122.

[10] Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 44.

[11] More precisely, about 90% of all French rappers are of immigrant descent, which is the highest percentage in Europe in comparison to ca. 60% in Germany, ca. 30% in Spain or only 4% in Italy. Arno Scholz, "Kulturelle Hybridität und Strategien der Appropriation an Beispielen des romanischen Rap," Eva Kimminich, ed., *Rap – more than words* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 55.

[12] See e.g. Robert S. Leiken, *Europe's angry Muslims. The revolt of the second generation* (New York: OUP USA, 2012), pp. 44-47; Michel Wieviorka, *L'antisémitisme est-il de retour?* (Paris: Larousse, 2008), p. 81; Dietmar Hüser, "Plurales Frankreich in der unteilbaren Republik. Einwürfe und Auswüchse zwischen Vorstadt-Krawallen und Kolonial-Debatten," Deutsch-Französisches Institut, ed., *Frankreich Jahrbuch 2006. Politik und Kommunikation* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), S 17.

[13] Hisham Aidi, "Let us be moors. Islam, Race and Connected Histories," *Middle East Report* 229 (2003), p. 47 and Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 45.

late 1990s and especially since 9/11.[14] According to Samira Hassa French rap has, thus, gradually developed to an "oral, visual and artistic expression of the struggle and resistance of the immigrant youth of France."[15]

At the same time, many musicians deal in their texts with multiculturalism in France and their countries of origin in a very positive way,[16] reflected sometimes in quite romanticized or idealized images of the latter.[17] This multicultural character of French rap, combined with a certain pride of being different and/or of migration background, is – for example – significantly expressed in the song *Citoyen du monde* (citizen of the world), released in 2008 by the French-Tunisian rapper Tunisiano:[18]

Mes origines / Mes couleurs / Je les ai pas choisies, N'essayez pas d'me changer / Prenez moi comme je suis. (…) / Ma culture vaut de l'or, Vaut de l'or !! (…) Je suis fils d'Algérie. Fille de Tunis !! / Parfum d'épices, / Jasmin et tulipes / Fils des Comores Fille du Mali !! / (…) Fierté, famille. / Nous sommes ceux que nous sommes.

My origin / My colors / I have not chosen them / Don't try to change me / Accept me as I am (…) / My culture is worth a mint, / worth a mint!! (…) / I am a son of Algeria, a daughter of Tunis!! / Smell of spices, Jasmin and tulips / son of the Comoros, daughter of Mali!! / (…) Pride, family, / We are what we are.

Similarly the female rapper Diam's – who is of Cypriot background and has converted to Islam several years ago – sings in *L'Honneur d'un Peuple* (The people's honor, 2009) concerning France:[19]

(…) ce pays c'est des Ritales des Noirs des Arabes (…) Ce pays c'est des portugais (…) Guadeloupéens, Martiniquais (…) / Ce pays c'est tout un tas de couleurs, tout un tas de cultures, tout un tas de couleurs, tout un tas

(…) this country are Italians, black people, Arabs, (…) this country are Portuguese people (…) people from Guadeloupe, Martinique (…) / This country is an amount of colours, an amount of cultures, an amount of

[14] Eva Kimminich, "Rassismus und RAPublikanismus – Islamismus oder Welt‚bürger' tum? Geschichte, Wahrnehmung und Funktionsmechanismus des französischen Rap," Karin Bock, ed., *Hip-Hop meets Academia. Globale Spuren eines lokalen Kulturphänomens* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), S 66. In this context it is striking that many young people living in French *banlieues* have converted to Islam in the last years – this is also due to the work of several Islamic (welfare) organisations which have increasingly gained influence in poor suburbs. Eva Kimminich, "Ton-Macht-Musik – Populäre Rap-Lieder und die französische Gesellschaft," Dietmar Hüser, ed., *Frankreichs Empire schlägt zurück. Gesellschaftswandel, Kolonialdebatten und Migrationskulturen im frühen 21. Jahrhundert* (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2010), S 342.

[15] Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 46.

[16] Ibid., 44 and Mairéad Seery, "Tout finit par des chansons? Developments in French Popular Music," Frédéric Royall, ed., *Contemporary French Cultures and Societies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 199.

[17] Hüser and Schüssler, *Klänge aus Algerien*, S 311.

[18] Tunisiano, "Citoyen du monde" (2008); lyrics available on //www.lyricsmania.com/citoyen_du_monde_lyrics_tunisiano.html.

[19] Diam's, "L'Honneur d'un peuple" (2009); lyrics available on http://rapgenius.com/Diams-lhonneur-dunpeuple-lyrics.

de futurs / Ce pays c'est une banlieue qui aimerait qu'on la regarde, qui fait péter les pétards quand on l'a traite de racaille.[20]

future / This country is a *banlieue* who wants to get attention; who huffs if it is treated like rabble.

In turn, the central motif of the *banlieue*, often called "ghetto" in the lyrics, is also essential in *Désillusion du ghetto* (2008), released by the Franco-Algerian rapper Kenza Farah. In the song, the artist deals with the "abandoned and forgotten" *banlieue* youth and expresses her wish to escape, together with her "brothers and sisters" all this misery:[21]

(…) On fait partie de l'histoire tout en vivant dans l'oubli / (…) On a tous le même rêve, celui de sortir du ghetto / Désillusion du ghetto / Le bonheur a mis son veto / On veut s'enfuir du ghetto (…) / On veut s'évader de ces murs de béton.

(…) We are part of the history, even though we are forgotten / (…) We share all the same dream, we want to leave the ghetto / disillusion of the ghetto / Fortune has exercised its right of veto / We want to escape the ghetto (…) / We want to escape these concrete walls.

Declaring her solidarity with all the "children of the concrete walls," suffering all the same fate and sharing the same dream of escape, Kenza Farah refers to a kind of (constructed) collective "*banlieue* identity," which can be found as motif in various French rap lyrics. However, it is striking in this context that many rap artists present themselves, via their music, as proud *banlieusards*, criticising the social grievances in French suburbs but aiming, at the same time, to give a more positive image of their inhabitants. As for instance the German historian Dietmar Hüser points out, the *banlieue* fulfils thus a dual function in French rap: on the one hand it gives reason to complaints and social criticism, on the other hand it serves as kind of counter-concept to stereotypical ideas of a failed, solely violent and "not integrable" suburban youth.[22]

b) "History-re-telling," integration, and the Umma

Besides the (vehement) criticism of grievances and social imbalances in *contemporary* France, several rap musicians also deal with crucial, silent aspects of French History and use their music as a medium to remind France of its colonial past.[23] Thus, they explicitly raise issues such as the role of France in transatlantic slave trade, colonial crimes in North Africa or torture during the Algerian war. The Romance philologist Eva Kimminich speaks in this con-

[20] Allusion to the *banlieue* riots in autumn 2005, when the former French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy called the revolting young people "racaille" ("rabble").

[21] Kenza Farah, "Désillusion du ghetto" (2008); lyrics available on http://www.paroles-musique.com/parolesKenza_Farah-Desillusion_Du_Ghetto-lyrics,p48957.

[22] Hüser, *Sex & crime & rap music*, p. 87.

[23] Joan Gross, David McMurray, and Ted Swedenburg, "Arab Noise and Ramadan Nights: Rai, Rap, and Franco-Maghrebi Identities," *Diaspora* 3, no. 1 (1994), p. 20 and Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 45.

text of a so-called "History-re-telling" of French rap, questioning French historiography and trying to get belated recognition in favour of their own ancestors, their history and suffering.[24] For instance, this is clearly reflected in *Fils du colonisé* (Son of a colonized), a song released in 2008 by the duo Médine (a French Muslim rapper with Algerian roots) and Monsieur R. (whose family emigrated from Congo to France). In the first couplet, Médine alludes to the torture that was executed by the French Army during the Algerian war (1954-1962) as well to a tragic incident on 17 October 1961 in Paris.[25] On this day, about 30.000 Algerians demonstrated peacefully (following a call by FLN) against a curfew for Algerian people imposed by the Parisian police prefect Maurice Papon. During the police operation against the demonstration about 300 Algerian protesters were killed by the French police and their bodies were thrown into the Seine. The incident which is closely related to the Algerian War was kept under silence for years in France and was only examined in recent years:[26]

Général Massu déguise les crimes en suicides Dans leurs cellules, électrocutés, jusqu'à l'homicide / Ainsi mon histoire, une si belle histoire / Et les donneurs de leçons sont placés faces à leur miroir / Leurs propres reflets reflètent leur fausse probité (…) Pareillement au Tiers-Monde, j'ai le cancer du colon / Remplit nos poumons avec l'eau de la Seine / Nous jette depuis les ponts (…)	General Massu[27] disguises the crimes as suicides / They have been tortured in their cells by electrical shocks culminating in intentional killing / This is my history, such a beautiful history / And those who give lessons are confronted with their mirror / Their own mirror images reflect their false probity / Like in the third world, the colon cancer grows in me / fills our lungs with water of the Seine / throws us from the bridge (…)

Nevertheless, it also has to be taken into consideration that the perspective of the "History-re-telling" of French rap itself is often relatively one-sided – thus, the lyrics are marked by a strong "victim-perpetrator dichotomy" and a quite dualistic world view, clearly differentiating between "good" and "bad." This is especially significant in the lyrics of *Lettre à la République* (Letter to the Republic) released in 2012 by the well-known French Muslim rapper Kery James:[28]

[24] Kimminich, *Ton-Macht-Musik*, S 339.

[25] Médine and Monsieur R., "Fils du colonisé" (2008); lyrics available on http://rapgenius.com/Medine-fils-decolonise-lyrics. Furthermore, Médine dealt already in 2006 in his song "17 octobre" with the incident of 1961.

[26] See for instance Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison and Nils Andersson, *Le 17 octobre 1961. Un crime d'État à Paris* (Paris. La Dispute, 2001).

[27] The French general Jacques Massu admitted in 2001 in an interview with *Le Monde* that he had tortured Algerian soldiers during the Algerian war. Henry Frank Carey, *Reaping What You Sow. A Comparative Examination of Torture Reform in the United States, France, Argentina, and Israel* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), p. 146.

[28] Kery James, "Lettre à la République" (2012); lyrics available on http://rapgenius.com/Kery-james-lettre-a-larepublique-lyrics.

A tous ces racistes à la tolérance hypocrite
Qui ont bâti leur nation sur le sang / Maintenant s'érigent en donneurs de leçons / Pilleurs de richesses, tueurs d'africains / Colonisateurs, tortionnaires d'algériens / Ce passé colonial c'est le vôtre / C'est vous qui avez choisi de lier votre histoire à la nôtre / Maintenant vous devez assumer / L'odeur du sang vous poursuit même si vous vous parfumez / Nous les Arabes et les Noirs / On est pas là par hasard (…)
J'n'ai pas peur de l'écrire : La France est islamophobe / D'ailleurs plus personne ne se cache dans la France des xénophobes (…)

To all those racists with a hypocritical tolerance / Who built their nation on blood / Now setting themselves up as sermonizer / Wealth Looters, Africans' murderers / Colonizers, Algerians' torturers / This colonial past is yours / You are those who chose to tie your history to ours / Now you must take responsibility / The smell of blood is chasing you, even though you wear perfume / We, Arabs and Blacks / We are not here by accident (…)
I am not scared to write it down: France is Islamophobic / Besides, nobody is hiding anymore in this xenophobic France (…)

As the lyrics suggest, the song is characterised by strong resentments both towards the historical and the contemporary France and is less a letter than a vehement indictment directed to the Republic. K. James accuses France of hypocrisy, dishonour, of betrayal of its own values, of discrimination, racism, Islamophobia, social inequality and misery in the *banlieues* as well as of colonial crimes and their distortion and disguise nowadays. Accordingly, the lyrics express a bitter disappointment concerning the republican values of France and its ideal of the "one and indivisible" nation. Whereas France is portrayed as being full of guilt towards its immigrants and Muslim population, the latter represent innocence and absolute victimhood. This is accompanied by a certain self-victimization of Kery James as an immigrant and Muslim "betrayed" by the Republic, respectively as its "unloved child." Finally, this creates a clear dichotomy between "Arabs and Blacks" and "the" French people who still have the "smell of blood" of colonialism on them and continue a "colonial" racist way of thinking.

However, and despite the many points of criticism, it is, in general, striking that most of the French rap musicians emphasize at the same time their French citizenship and present themselves rather as conscious, critical, worried or angry citizens than as anti-French. They often refer to French Republican symbols such as *Marianne* or to Republican ideals such as the much vaunted *égalité, liberté, fraternité*. On this account, Dietmar Hüser also speaks of "RAPublicanism"[29] – according to him, French rap lyrics do not only contrast the universal republican values of France with social reality, but "reinvigorate" and "reclaim" them constantly. Accordingly, the vehement criticism of French policy and social reality should rather be seen as a sign of integration – or a desire for integration – than a rejection of France itself.[30]

Furthermore, this question of integration is also interesting concerning linguistic aspects. It is striking that rap songs are almost exclusively in *French*. In addition, several Arabic

[29] Hüser, *Sex & crime & rap music*, p. 90.
[30] Ibid., p. 88.

expressions and phrases can be found.[31] According to Samira Hassa this "code-switching" also plays "the role of an identity construction tool and an identity marker"[32] – thus, the use of Arabic can be seen, as she argues, as a simultaneous identification with France *and* the Maghreb.[33] Furthermore, Arabic (religiously connoted) terms allow the respective artists to express their affiliation to Islamic religion and to clearly present themselves as *Muslim* rappers. Here, terms such as *halal* and *haram*, *Allah*, *kouffar* ("unbelievers") or expressions such as *hak'allah* ("I swear in the name of God") or *Inch'allah* ("God willing") are quite recent.[34]

Beside the aspect of self-presentation as *Muslim* rappers, references to Islamic religion also allow their recipients to identify with them or their lyrics and create perhaps some sense of community and belonging. This is not only relevant concerning possibilities for identification as French Muslim but also in a more global sense. Eva Kimminich for instance speaks in this context of the creation of a transcultural "deterritorialized community,"[35] Samy Alim uses the term "transglobal Hip Hop *Umma*."[36] Accordingly, many French-Muslim rappers refer in their lyrics to universal "Islamic values" and/or declare their solidarity with their "Muslim brothers and sisters" in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Myanmar and elsewhere. Rap as a global culture and the idea of the *Umma* as a global Muslim community interlink here and constitute at the same time a new, "fashionable" and "cool" approach to Islam.[37]

Nevertheless, and although Islamic influenced rap is certainly a part of Islamic youth culture, it remains a controversial issue within Muslim communities. Generally, it is disputed in Islamic theology whether music – or what kind of music – should be considered as *halal* or *haram* and therefore be prohibited. While some Islamic scholars reject music in all forms, regarding it as distracting from religion, others only refuse the use of drums or wind instruments (which are believed to resemble the voice of Satan) or musical entertainment.[38] In contrast, others – especially many young, believing Muslims – emphasize that music can deliberately be chosen as an explicit means of expressing one's faith and can therefore be regarded as *halal*. As Maruta Herding argues, especially with regard to British, German, and French "Islamic rap," this concerns above all the *intention* behind the respective music:

[31] Stemmler, *Rap-Musik und Hip-Hop-Kulturen*, S 17.
[32] Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 45.
[33] Ibid., p. 50.
[34] Cf. e.g. Hassa, *Kiff my zikmu*, p. 52; Mathias Vicherat, "Au commencement était le verbe: Aspects d'une analyse textuelle du rap en France," Susanne Stemmler and Timo Skrandies, eds., *Hip-Hop und Rap in romanischen Sprachwelten. Stationen einer globalen Musikkultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), S 100, and Rupa Huq, *Beyond subculture: pop, youth and identity in a postcolonial world* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 121.
[35] Kimminich, *Ton-Macht-Musik*, S 332; Seery, *Developments in French Popular Music*, p. 198.
[36] Samy Alim, "A New Research Agenda. Exploring The Transglobal Hip Hop *Umma*," Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence, eds., *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 264-274.
[37] Aidi, "Let us be moors," p. 50.
[38] Maruta Herding, *Inventing the Muslim Cool. Islamic Youth Culture in Western Europe* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 93.

Justifying making music with the "right intentions" is a very common approach, and the emphasis placed on the lyrics is therefore strong. If the music is concerned with the remembrance of Allah and the Prophet, the argument that music distracts from religion becomes invalid. Rap music in particular lends itself to this purpose, because it emphasised the words more than the music.[39]

Furthermore, "Islam music" can also be justified – as Herding continues – regarding the topics which are usually *not* covered in the songs:
sexual reference, love stories (unless clearly relating to marriage), vulgarity, strong language, references to alcohol, drugs or crime, partying or having fun as end in itself. Some or all of this would be expected in hip-hop and any other youth cultural music scene, and their absence is a clear trait of contemporary Islamic music. Adhering to these rules – using hip-hop in a *halal* manner and disconnecting it from sex, drugs and violence – makes the prohibition less convincing.[40]

However, the clear distinction between a "moral," only religious-oriented, "*halal*" rap and a more "typical," "dirty" rap does not always seem that easy. After all, aspects of the above-mentioned topics can also be found in the lyrics of rappers who declare themselves as Muslims. Contrarily, they can be missing in the music of non-Muslim rappers as well.

c) Solidarity with Palestine, anti-Zionism and the question of image cultivation
At the same time it is striking that references to Islamic religion often go along with clearly political statements. In other words, there seems to be a certain "set" of topics which *should be* covered in the songs, especially in those of Muslim rappers. Beside the vehement criticism of racism, Islamophobia, social injustice, colonial crimes or contemporary wars, this particularly concerns pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist statements. Even though some musicians also bring up comprehensible points of criticism of Israeli politics (such as Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas or the death of innocent civilians during military operations), this doesn't hide the fact that their point of view remains, to a large extent, one-sided, biased and simplifying. Israel is mostly portrayed, or even demonized, as a hard-line, inflexible occupying or colonial power, as a "heartless" and "bloodthirsty" aggressor and "murderer" of innocent people. Sometimes it is even compared to Nazi-Germany and accused of committing a genocide against the Palestinians. In contrast, the Palestinians are generally described as oppressed, colonised people struggling (quite peacefully) for independence. The problem of Palestinian terrorism or especially the terrorist actions of Hamas, however, are either not mentioned or even glorified as brave resistance. In turn, the "Western World" respectively the United States and the Western media, are in some songs reproached for unconditionally supporting Israel while ignoring the Palestinians fate.

For instance, these tendencies are clearly reflected in the song *Jeteur de pierres* (Stone Thrower) released in 2003 by the French rap group Sniper. In this musical allusion to the sec-

[39] Ibid., p. 94.
[40] Ibid., p. 94.

ond Intifada Sniper directly addresses both to Israel and the Palestinians as in the following passage:[41]

Voilà le résultat / D'une puissance colonisatrice / Aidés de l 'Occident / Ils ont tué et chassé / (…) Laxiste, le monde laisse faire et se défile / Pendant que tu tues des civils / Et les appelle terroristes / (…) Jeteur de pierres / Le monde sait que ton pays est en guerre / Pas d'aide humanitaire / Vu que les colons te volent tes terres (…)	This is the result / Of a colonist power / With the help of the West / They killed and chased people away / (…) The world is slack, let it happen and cops out / While you are killing civilians / And calling them terrorists / (…) Stone Thrower / The world knows that your country is at war / No humanitarian aid / Given that the colonists are stealing your land (…).

Generally, the song includes a strong moral component and clearly takes side with the Palestinians without minding Israeli views. Rather, the lyrics portray Israel as solely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the "guilty" oppressor and perpetrator having "poisoned" every chance for peace since its founding in 1948. But instead of admitting its "guilt," the Israeli state presents itself, according to Sniper, as a permanent "victim" and "whitewashes" all its "crimes." Therefore, it would be impossible, especially in France, to criticise Israel without being accused of anti-Semitism: "Contredis les sionistes et tu passes pour un antisémite en deux secondes"[42] ("If you disagree with the Zionists, you'll be considered as an anti-Semite within two seconds."). This statement inevitably arises the question *who* is exactly meant by Zionists, considering that in anti-Semitic discourses "Zionist" often is used as a synonym for "Jew" in general, accompanied by the idea of a kind of powerful "Zionist censorship". Nevertheless, Sniper interestingly concludes his song with the following "unifying" message, disclaiming deliberately any intention of inappropriate partiality or of anti-Semitism: "Dire Inchallah, bonjour, shalom et salam (...) / Si à tes yeux on prend position, comprend bien / Qu'on parle pas en tant que musulman rien qu'en tant qu'être humain"[43] ("To say Inchallah, bonjour, shalom and salam (…) / If in your eyes we take sides, you should understand / That we don't speak as Muslims, only as human beings").

In contrast to the vehement criticism of Israel, the Palestinians are in many songs – as indicated above – idealized and romanticised as faultless, upright, admirable people of (Muslim) martyrs. Sounding quite sentimentally, such lyrics aim above all at the emotions of the listeners and appeal to their compassion and conscience. Kery James for instance expresses in his song *Avec le coeur et la raison* (With the heart and the mind, 2009) all his respect and

[41] Sniper, "Jeteur de pierres" (2003); lyrics available on http://musique.ados.fr/Sniper/Jeteur-De-Pierre- t35541.html.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

affection to the Palestinian people and turns it in a literal "declaration of love" (in French and in Arabic):[44]

Malgré tout ce qu'ils subissent / Les Palestiniens résistent, les Palestiniens existent / J'ai rarement vu un peuple si courageux / Sa fierté brille comme le soleil même par temps orageux (…) / Hozn fi Qalbi / Hozn fi Qalbi / 'Aandi hozn fi qalbi / Lemma ou fakar fi falastine / 'Aandi lorfa fi qalbi / Wa ana nhabekom / Wa ana nhabekom.	Despite every suffering / The Palestinians resist, the Palestinians exist / I've rarely seen such brave people before / Their pride beams like the sun even in stormy times (…) / There is such a sadness in my heart / There is such a sadness in my heart / When I think of Palestine / There is fear in my heart / And I love you / And I love you.

A similar strategy of emotionalization can be observed in Médine's song *Gaza Soccer Beach*, released shortly after the beginning of the Israeli Operation "Protective Edge" in the Gaza Strip (in July of 2014). As the title suggests, the song is an allusion to the football World Cup (in 2014 in Brazil) as well as to the death of four Palestinian children, playing football at a beach in Gaza and being killed during the Israeli operation. In his song, Médine constantly transfers the Israel-Gaza conflict into metaphors of football and competition describing it as a cruel and lethal "match." Furthermore, he tells the incident from the perspective of the Palestinian children and thereby expresses a strong identification with the Palestinian people:[45]

Chacun son camp et la balle au centre / Leur tenue bleue et blanche porte l'étoile à six branches / Dernier vainqueur de la coupe d'immonde / On leur tient tête avec nos joueurs de 3ème division / Mes frères et moi, et mon cousin aussi (…) / Ô Gaza Soccer Beach, Gaza Soccer Beach (…) / Où les tirs se poursuivent même quand l'arbitre siffle (…) / On joue la coupe du monde sous l'œil des journalistes (…) / Un premier tir non cadré fait valser la défense / Doublé d'une frappe aérienne qui leur fauchera les jambes (…) / Nos quatre Neymar nous quittent sur le brancard / (…) J'crois pas qu'on fera le match retour / A moins qu'au Paradis il y ait des stades de foot (…) / Stop au sionisme, stop à l'oligarchie (…) / Stop les colonies, stop le blocus de l'économie / Stop	Each team is on its own side with the ball at the centre / Their blue and white outfit wears the six-pointed star / Last winner of the vile cup / We stand up to them with our 3rd division players / My brothers and myself and my cousin as well (…) / Oh Gaza Soccer Beach, Gaza Soccer Beach (…) / Where strikes go on even when the referee whistles (…) / Where the world cup is being played in front of journalist's eyes (…) / A first shot off target makes the defence crumble / Followed by an aerial strike that will mow down their legs / Our four Neymar leave us on the stretcher / (…) I don't think we will play the return leg / Unless there are football pinches in paradise (…) / Stop Zionism, stop oligarchy (…) / Stop settlements, stop economic blockade / Stop hypocrisy, stop missiles from the protec-

[44] Kery James, "Avec le coeur et la raison" (2009); lyrics available on http://rapgenius.com/Kery-james-avec-lecoeur-et-la-raison-lyrics.

[45] Médine, "Gaza Soccer Beach" (2014); lyrics available on http://genius.com/3479658.

à l'hypocrisie, stop aux tirs de missiles de la bordure protectrice / Gaza Soccer Beach, Gaza Soccer Beach / La dernière plage de martyre (…).

tive edge / Oh Gaza Soccer Beach, Gaza Soccer Beach / The last beach of martyrs (…).

Using this football imagery, Médine does not only accuse Israel of killing innocent people respectively children in a highly "unfair match" but – similarly to Sniper – also the "world public" and media of watching it as simple spectators. In contrast, the Palestinians are, once again, portrayed as brave players at the "soccer beach of martyrs," having no chance against the Israeli superiority. Thus, on the one hand, Médine strongly emotionalises the conflict by using affecting images; on the other hand, his song includes a clearly political appeal against Israeli settlements, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military strike and finally against Zionism itself.

Surely, one-sided and biased narratives are also due to stylistic characteristics of rap music in general and a kind of stylistic device. Nevertheless, they inevitably spread and reinforce a problematical and simplifying view on the Middle East conflict. However, in a way, vehemently declared solidarity with Palestine and anti-Israeli positions seem to be – similarly to anti-Islamophobic or anti-racist positions – *expected* from Muslim rappers. This is closely related to the general question what "sells" in rap and what kind of statements are rather unwanted among its listeners. Thus, besides the socio-critical and community-enhancing components of rap, strategies of image cultivation and "self-promotion" of the rap artists have to be taken into consideration as well. First of all, this concerns the creation of an image as politically conscious Muslim "*banlieue* rapper". Contrary to social scientists such as Dietmar Hüser or Eva Kimminich, cited above, the French literary scholar Jules Barret takes thus a more critical look at contemporary trends in French rap, and argues that rappers criticize France's history and present grievances less to change society but more to make money out of it.[46] According to him, this has to be seen in the context of a general "commercialization" of the "*banlieue* image" per se: young French people of the middle and upper classes are sometimes imitating the "*banlieue*" clothing style and language or listening to "*banlieue* music" to distinguish themselves from their bourgeois parental home.[47] At the same time rap sells among the "*banlieue* youth" as well and seems to have to "fulfil," therefore, certain specific criteria. In turn – and to close the circle – this is also related to declared solidarity with Palestine: in this context it is noteworthy that since the year 2000 and the outbreak of the second Intifada in Israel "pro-Palestinism," anti-Zionism and sometimes also crude anti-Semitism have been relatively widespread in France, especially in certain *banlieues*.[48] Thus finally, rap music clearly reflects this contemporary tendency and contributes, to some extent, to the

[46] Barret, *Le rap,* p. 25.

[47] Ibid., p. 12.

[48] See for instance Michel Wieviorka, *La tentation antisémite. Haine des Juifs dans la France d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2005); ibd., *L'antisémitisme est-il de retour?*; Didier Lapeyronnie, *Ghetto urbain. Ségrégation, violence, pauvreté en France aujourd'hui* (Paris: Robert Laffont,2008); Dominique Reynié, *L'antisémitisme dans l'opinion publique française. Nouveaux éclairages* (Paris: Fondation pour l'innovation politique, 2014).

propagation of present ideas and resentments. On the contrary, there are hardly any pro-Israeli statements in French rap and probably, they would rather harm a rapper's image instead of promoting it.

III. Conclusion

As shown above, many French rappers are very critical concerning French policies and France's colonial history or denounce the living conditions in the *banlieues*, discriminations against migrants, racism, xenophobia or Islamophobia. This is often combined with references to Islamic religion and/or a self-presentation of the rappers as *Muslim* citizens.

However, it is noteworthy as well that the "History-re-telling" and socio-political criticism of many songs are characterized by a rather undifferentiated, illusive black and white world view (expressed in the dichotomy between "the Western World" or an Islamophobic France and its "Muslim victims" or especially condensed in the dichotomy between "the Israeli perpetrators" and "the Palestinian victims"). These dualistic concepts of "right" and "wrong," "good" and "bad," or of "victim" and "perpetrator" are certainly not limited to rap lyrics but rather reflect – in an exaggerated way – generally existing discourses among parts of the French society. As on the example of different French rappers could be demonstrated, musicians seem to be very aware of these circumstances and eager to reach their audience (especially young people with as well as without Muslim background) via issues which are apparently "in demand." Thus, presenting oneself as voices of the disadvantaged (Muslim) "*banlieue* youth" and of Muslim victims worldwide as well as being historically and politically conscious seems to be quite "saleable" as well.

Thus finally, only certain aspects of "the local," "the national" and "the global" form the "subject pool" from which French Muslim rappers choose the material for their songs. In other words, these aspects could be seen as kind of common topoi, excluding other possible versions of a song: Reaching from the local *banlieues* of Paris to the global *Umma*, they fit perfectly together, at least in the logics of the songs; however, they constantly recreate a quite narrow world view that does – despite all the criticism in in it – not allow much "in between" or "on beyond." For instance, this becomes more than clear considering the fact that it is even hard to imagine, that a Muslim rapper would or could release a pro-Israeli, Zionist rap song, declaring his solidarity with the Israeli people. However, the questions remain open: why actually not?

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture
Volume I, Number 01 (2018): 117-126

THE OWN AND THE FOREIGN IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Mitko Momov and Mirena Patseva

Abstract

According to Gal Ariely in the situation of globalization two opposite tendencies can be observed with respect to the feeling of national identity: increase and reduction of the sense of identity.[1] We will try to trace the dynamics of the concept with the help of a psycholinguistic test conducted in different phases of Bulgaria's transition to democracy since 1989. The concepts illustrating the findings are 'foreigner' and 'motherland' with a focus on the connotative meaning of the concepts on a subconscious level. During the first trial 'foreigner' evoked intensive positive reactions, whereas nowadays the attractiveness and the striving for contact with the foreigner decrease. The 'foreigner' is no longer representative of the West, but just a human, and could be emigrant or homeless. The personal experience in a situation of free mobility changes the viewpoint and the distance between the own and the foreign.

During the first trial, the declarative affiliation to 'motherland' imposed by the totalitarian ideology was not reflected in the test results, most probably due to a reaction of resistance to its official propaganda. On the contrary – 'motherland' was associated with skeptical and even negative reactions. Our data also show moderate consolidation of these reactions on subconscious level during the last three decades, even as there have been constantly growing social criticism and radical attitude in our societies.[2]

It is important to note that in both phases of the test the main focus of the reactions has been contrary to the dominant social mood: in 1989, the young people expressed negative attitude to the officially advanced patriotism; nowadays, amid strong social critique of the state, the emotional reactions to it have become more positive. Indeed, it appears that when the concept of homeland is threatened, especially amidst of a widely felt deficit of values, the erosion of feelings does not penetrate at a deeper level.

Key words: *identity, political attitude, semantic change, concept drift*

[1] Gal Ariely, "Globalization and Decline of National Identity? An Exploration Across Sixty Three countries," *Nation and Nationalism*, 18 (3) (ACEN/Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 461-482.

[2] Vihren Bouzov, "'Europe 2020': Some Problems of Development in Romania and Bulgaria," *Maximizing Comparative Advantages of Cross-border Regions* (Gabrovo: Express Ltd., 2013), p. 20.

1. Introduction

The sense of the concepts of *own* and *foreign* has changed in recent decades. Although the core meanings of the words have largely persisted, new semantic components and tendencies in their connotation have emerged. We will try to trace the concept drift with the help of a psycholinguistic test revealing the connotative meaning of the concepts. After Fokkens at al., we define the semantic of concept drift as a change in the intension of a concept, while its core remaining stable. [3] Although the processes of semantic change in general and of concept drift in particular were originally discussed in semantics and psycholinguistics, they have also become relevant to the work of a number of other academic fields, including philosophy, history, and political science. We shall present a longitudinal study on the dynamics of some social and political concepts with the aim to trace particular aspects of the transformation of social and political attitudes in Bulgaria in the new political context of the decades after the transition to democracy in 1989. We illustrate the concept drift using an analysis of associative tests results of the stimulus words *motherland* and *foreigner*. We take the concepts of *own* and *foreign* to represent "conflict" zones at the present time of mobility and refugee flow, and we endeavor to identify a tension between the longing to the *foreign* and the belonging to the *own*, which could be detected in young people's answers in different proportions during the trials of the study.

In what follows, in Section 2 and Section 3, we make an overview of works on semantic change and concept drift respectively. In Section 4, we discuss some related work in the field of the semantic shifts of political concepts. In Section 5, we introduce the methodology, the procedure and the analysis of the present study. In Section 6, we offer a discussion of the study, and we conclude in Section 7.

2. Semantic change

Both the meaning and the outer form of the words change over time and at various rates. It is generally considered that meaning is the most variable and shifting part of the linguistic sign. Word meanings are highly dependent on context, whether that of the ongoing discourse or of social and ideological changes.

Traditionally, semantic changes are classified in terms of opposing tendencies, such as broadening and narrowing, and development of positive or negative meanings. An example of broadening (generalization or widening) is the noun *dog*, which was used to refer to some specific breeds but nowadays means any dog. On the opposite side, the noun *girl* narrowed (specialized) its meaning: in Middle English, any young person could be called a *girl*; the restriction to female young persons occurred in the Modern period. The same process occurred with the meaning of the Bulgarian word *лято*, which meant *year* in Old Bulgarian and subsequently narrowed its meaning to one season only – *summer*.

An illustration of melioration (development of positive meanings) is the word *rude*, whose original meaning of 'unmannered' is rather negative, but nowadays could be used in a more positive sense as 'physically attractive'. Words with negative meaning, such as *killer*,

[3] Antske Fokkens, Serge ter Braake, Isa Maks, and Davide Ceolin, "On the Semantics of Concept Drift: Towards Formal Definitions of Semantic Change," In S. Darányi, L. Hollink, A. Meroño Peñuela, & E. Kontopoulos (Eds.), *Proceedings of Drift-a-LOD* (Bologna, 2016).

are used in English, as well as in Bulgarian, jargon to designate powerful entities or to express or evoke strong (including positive) feelings. As an example of pejoration, or development of more negative meaning, could serve the noun *communist*. Another way in which semantic changes have been traditionally classified is related to whether they are driven by language-internal or by language-external factors. Language external factors are broadly cultural and social.

According to Willem B. Hollmann's review of publications from the previous century, semantic change was generally neglected in research for a considerable period of time.[4] It was not until Elizabeth Traugott endeavored to establish regularities in the semantic processes that it came into focus. Traugott and Dasher maintained that there is a path from pragmatically polysemous meanings to new semantically polysemous meanings.[5] Recently, scholars have put forward different models for attesting regularities in semantic change, including Geeraerts' *Diachronic Prototype Semantics* and Traugott and Dasher's *Invited Inference Theory of Semantic Change*, where semantic change regularities were identified by means of technological tools. New quantitative laws were also proposed, such as that of the correlation between semantic change and frequency, modelled along the linear regression suggested by Hamilton et al.[6]

3. Conceptual replacement and concept drift

In some of the cases of semantic change the core of the meaning changes, while in other cases the change is only in the field of its connotation. The latter represents the concept drift – a change in the intension (associations) of a concept, while its core remains stable.[7] If the core of the concept changes as well, a new concept emerges, and we have a conceptual replacement. An example of the latter semantic change is the English word *cute* (based on Frermann and Lapata).[8] In the early 18th century, the word appeared with the meaning of 'clever'. In the late nineteenth century the meaning had shifted to 'cunning'. It then shifted to its modern day meaning of 'sweet' and 'attractive' (according to the Oxford English Dictionary).[9]

In this paper, we are particularly interested in the concept drift – the changes in the field of connotation of the meanings of the word while the core remaining intact. As an ex-

[4] Willem B. Hollmann, "Semantic Change," In Jonathan Culpeper, Francis Katamba, Paul Kerswill, and Tony McEnery (eds.), *English Language: Description, Variation, and Context* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009: 536), pp. 301-313.

[5] Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Richard B. Dasher, *Regularity in Semantic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 35.

[6] William L. Hamilton, Jure Leskovec, Dan Jurafsky, "DiachronicWord Embeddings Reveal Statistical Laws of Semantic Change," *Proceedings of the 54th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, (Berlin, Germany, August 7-12, 2016), p. 1495.

[7] Antske Fokkens, Serge ter Braake, Isa Maks, and Davide Ceolin, "On the Semantics of Concept Drift: Towards Formal Definitions of Semantic Change," In S. Darányi, L. Hollink, A. Meroño Peñuela, & E. Kontopoulos (Eds.), *Proceedings of Drift-a-LOD* (Bologna, 2016). Shenghui Wang, Stefan Schlobach, Michel Klein, "Concept Drift and How to Identify It." *Journal of Web Semantics*: *Science, Services and Agents on the World Wide Web*, 9 (3), (2011), pp. 247–265.

[8] Lea Frermann and Mirella Lapata, "A Bayesian Model of Diachronic Meaning Change," In *Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, Vol. 4, (2016: 31), pp. 31–45.

[9] Angus Stevenson, *Oxford dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

ample of this phenomenon could serve the dynamics of the concept "democracy" traced in a longitudinal study using a word association technique conducted in 1989 and tree years later.[10] The most frequent association was identical in both stages – "freedom." The further associations, however, were quite different: in 1989 the concept was associated with "publicness," "equality," and "pluralism," but three years later, none of these associative connections were present. Instead, the stage was taken by skeptical statements of the type "It does not exist," "utopia," as well as by straightforward negativism with answers like "demagogy" and "falsehood." Such changes in the connotation of meaning are especially important with regard to contestable concepts, like 'democracy' and 'freedom', whose meaning is very much a subject of debate. Contestable concepts are of interest for the purpose of determining how the political climate changes in certain periods of time.[11] Some of the latter concepts were imported in Bulgaria into the process of Westernization and globalization along with new technologies, values, and social models. The imported significations, however, were not merely accepted but arouse specific reactions that were often indicative of particular national attitudes. In the process of concept drift, such stable attitudes were detectable along the changes in the connotations of the new forms, concepts, or catchwords, like 'democracy'.

4. Related work in the field of semantic shifts in political concepts

In historical linguistics, semantic shift describes the evolution of word usage. Each word has multiple senses and connotations which can be added, removed, or altered over time. Hosein Azarbonyad and colleagues use distributional semantics to detect temporal semantic shifts in political and media discourse, as well as in the dimension of social and political variability.[12] For instance, they have examined the semantic shifts in the meaning of words like "democracy" and "moral" over time and within the usage of the Conservative and Labour parties in the UK parliament. The meaning of "moral" within the Labour party usage has shifted in time from that of the "philosophical" concept to that of a "liberal" one; whereas within the Conservative usage the meaning of this word has shifted from that of a "spiritual" concept to that of a "religious" one. For its part, the meaning of "democracy" remains stable over time in the usage of both parties, however, the Conservatives refer to it mostly in the sense of a "unity," while the Labours associate it with "freedom" and "social justice."

This example is indicative of a change in the connotation of meaning over time. It is relevant to our study in that we focus not so much on the denotative component of the language sign as on the connotative one, as the latter is indicative of the emotional charge and power, which play a key part in inspiring people, forming their attitudes, and often directing their behavior.

[10] Mirena Patseva, "The Creation of New Meaning in the Process of Democratization of Eastern Europe," *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 1994, Vol. 32, N 1, pp. 5-13.

[11] David Collier, F. Daniel Hidalgo, Andra Olivia Maciuceanu, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11(3), 2006: 213, pp. 211–226.

[12] Hosein Azarbonyad et. Al., "Words are Malleable: Computing Semantic Shifts in Political and Media Discourse," *CIKM'17*, November 6–10 (Singapore, Singapore, 2017), accessed April 4, 2018, https://arxiv.org/pdf/1711.05603.pdf

5. The present study

In our investigation, we focus on the concept shift of some social and political words, including contestable concepts. The goal of the study is to trace some directions of the dynamics of particular political concepts in the time of intensive changes, marked by cultural globalization, translocal culture, and postnational discourse (in the terms of Arjuna Appadurai).[13] Because of their changing connotations, words from the political lexicon are vague, ambiguous, and difficult to define. We use the free association technique to illustrate the transformations of connotative meaning over a relatively short period of historical time.

The beginning of the study coincides with the beginning of democratic changes in Bulgaria in 1989 in the context of political enthusiasm after the totalitarian period. Twenty-two stimulus words were used, belonging to (1) the socio-political domain (democracy, power, freedom) and some fundamental categories of human life (family, work, holiday). Tree experimental methods were used: associative test, definition technique, and text method. The first one was expected to offer information on affective meaning; through the latter two, we attempted to approximately identify the main body of meaning. We will present here some findings of the first method only, which was used in the next stages of the experiment. We compare the data obtained in 1989 and those obtained in two recent trials – in 2015 and 2017.[14] The data of the latter two stages are grouped together due to the relatively short time distance between them.[15] In the last two stages, we expanded the questioning by taking into account the gender differences in the responses.

5.1. ***Methodology – free associative test***

The psychological associations refer to the connections between conceptual entities or mental states that result from the similarity or proximity in space or time. The idea comes from Plato and Aristotle, and was carried on by philosophers like Locke and Hume among others. The same notion is also used in the contemporary psychology, and more particularly in the so-called *neural network models*. Semantic network theory proposes that a word's meaning is represented by a set of nodes and the associative links among them. The semantic information in such a network is accessed through a spreading activation, whereas the mental process in which it occurs are thought to be automatic.[16] Ultimately, these characteristics of associations enable us to obtain information from the deeper structures of the mental activity. The free associative test measures the implicit or subconscious content of concepts, based on the assumption that associations are activated without effort, and outside of conscious control.

---

[13] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[14] During the first stage we conducted a comparative study of the national specifics of the meanings of the words in our focus, based on an input from Bulgarian and Russian students (4033 subjects). We consider the cross cultural data obtained in it to be an additional telling dimension of the tendencies we identified.

[15] Other stages were discussed in Mirena Patseva and Mitko Momov, *Tsennostnoto initsiirane of 90s in Bulgaria* (Sofia: Agata 1998), pp. 114-161 (in Bulgarian).

[16] Matthew Traxler, *Introduction to Psycholinguistics: Understanding Language Science* (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 81.

5.2. Procedure: participants and material

The participants in the tests were students at Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* and *St. Cyril and St. Methodius* University of Veliko Tarnovo (19 to 30 years old). Minimum 100 people took part in the questioning at each stage; in the last two trials they were 50% male and 50% female participants. The procedure of the associative experiment was as follows: each respondent was given a list of all the stimulus words and the task of responding to each stimulus with "the first word that comes to mind". The response time was not restricted but it did not exceed 20 minutes. Among the 22 stimulus words there were political concepts, such as: *democracy, security, property, freedom*, *leader*, *war*, as well as everyday words like *man*, *woman*, *work, family,* or *holiday*. Thus, we obtained 100 answer-associations for each stimulus in each trial. In our analysis we targeted four elements:

1. Semantic analysis
2. Level of stereotypicality
3. Level of abstraction
4. As well as, the distribution of the responses into semantic domains

We present here the first two of these elements in relation to the data of two stimulus words – *motherland* and *foreigner*, which are related to the concepts *own* and *foreign*.

5.3. Semantic analysis

The comparison of the most frequent reactions defines the focuses in the semantic connotation of the words. The whole list of obtained reactions is distributed into semantic groups or fields by experts.[17] The semantic groups are analogous to semantic components (*semes)* – the important features by which speakers of language distinguish different words. These semantic groups do not reveal the entire structure of the word meaning but mainly its connotation. The semantic groups give information about the *actual focuses* in the semantic structure. In tracing the dynamics of these semantic focuses, we keep in mind the observation of Alexander Potebnya that lexical units express not the whole content of the notion, but only those features which are most important for the people.[18] The particular configuration of semantic groups in each stage is informative for the modifications of the connotative meaning. What is important for us here is that the semantic data obtained in the associative test is not declarative but ~~it~~ reflects an automatic level of mental life, which is out of conscious control, and thus gives information about implicit or tacit knowledge. Our semantic analysis will be illustrated by the stimulus words *motherland* and *foreigner.*

Motherland

Motherland is perhaps the most stereotypical stimulus-word nowadays (Table 1). The most common reaction to it in 1989 was the neutral word *Bulgaria* (with 13% of the responses). In the later stages of the test this changed with the number of the respondents with the same answer more than doubled (31%). This quantitative difference reveals a tendency towards neutralization and stereotyping of the concept. Other repeated reactions to 'motherland', like

[17] The distribution of reactions into semantic groups is based on their similarity and is provided by minimum two experts independently.

[18] Alexander Potebnya, *Estetika i poetika* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1976), p. 221 (in Russian).

country and *fatherland*, were also neutral (13%). In 1989, 20% of the participants associated their own country with *beautiful land* and *nature* of Bulgaria, whereas in the latest trials they are more than twice less (9%). Young people also associated motherland with *home* and *family*, with the quantification doubling in the latest trials (from 5% in 1989 to 10% in 2015/2017). One possible interpretation of this result could be the narrowing of the national identity concept to the realm of the family.

During the last stages some female participants appeared to express emotions detectable along responses like *love* and *affection*, whereas some men came up more evaluative reactions such as *value*, *sacredness, wealth*. In 1989, the young people did not appear inclined to express their patriotic feelings towards motherland – reactions like *patriotism* and *proud* were missing (unlike in the latest trials), and reactions like *dear* were rare. Only few Bulgarian men and only one girl gave *mother* as reaction.[19] Before 1989, the totalitarian ideology had largely imposed a more or less unquestionable affiliation to the motherland. This, however, was not reflected in the test results possibly due to a tacit rejection on the part of the participants of the official propaganda of the communist government. Quite the opposite, in 1989, relatively strong negative feelings were expressed in response to this stimulus word in answers such as *nonsense, devaluation, barrack, chaos, mess,* or *darkness*; as well as in terms of existential conflicts such as *accusation and conscience* (totaling 16%). For comparison, two and a half decades later, the related negative reactions were only a few (3%), even if a reaction like *nothing* could be interpreted as indicative of a crisis of the sense of belonging.

Thus, we can conclude that the dynamics of the connotative meaning of the concept *motherland* is towards a narrowing to the realm of the family, along the increasing number of neutral and moderate positive reactions. The critical attitude and tension of 1989 is replaced by calmer feelings accompanied by lower levels of skepticism and negativism in 2015 and 2017.

Table 1. *Distribution of reactions to the stimulus word motherland.*

Semantic groups	1989	2015/2017
Bulgaria	13%	31%
country	3%	5%
fatherland	10%	8%
nature, beautiful land	20	9%
home, family	5%	10%
love, dear	11%	15%
mother	2%	2%
sacred, holy	2%	4%
unique, one, and only one	3%	2%
patriotism, proud	–	5%
social feelings: duty, conscience	7%	–
skepticism: barrack, nothing,	4%	2%
Negation: nonsense, devaluation, mess	5%	1%

[19] For comparison, *mother* is the most frequent reaction for Russians associated with the well-known expression *родина – мать* '*motherland-mother*'. One other comparative observation is also important: among most frequent Russian answers is also the capital city *Moscow* – the center of the country. Bulgarians never mention their capital Sofia. So, unlike Russian, the Bulgarian identity concept seems less centralized.

*The numbers represent the percentage ratio of the semantic group quantification of the total number of reactions obtained for one stimulus word. (The total could be less than 100% due to missing answers and because not all reactions are included into the semantic groups).

Foreigner

In 1989, the *foreigner* was an *interesting* (26%) and *attractive* figure (Table 2). He or she evoked *curiosity* and a desire for *contact*, and was seen mostly as a representative of the *West* (*European, American*). But there is a significant decrease in the interest towards him or her two and a half decades later. A central semantic group nowadays is *alien* and *different* (12%). The image of the foreigner became more concrete and the importance of his or her social status decreased: he or she is no longer *investor* or *uncle from America* and could be also *emigrant* or *prisoner*.

The *foreigner* still appears to be more attractive for women who associate him or her with *high standard and money, culture*, *intellect* and *education*. The *foreigner* evokes *curiosity* and wish for *acquaintance.* The study results also show men as being more reserved in their attitude towards the *foreigner*: for some of them the foreigner is *interesting*, can be *friend* (4%), but the majority of answers are indifferent: a *man* (4%), can be a *guest* (3%), a *tourist* (4%), or an *emigrant* (5%) looking for job. Men give a few isolated negative reactions as well: *intruder*, *parasite.* One possible explanation for the warmer women's reactions is the masculine gender characteristic of the stimulus word.

***Table 2**. Distribution of reactions to the stimulus word foreigner*

Semantic groups	1989	2015/2017
foreign, alien, different	4%	12%
man	2%	8%
interest, curiosity	26%	7%
attractive	4%	1%
contact	3%	2%
European, American, Italian	5%	8%
Emigrant, Gipsy, prisoner	–	5%
tourist	3%	7%
guest	1%	3%
friend	5%	4%
currency, money	17%	4%
investor, uncle from America	4%	1%
nice dress, sun glasses,	2%	–
culture, education	2%	1%
alone, loneliness	2%	–
Negation:: parasite, intruder, arrogant	1%	7%

As a whole, the tendency with regard to the foreigner appears to be towards a diminished interest. The few isolated negative reactions are not a reason to suspect a crisis of toler-

ance. The dynamics of semantic groups, however, indicates a tendency towards a certain restraint in the attitude to the foreigner.

Level of stereotypicality

Following Alexandra Zalevskaya, we use two methods to measure the level of stereotypical reactions: (1) the average quantity of different (not coinciding) answers and (2) the percentage of the first three most frequent reactions.[20] In 1989, the results showed a low level of stereotypical reactions: the average value of different reactions was relatively high (70.17%), whereas the percentage of the first tree most often repeated reaction was relatively small (24.14%). In the recent stages of the study in 2015/2017, the latter was higher (29.5%) and the average quantity of different (not coinciding) answers was smaller (59.1%). That is, with the time, the level of stereotypicality grows up, whereas the diversity of answers decreases. It seems a paradox that during the time of regimentation of the totalitarian regime the level of stereotypical reactions was lower. Our conjecture here is that perhaps at that time the young Bulgarians deliberately distanced themselves from the cliché, strove for originality, and thus gave more diverse answers. The results of our study also suggest that during the years of democratic changes with the increase of social opportunities the diversity of reactions decreases. For us, this means that during the time of destabilization and stratification of the society the associative reactions show the opposite tendency to group together (into the neutral realm), such that the level of stereotypicality increased. This result may reflect a compensatory unconscious reaction of non-acceptance of the dogma of the totalitarian regime in 1989 along a striving for originality. The same mechanism of opposition to the general trend of the contemporary pluralism and diversity results in a kind of "consolidation" within the neutral realm (the most frequent reactions are neutral words like *man* and *Bulgaria*). Another possible interpretation could be related to the fact that nowadays some young people cannot but maturate without any help by their parents or by the government, which could have conditioned the replacement of the metaphorical reactions and play on words (characteristic for the data of 1989) with more neutral and sober reaction.

6. Discussion

The tenser feelings which characterized the reactions to the stimulus word *motherland* in the first trial of the study were subsequently replaced by more neutral answers. Unlike in 1989, there is almost no negativism among the latest answers. Paradoxically, this comes on the background of a constantly growing social criticism and radical attitude in our societies.[21] The strong criticism towards the government in the mass media and in the public space is almost absent in the associative reactions to the concept *motherland*. Our conjecture here is that both concepts (government and motherland) are kept separate in the minds of the young people. Participants in the later trials keep their notion of *motherland* unaffected by the critical evalu-

[20] Alexandra Zalevskaya, "Dynamics of Meaning of the 'Live Word' in Science and in Common Knowledge," *Gisap: Philological Sciences,* No. 3 (2014), p. 13, accessed November 15, 2017, http://Journals.Gisap.Eu/Index.Php/Philological/Article/No3,2014

[21] Vihren Bouzov, "'Europe 2020'," pp. 15-32.

ations of the government and express a certain level of (even if not very enthusiastic) patriotism.

The more intensive positive attitude to the *foreigner* in 1989 could be explained as a reaction to the hostile official politics of the communist regime towards the different West. The emotional grade of the reactions decreases nowadays: the answers are more balanced and the image of the foreigner is more concrete. But the foreigner is no longer representative only of the West – he or she is just a *human*, be it *emigrant* or *homeless*. Another perspective also emerged: the opening of the borders made it possible for many students to experience themselves as foreigners in other countries. They may have longed for their homes but upon coming back many of them experienced difficulties to find their place there. This feeling is expressed in the answer *I am a foreigner in my own country.* In other words, the personal experience abroad changes the view point and the distance between the own and the foreign.

Conclusions

The main goal of this paper was to show the dynamics of the connotative meaning of some political and social concepts. Word meaning is highly dependent on context – not only that of the ongoing discourse, but also that of the social dynamics. Semantic changes could be traced in longitudinal studies using associative test. Our analysis reveals certain semantic groups as corresponding to certain semantic components. The dynamic of their configuration traces particular tendencies in the modification of the connotative meaning, which gives information about the participants' tacit attitudes. We hope that our data could complement those of sociological studies which deal primarily with declarative assessments and deliberately formulated opinions.

The skeptical and critical attitude towards the own national identity expressed in 1989 (in opposition to the official public discourse at that time) is replaced by a moderate and calm patriotic attitude (also in opposition to the prevailing critical public discourse). The tense and even negative feelings are reduced and replaced by neutral reactions amid unrestrained criticism in the social space in the period of the last two trials. Accordingly, it is worth noting that in the two discussed phases of the test the main tendencies revealed in the analysis of the reactions are contrary to the mood of the dominant public discourse: in 1989 amid keenly imposed patriotism of the totalitarian state, young people expressed negation. Now amid strong social critique in the public space, the emotional reactions in the associative test are relieved.

The curiosity and the interest in the foreign and the foreigner is undoubtedly a characteristic feature of the Bulgarian folk psychology. Probably this interest has evolved during the periods of confinement and limitations in the country's history. The attractive image of the other/the foreigner could be seen as a projection of unfulfilled desires and is usually associated with the fact that our own efforts have not always been adequate enough to meet our recurrent needs. Perhaps the massive offensive of the foreign at all levels of life in the last decades deflects the former mystery and charm of the foreigner and causes a withdrawal from the aspiration for contacts with him or her. On the other hand, the onset of individualistic values following the end of the totalitarian regime seems to reduce the openness and the desire for contact with the other.

Notes on Contributors

Dr. Rossen Roussev *is Associate Professor in Contemporary Philosophy at "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo. He has been a Visiting Professor at the Kazakh British Technical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Assistant Professor at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, S. Korea, and at St. John's University in New York. He also taught at the University of Aktobe, Kazakhstan, the City University of New York, and Mercy College in New York. He obtained his doctorate in philosophy from The New School for Social Research in New York (2005). His publications and interests are in phenomenology, philosophy of language, critical theory, and philosophy of culture.*
Email: r.roussev@ts.uni-vt.bg

Dr. Tomokazu Baba *is Associate Professor at Nagano Prefectural College, University of Nagano. He received a Ph.D. from Hitotsubashi University (2008) and another one from the Sorbonne Paris IV (2013). His research discipline include Contemporary Philosophy, Ethics, History of Ideas, especially 20th century French and German Philosophy, Levinas and Heidegger. Email: joiespacieuse@gmail.com*

Dr. Jon Mahoney *is Professor of Philosophy at Kansas State University. He has taught philosophy in Turkey, Italy, and Kyrgyzstan, and is primarily interested in political philosophy. His interests include international education and travel, and he has been pursuing these interests in Central Asia for the past several years. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Binghamton University, NY, in 2000. Email: jmahoney@ksu.edu*

Dr. Micah Daily *received a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the New School for Social Research in 2014. Prior to that, she attained a B.A. in philosophy, storytelling, and filmmaking from Sarah Lawrence College. Dr. Daily specializes in Kantian and modern moral philosophy as applied to everyday experience. She is an established lecturer and recipient of the most influential person and excellence in teaching awards from her students at Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles where she taught philosophy and cultural studies for eight years. She currently works at the Philosophy Department of California Lutheran University at Thousand Oaks. Her research interests include: 'Neighborliness' and 'quarrelsomeness' in our developing global community and the power of rational discourse as a method to address issues of free speech and hyperpolarization in politics, on college campuses, online, and in everyday experience. Email: mdaily@callutheran.edu*

Dr. Frank Passani *obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Barcelona with a dissertation on the Aristotelian and Platonic influences on the British author C. S. Lewis. His main field of interest is the relationship between Philosophy and Literature. He became a Modern Greek translator while working in Greece as a Spanish language teacher. Currently he lives in Singapore, where he teaches Spanish at the private academy Las Lilas*

School. You can follow his literary reviews with English and Spanish subtitles on his YouTube channel Read This or Die! Email: francesc.badrines.passani@gmail.com

***Dr. Petya Tsoneva** is Associate Professor at the Department of English and American studies at "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. Her interests and publications span over postcolonial studies, English and French literature, literary responses to migration, and borderline experience. She is holder of one of the ESSE bursaries for postdoctoral research in 2015. Email: petyatzoneva@hotmail.com*

***Dr. Alexandra Preitschopf** studied French and History at the University of Salzburg (Austria). She finished her PhD in contemporary history in 2016 with thesis "Solidarity with Palestine, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism among Muslims in contemporary France." After working as a research assistant and lecturer at the University of Salzburg andthe University of Linz, she now teaches on behalf of the OeAD (the Austrian academic exchange programme) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Her research interests include: Modern Jewish history, anti-Semitism, culture of remembrance.*
Email: Alexandra.Preitschopf@stud.sbg.ac.at

***Dr. Mitko Momov** is Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophical Sciences at "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo. He has taught courses in Eastern Philosophy, Social Philosophy, and Business Ethics. He has specialized in Denmark, India, Russia, Poland, and Hungary. His research interests are in anthropology and history of philosophy. He has published and participated in interdisciplinary projects internationally. Email: momovmitko@gmail.com*

***Dr. Mirena Patseva** is Associate Professor in linguistics at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She has taught courses in Cross-cultural Psycholinguistics, Cognitive Science, Anthropological Linguistics, and Cognitive anthropology. She has also taught Bulgarian language and culture to foreigners, including for six years at Delhi University, India, and at the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece. Email: mirena.patseva@gmail.com*

Announcement

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Home and Journey around the Globe

May 30 - June 1, 2019

Location: Ala-Too International University,
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
(in conjunction with the Society for Philosophy
as Global Conversation)

On the Idea of the Colloquium

The first record of a conjoined usage of *philos* and *sophia* is in Herodotus' *Histories* from 5th century BC. Herodotus uses the verb *philosophein* (*φιλοσοφέων*) broadly in the sense of desire to find out and links it to ''traveling much of the world for the sake of seeing it'' (*I, 30*). In a similar vein, the latter Heidegger relates *way* (*Weg*) and *waying* (*wëgen*, *Bëwegung*) to language and thinking, as well as to the *Tao* of *Laozi*. Heidegger has also designated the fundamental motivation for any thinking and philosophizing with terms like *the uncanny* (*Unheimlichkeit*) and *homelessness* (*Heimatlosigkeit*), and he has likewise discussed its ends in terms of *home* (*Heim*) and *homecoming* (*Heimkehr*).

In this sense, philosophy can be seen as a journey around the globe, which is at once also homecoming. In this homecoming journey, philosophy takes the form of a conversation, much like the one described by Herodotus between Solon and Croesus at Sardis on the meaning of happiness, or like the one of exchange of differences of significance on the level of culture. Thus, understanding philosophy as conversation means embracing differences of opinions that come from all levels of society and culture to contribute to productive debates, insightful reflections, and practical solutions.

This conference will likely be the first of its kind in Central Asia in the following sense: many of the presenters will be philosophers and scholars in related disciplines from Europe, America, Asia, and Central Asia, whose work in some way directly bears on questions that fall within the scope of the "humanities and social sciences" broadly conceived. The aim of the conference is to bring together an international group of scholars to participate in a "global conversation" on topics that explore cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary questions with philosophical import. In this sense, the topics of interest to the colloquium can be related but not limited to,

- Phenomenology, existential philosophy, post-structuralism
- Metaphilosophy, pragmatism, and communicative action
- Language, thinking, and technology
- Critical theory, literature, and art
- Ethics, religion, and spirituality
- Power, politics, and economics
- Race, gender, sexuality, identity
- Refugees, strangers, and outcasts
- Community building, inclusion, and integration
- Human person, health, and self-creation
- Globalization, multi-culturalism, and the meaning of nationality
- Trans- and cross-cultural horizons
- Environment, common concerns, and common solutions
- Radicalization, Populism, and Extremism
- Poverty, Gentrification, and Biopolitics

*Conference organizers will consider conference presentations for publication (after a review process) in the second edition of *Global Conversations: An International Journal in Contemporary Philosophy and Culture*, an online open-access journal inaugurated after the first conference of the Society for Philosophy as Global Conversation in March, 2018.

*Target Audience: Philosophers and faculty from related disciplines (e.g. humanities, literature, art, journalism) with an interest in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogue and research

*Conference Fee: None.

* An optional cultural program and conference dinner will be organized.

* Kyrgyzstan has a visa free regime for citizens of 60 countries, and many others could obtain visas at Manas International Airport in Bishkek or online. More information is available at http://evisa.e-gov.kg/get_information.php?lng=en

***** For inquiries about travel to Bishkek, please contact Jon Mahoney at jmahoney@ksu.edu

Abstract Submissions

We invite abstract-proposals within 300 words at global.conversations.ph@gmail.com by March 1, 2019 (with early submission encouraged).

Information for Authors

Global Conversations is a peer-reviewed, open-access, electronic journal accepting high quality articles in philosophy, humanities, social sciences, or other fields, which advance the idea of global cultural awareness, exchange, and conversation broadly construed. It is a philosophical journal in the broadest sense of term open to any viewpoint, school orientation, intellectual trend, or cultural tradition. It welcomes in-depth philosophical and theoretical discussions of relevant issues, as well as texts on issues in comparative philosophy, critical theory, art criticism, cross-cultural investigations, interdisciplinary research, or transcultural studies.

Articles are evaluated in terms of their merit, rather than seize, though ones larger than 16, 000 words or smaller than 4,000 words are generally discouraged. Article styling is in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style,* with main text 1.5-spaced 12pt font, footnotes single-spaced 10pt font, one space after a sentence, indented first line of each new paragraph without space between paragraphs. Authors are expected to adhere to gender-inclusive and diversity-sensitive language.

Paper submissions are accepted at *global.conversations.ph@gmail.com*. The provisional time for review is two months.