

Editorial

The Thematic Perspective of War and Peace, Love and Hate, and the Current Entries: An Introduction

In times of war we naturally long for peace, but we often ignore the extent to which humanity's overall state depends on the prevalence of love or hate among its ranks. Mother Teresa is reputed to have said saying that "works of love are works of peace." Regrettably, in our time, with the heaviest military combat in Europe since the World War Two, this statement comes to suggest that we have given in too much to love's opposite; that is, hate. For all who care, now the question that looms is How can we retain love while keeping hate at bay to secure peace and prosperity for humanity today and in the future? As love and hate take many forms and the same is true for war and peace, the rationale appears to be that, if we are able to account for them and their interrelations sufficiently, we might be able to come up with a reliable perspective on both the chances of peace against war and the future of humanity. While realizing that this will be an open and ever incomplete task, and thus far from accomplishable in a research volume, we still believe that continuing to work on this through multiple investigative perspectives is worthwhile regardless of any possible setbacks.

The majority of critical theorists today will likely agree that a due apperception of the interrelations of war and peace, love and hate inevitably goes through a certain perspective on what in the philosophical and socio-political thought of the last century came to be known as *the Other*. Taken always in its relation to *the self* as a reflecting and knowing capacity, the Other has been construed in the perspective of the self in various ways. In ethics, socio-political research, and literary criticism, such constructions have placed the Other in the range between friend and enemy, neighbor and stranger, guest and intruder, lover and hater, peacemaker and warmonger, amongst others. This however has not always contributed, and certainly not yet achieved, the vindication of love and peace around the globe, as much as has been wished. Indeed, a critical perspective on the relation between the self and the Other suggests that it is the antagonistic construction of the Other that fails the self in its aspirations to a meaningful approach to co-existence and thus to all that helps achieve the desired world of love and peace.

It must, therefore, be acknowledged that much in the construction of the Other depends on the self itself and its capacity to open itself for the otherness of the Other. Thus, those who genuinely work for the promotion of peace and love around the globe would generally find it wise to also both know better and work timely on themselves and their ability to welcome, appreciate, and be ready for the Other. What this amounts to on individual and communal levels, in addition to self-knowledge and self-betterment, is adopting a concerned ethics and democratic politics, respectively. This means eschewing extremism in all its forms (including war and hate) on behalf of a due inclusion of all that may appear as 'Other' to serve the

objectives of a humane and productive co-existence (including peace and love). And to those who would demand specifics on what could be possibly meant by ‘the Other’, we can just say that it includes all other individuals, communities, societies, and cultures (regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status, religion, ability, age, etc. among their ranks), as well as nature, environment, and the planet as a whole.

This thematic issue covers topics in philosophy, socio-political theory, literary criticism, aesthetics, as well as transcultural studies, and includes original articles and a translation. Articles focus directly on the theme of “War and Peace, Love and Hate,” which they address in a markedly objectivist perspective; whereas the translation with notes draws attention to a poetic philosophy which addresses the theme on an individual personal or subjective level.

Alexandra Preitschopf discusses aspects of anti-communism in Pyotr Krasnov’s novel *Endless Hate (Nenavist)*, which was published in France and Germany in the 1930s. Krasnov, a White Russian émigré, who fought the Red Army commanding Cossack military forces before moving to Western Europe in 1919, devoted his life and works in the interwar period to stirring anti-communist and anti-Bolshevik sentiment – portraying the life and politics in the Soviet Union exclusively in dark terms while glorifying the “old Russian virtues” and achievements. As he became a fascist and Nazi supporter in the process, Preitschopf is interested most of all in throwing light on the possibility for the instrumentalization of emigrant literature for purposes of anti-communist and far right propaganda which utilizes hate in various directions, including anti-democratic, racist, and anti-Semitic, amongst others.

Drawing on the thought of Søren Kierkegaard, Jacques Lacan, and Watsuji Tetsurō, Thomas Diesner endeavors to assemble a common perspective for apprehension of what he sees as a special relation of aggressivity, anxiety, and the third. He links aggressive actions, as well as a number of problems of social, political, and therapeutic nature, to a bipolar structure, in which anxiety grows due to a lack of mediation between its two poles. Diesner maintains that such problems can be resolved by securing in the relational structure a place for a mediating third party, whose role essentially consists in keeping that structure open to and preserving difference, and whose aspects he identifies in the perspectives of these three thinkers, despite other their differences.

In a time of resurgence of populist and far right ideologies, David Casciola’s article focuses on the capacity of art to disrupt the political project of fascism. The author utilizes viewpoints of Umberto Eco and Sven Reichardt to identify as key and essential feature of fascism its synthetico-paradoxical character – its ability to accommodate within its aesthetic and political perspectives contradictory elements and positions without being disrupted by that as a whole. Whereas this peculiar resilience of fascism has posed a challenge to its critics and opponents, Casciola finds elements of support in the works of Jacques Rancière and Walter Benjamin, amongst others, to assemble a perspective on art that maintains its capacity for political disruption – in (what appears to be) a postmodernist fashion – by challenging the sense of self-recognition of the particular individual.

Yasemin Karağağ discusses Kamila Shamsie’s novel *Home Fire* which presents us with challenges faced by two Pakistani British families finding themselves in different social situations in modern day Great Britain but with nonetheless intertwined lives. As members of one of the families appear to have strong links to jihadist movements, whereas a member of the

other holds a key governmental office with special responsibilities in what came to be known as West's war on terror, complex and tumultuous relationships between different characters involving also a conflict between politics and feelings of love and hate come to a tragic end. Karaağaç convincingly traces a parallel between Shamsie's novel and Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*, representing the dramatic tension between state law and personal feelings within Giorgio Agamben's perspective on sovereign power and state of exception.

Catherine MacMillan discusses J. M. Coetzee's novel *Life and Times of Michael K* with the aim of identifying the sense of Roberto Esposito's concepts of community, immunity, and the impersonal within the events and relationships presented in the plot. Coetzee portrays the eponymous character as dwelling in a partially democratized South Africa which however is still ruled by the white minority in a way that at the bottom remains racialized and discriminatory, and at some point pushes the fate of the black majority protagonist into a prison camp. Drawing most of all on the thought of Esposito, but also of Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari and Giorgio Agamben amongst others, MacMillan insightfully juxtaposes the concepts in her focus with elements of Coetzee's narrative to advance a vision of community of tolerance and diversity without exclusion.

In continuation with our previous issue, we end up with another selection from the songs of Lalon Fakir, the unique Bengali poet-philosopher from the 19th century, again translated and with notes by Sayed Muddashir Hossain. Lalon's verse is highly metaphorical, philosophic, and insightful, whereas the songs selected here dwell most of all on the topic of the self or soul, which has had a long and vital presence in the cultural tradition of the Indian subcontinent. Hossain's notes prove informative and helpful for the uninitiated reader to enter and appreciate the moral-philosophical world of this poetic thinker.

We hope you find in these texts something valuable for yourself. Thank you for your time and enjoy!

Rossen Roussev