

Editorial

Introduction

The selection in this varied issue includes six articles from the areas literary criticism, cultural studies, political science, and philosophy. Thematically they fit nicely into the scope of interest of the journal *Global Conversations*, which spreads over humanities, social sciences, interdisciplinary and other relevant research addressing issues of global cultural exchange and conversation in a broadest sense.

The opening pair of articles dwell on challenges of cultural intermixing and coexistence in volatile times. Catherine MacMillan approaches Louis de Bernières' novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* for a revisit of the concept of the Other via Derrida's vocabulary of *hospitality* and *autoimmunity*. Set against the background of the Italian and German occupations of the Greek island of Cephalonia during the second World War, the novel involves characters from all warring sides in various relations of friendship, love, and enmity amidst most precarious of political circumstances. Following de Bernières' subtle depiction of friendships between putative political enemies and enmities between putative political friends – such as Corelli's friendship with Dr. Iannis and love with Pelagia, (for whom Corelli is an occupier), which are juxtaposed with enmities among Nazi soldiers, as well as with the brutality of the Greek resistance group ELAS towards the local population and fellow communists – MacMillan unveils the binary opposition of friendship and enmity as deeply shattered. For his part, Stefan Stefanov focuses on challenges for the coexistence of different forms of creativity and art posed by the currently predominant cultural attitudes and copyrighting regulations. Tracing the root of the problem to the dominance of the concepts of “originality,” “genius author,” and “uniqueness” firmly fixated in both aesthetic valuation and copyright legislation since the 18th century, he points to the emergence of the “remix author” who appears on the creative stage as working in a situation of tight cultural and legal constraints. In support of the *remix art*, Stefanov advances the view that reusing works of others allows a wider range of possibilities for creativity and that an “environmentalist” approach endorsing “recycling” art can flourish upon the removal of the existent obstacles to it, noting positively recent changes in attitudes and legislation as more adequate to the nature of creativity.

The second pair of articles address issues of politics in national and global affairs that have become particularly pressing in recent years. Eric C. Hendriks-Kim draws attention to certain Western political attitudes toward People's Republic of China, which regard it as the mightiest deviation from the liberal political model and call for “liberation” of the Chinese people from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The author terms this approach *neo-Napoleonism* associating it with Napoleon's expansionist politics of “soldier of freedom” fighting against Ancien Régime, and tracing it in the American foreign policy under Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Pointing that mainland China's theoretical response to this approach

sees the harmonious *Tianxia* tradition as a civilizational guard against aggressive ideologies from the West, and that the relationship between CCP and Chinese people is rather complex, Hendriks-Kim suggests that this ideological debate is far from over, especially as the current Chinese political system is a modern revolutionist replacement of Ancien Régime on its own. For his part, Davide Orsitto focuses on the popular support for the communitarian critique of political liberalism, which sees the latter as placing emphasis on human rights to the detriment of the values of trust and belonging to community. He backs up his investigation with empirical data attesting to changes in the public attitudes towards both communitarianism and liberalism in the four largest European countries – France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom – for the last half a century. Based on the empirical findings, Orsitto signals that while there have been different trends in the fluctuation of the public attitudes to these two political value systems during this period, the overall tendency is towards a greater support for communitarian society that advances the values of trust and belonging, and towards a lesser support for individualistic values.

The final pair of articles are philosophical in focus exploring the interminglings of *logos*, non-conceptual experience, and philosophy. J. Jeremy Wisnewski focuses on the relation between *logos* and non-conceptual experience searching for answers on whether the latter could be investigated without being “colonized” by the former; that is, outside the realm of the founding presumption of the Western philosophical tradition that the language of reason is adequate to reality. He brings the relevance of the Indic meditative practice of *samādhi* as a way to a non-conceptual experience unmediated by *logos*, while also comparatively exploring the possibility for the former to found knowledge independently of the latter, making in the process numerous allusions to well-known Western viewpoints. While Wisnewski asserted that he could find no argument for privileging *samādhi* over *logos*, the same applies also the other way around, thus suggesting that Western philosophers still need to address their unfounded presumption of privileging *logos* over experience on its own. The final article explores the role and place of philosophy in our contemporary world issuing primarily from the work of Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault. Based on Habermas’ view of modernity, which situates the role of philosophy as mediating interpreter in the exchange of *expert knowledge* between and within the levels of theoretical culture and *practical application*, the role of philosophy is ultimately specified as *competence*, in distinction from expertise. Then, in a supplementary fashion, based on Foucault’s investigations on the so-called “technologies of the self” practiced within “the art of living” of Antiquity and Middle Ages, the role of philosophy is identified along the principles of *self-knowledge* and *self-care* also as *art of self-creation*.

We hope you enjoy these articles and find there something for yourself. Thank you for your time!

Rossen Roussev