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Wordtrade Reviews: Fasting, Image, Earth

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Editorial Appraisals:

Some qualified reviewers offer their own brief evaluation of the book. Otherwise most of our content represents the authors'-editors' own words as a preview to their approach to the subject, their style and point-of-view. <>

HOLY MEN AND HUNGER ARTISTS: FASTING AND ASCETICISM IN RABBINIC CULTURE by Eliezer Diamond [Oxford University Press, 9780195137507]

The existence of ascetic elements within rabbinic Judaism has generally been either overlooked or actually denied. This is in part because asceticism is commonly identified with celibacy, whereas the rabbis emphasized sexuality as a positive good. In addition, argues Eliezer Diamond, it serves the theological agendas of both Jewish and Christian scholars to characterize Judaism as non- or anti-ascetic. In fact, however, Diamond shows that rabbinic asceticism does indeed exist. This asceticism is mainly secondary, rather than primary, in that the rabbis place no value on self-denial in and of itself, but rather require of themselves the virtual abandonment of familial, social, and economic life in favor of an absolute commitment to the study of the Torah. It is an asceticism of neglect, rather than negation. He also notes that this asceticism of neglect dovetails with the rabbinic theology of sin and punishment, which encourages delaying gratification in this world in the hopes of a greater reward in the next. The rabbis believed, moreover, that every pleasure taken in this world detracts from what awaits one in the future.

The rabbis valued and occasionally engaged in primary asceticism as well. In fact, as Diamond shows, the vocabulary of holiness was often used by the rabbis in connection with voluntary self-denial. One form of primary asceticism--fasting--became increasingly popular in the wake of the destruction of the second temple. He traces this development to the need to mourn the temple's devastation but also to the cessation of three forms of temple-related rituals: the sacrificial cult, the *Ma'amadot* (groups that would fast, pray, and read from the Torah while daily sacrifices were offered), and naziritism. Fasting is linked by the rabbis to each of these practices and Diamond shows that fasting was seen as a substitute for them after the temple was destroyed. In a final chapter, Diamond shows that there is a greater tendency toward asceticism among the Palestinian rabbis than among the Babylonian. He contends that the divergent political histories of these communities as well as differing external cultural influences account for this disparity.

Review

"With the scope and depth of its research, masterly panoramic presentations, invaluable insights, splendid notes, and judiciously selected bibliography, his book sets a standard that transcends the label of an excellent introduction. It is a comprehensive education in a specific dimension of rabbinic Judaism and more than that, in rabbinic Judaism as a totality."--*American Historical Review*

"...a rewarding and enlightening study. Its fresh approaches to the understanding of familiar rabbinic texts penetrate beneath the technical surfaces of talmudic law and rhetoric to confront important issues of Jewish spirituality and lifestyles."--*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

This book is part of a lifelong effort to make sense of two of the strangest and most difficult, and yet most formative and inspirational aspects of life: fasting and asceticism in rabbinic culture. Chapter 1 outlines that rabbinic Judaism does in fact contain ascetic elements, but that the asceticism of rabbinic Judaism is significantly different from that of Christianity in that it is largely incidental and instrumental rather than essential and that the two could co-exist. Chapter 2 examines the beliefs in theological principle and their implications for the rabbinic pursuit or avoidance of pleasure. Chapter 3 surveys the use of terms in the rabbinic corpus and evaluates what this usage implies about rabbinic asceticism. It is suggested in chapter 4 that fasting is the post-destruction substitute for its biblical predecessor, the Nazirite. Lastly, Chapter 5 explores the differences in attitude toward fasting, and perhaps toward active ascetic behavior in general, between the rabbis of the Land of Israel and those of Babylonia.

> [I fasted] because I couldn't find the food I liked. If I had found it, believe me, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else. —The eponymous protagonist of Kafka's The Hunger Artist

> The person who lives as a worldly ascetic is a rationalist, not only in the sense that he rationally systematizes his own personal patterning of life, but also in his rejection of everything that is ethically irrational, esthetic, or dependent upon his own reactions to the world and its institutions. The distinctive goal always remains the alert, methodical control of one's own pattern of life and behavior. —Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion

This book is part of a lifelong effort to make sense of two of the strangest and most difficult, and yet most formative and inspirational, years of my life. At the end of ninth grade my parents, primarily my father, decided that for high school I would attend a relatively new local institution that he had helped found, a mesivta or yeshiva high school. I knew that this yeshiva's ideology was different from that of my previous school, but nothing could have prepared me for the experience that lay ahead.

I spent the next two years of my life in what was in effect a Jewish monastery. The mesivta was a males-only boarding school; it required a totally controlled—one might say hermetic—environment in order to achieve its goals. Outside culture was kept out; we were forbidden to have radios. (One of the Talmud instructors or rebbeim who wanted to keep up with the news would go out to his car each day to listen to the broadcasts there; this practice made him "modern" in the eyes of some, not necessarily a compliment in the world of the mesivta.) All reading matter, including books, newspapers, and magazines, was strictly supervised and censored by the administration. The English teacher who wanted us to read Catcher in the Rye was told that the book was unacceptable; some of us read it on our own anyway. Every other weekend and many Jewish holidays had to be spent on the school grounds. Our activities during our rather limited free time were heavily restricted. A primary concern was that we not engage in any activity that might in any way result in our meeting and fraternizing with members of the opposite sex. Going bowling was forbidden for this reason.

The institution's commitment to keeping out American culture was so thorough that when one of the rebbeim heard me playing a Beatles tune on a piano left behind by the building's previous owners, he rushed in, horrified. "Eliezer," he said, "what are you doing?!"—to which I answered, reasonably enough, "I'm playing the piano." Two days later the piano was gone.

There were also restrictions in connection with clothing and grooming. Haircuts or hairstyles that were considered too modern had to be "corrected"; certain styles of suits (double-breasted, for example, a style coming back into vogue at that time) and eyeglass frames (such as metal frames, which were then a relative novelty) were forbidden. We were required to wear brimmed hats during prayers and were encouraged to do so at other times as well; the preferred mode of dress, from the administration's perspective, was a not particularly stylish dark suit, white shirt (tie optional), and black, not overly shiny, shoes. In short, it was hoped that we would dress like our rebbeim.

In any case, the rigorous schedule of study and classes left little time for bowling, clothes shopping, or anything else. Morning prayers began the day; those who did not arrive on time were assessed a nominal fine. The prayers were followed by a twenty-minute period of independent study of Mishnah Berurah, a compendium of the laws governing a Jew's daily religious responsibilities. Breakfast followed, after which we paired off in groups to prepare for that day's Talmud class. Our Jewish studies curriculum consisted entirely of Talmud. Hebrew language and literature were not taught at all, nor were the Nevi'im and Ketubim (the prophetic works and the hagiographa); we were expected to review the weekly Torah portion with Rashi's commentary on our own. After preparing for two hours we would attend the daily Talmud lesson, which involved review of the material we had prepared and presentation of new material from Talmudic commentaries we had not previously seen.

At about 12:30 we had lunch, followed by afternoon services and another twenty-minute study period, during which we studied an ethical tract of our choice, usually with a study partner. This was followed by the only break of the day: for an hour and a quarter we played basketball, did homework, or, in a few cases, voluntarily studied another tractate of the Talmud. The next three and a half hours were devoted to general studies; this was followed by a two-hour period in which we were expected to study a chapter of the Talmud other than the one we were studying in the morning. At about 9:30 P.M. we were free to return to the dormitory to do homework and then to engage in any form of relaxation that was not forbidden.

One might think, given this description, that I detested the institution and that I abhor it still today. However, the truth is much more complicated. I did dislike the mesivta, but I was also enthralled by it. In the day school I had previously attended my teachers had often spoken about mesiras nefesh, dedicating one's life to the service of God. I had the sense, though, that they weren't too fond of practicing it in their own lives. At the mesivta, we lived mesiras nefesh. Everything about the mesivta declared in no uncertain terms that there was only one thing that made life worth living: lernen (Yiddish for the study of Torah). No apology for the bad food and the endless restrictions was given or needed; if you wanted to become a Torah scholar, you had to lead a life of rigorous self-discipline and relative hardship. To my rebbeim, the rabbinic dictum "This is the way of Torah: you shall eat bread with salt, drink water by measure, sleep on the ground, and live a life of discomfort while you toil in the Torah" was not poetic hyperbole but an actual blueprint for the life of Torah.

I was also intrigued by my rebbeim. Their lives were every bit as demanding as ours. Before coming to the mesivta, each of them had spent at least ten years studying in the Lakewood, New Jersey, kollel, an institution that gives each of its students, all of them married, a rather minimal stipend in exchange for their devoting all day and part of the evening to Talmud study. This pattern of life continued for them at the mesivta. While we were preparing the Talmud, they studied. We studied late into the night; at least one of the rebbeim studied with us each evening and the others were no doubt studying at home. Every event in their lives was connected somehow to Torah. I remember a conversation in which one of my rebbeim was having trouble recalling what year he had gotten married; he finally shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, I do remember that we were studying [the Talmudic tractate] Kesubes that year."

The asceticism and self-denial in the pursuit of lernen advocated by my rebbeim was absolute; it even applied to denying oneself the spiritual delights of the next world, if necessary. One of the songs we used to sing began, "Oylom haboh iz a gute zach, ober lernen Toyre iz di beste zach"—"The world to come is a good thing; but learning Torah is the best thing."

And so for all that I hated the mesivta for its Orwellian environment, its indifference to aesthetics and hygiene, and its contemptuously superior attitude to the world outside, I was irresistibly drawn to its single-minded clarity of purpose. Some part of me has always felt that a life lived with anything less than absolute devotion to a sole objective is a life squandered on the small-mindedness of daily survival or the pointless pursuit of evanescent pleasure. The legacy I received from the mesivta and its rebbeim has blessed and cursed my life ever since. To this day I can hear in my head the cadences of my rebbeim and fellow students chanting the Talmud and debating its meaning, praying as only those who are both abjectly humble before God and supremely confident of their importance in his world can do, and discussing every aspect of life as though it were a difficult passage in the Talmud. And to this day, if I am doing anything other than studying the Talmud, there is a voice in my head that says, "Nu, what about lernen?"

It is the desire to understand that voice and its power that has inspired my study of rabbinic asceticism. Though I have heard over and over again that Judaism is not an ascetic faith, experience teaches me otherwise. Thus the question is: How could the stark self-denial of the mesivta be an expression of a faith viewed by so many as the antithesis of asceticism? This question cannot be addressed without one's revisiting an old and much-debated question, namely whether, and to what extent, rabbinic Judaism, the Judaism that came into being in Palestine and Persia between the destruction of the Second Temple in

70 C.E. and the Islamic invasion of Persia in 640 C.E.,1 is ascetic. It is to this latter question that the following study is devoted.

I am aware that in acknowledging a personal motivation for this inquiry I open myself to the accusation of having an axe to grind and the charge that this will inevitably influence my work and its conclusions. These claims are, of course, true. No one can claim honestly to be a totally objective scholar (whatever that means). The best that one can hope for is to be aware of one's biases and to strive not to let them play an inordinate role in one's research. Note that I do not discount my presumptions out of hand; discounting one's suppositions without examination is no better scholarship than affirming them unreflectively. It is not impossible, after all, for one to be predisposed to a point of view that one later concludes is logically and historically sound. Obviously, though, one must be especially skeptical of the arguments that seem to persuade one of the correctness of a position toward which one is instinctively hospitable.2 In any case, I suppose that it is particularly appropriate to preface a study of asceticism by acknowledging my frailties and shortcomings while dedicating myself to wrestling with them.

Almost from the moment of Christianity's inception, there was, as Daniel Boyarin puts it, "a difference between Christians and Jews that had to do with the body." Paul distinguished between Israel according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) and Israel according to the spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα), and between law (νόμος) and faith (πίστις), thus repudiating the traditional Jewish link between identity on the one hand and physical and social separation through circumcision and the laws of kašrût on the other. Moreover, by discarding the tribal, biological definition of Israel and by reading the Torah allegorically—two moves that were intimately connected, as Boyarin has argued so convincingly—Paul laid the groundwork for subsequent Christian glorification of virginity and sexual continence and the rejection of the Jewish view of biological propagation as a divine commandment. From the perspective of celibate Christians and their communities, the ongoing Jewish commitment to the observance of miṣwôt (commandments) including marriage and propagation were seen as symptomatic of their rejection of Christ's kerygma. The "commandments in the flesh"—the Torah's obligations and prohibitions in their literal sense—were meant only to be symbolic precursors to Jesus's (read Paul's) gospel of the spirit; the Jews, however, had tragically mistaken symbol for substance.

Jews, on the other hand, saw Christian celibacy as a betrayal of the biblical blessing and command to be fruitful and multiply. The third- and fourth-century bishop and church historian Eusebius of Caesarea cited the following objection of a Jewish contemporary: "If we [Christians] claim that the Gospel teaching of our Savior Christ bids us worship God as did the men of old and the pre-Mosaic men of God [i.e., those before the advent of the Law], and that our religion is the same as theirs, and our knowledge of God the same, why were they keenly concerned with marriage and reproduction while we to some extent disregard it?"8 The fourth-century Syrian churchman Aphrahat recounts the following Jewish anti-Christian polemic: "But you [Christians] do something not commanded by God for you have received a curse and have received barrenness. You hinder generation, the blessing of righteous men. You do not take wives, and you are not wives for husbands. You hate procreation, a blessing given by God."9 This critique was especially appropriate in the context of Syrian Christianity, where celibacy played a more dominant role than it did elsewhere in the Christian world.

Christian asceticism took other forms besides celibacy, including fasting and renouncing one's possessions; these latter forms of asceticism, particularly fasting, are present in rabbinic Judaism as well. Nonetheless, when the study of asceticism began in earnest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, little notice was taken of rabbinic asceticism. This inattention was due largely to the almost exclusive interest of most scholars in Christianity. Even those who considered the possibility of Jewish asceticism generally had little or no access to rabbinic sources and therefore limited their discussion to Philo and the Essenes. With the notable exception of James Montgomery, most scholars of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, both Jewish and Christian, characterized Christianity as ascetic and Judaism as non-or anti-ascetic. More recent scholarship, while sometimes acknowledging the existence of Jewish asceticism, often does so only with significant qualifications. David Halivni is willing to consider the possibility that early Judaism contained some ascetic strains but says that if "the claim that normative Judaism is anti-ascetic is confined to the talmudic period there [is] little to quarrel with." Salo Baron acknowledges that "ascetics were not lacking in ancient Judaism, even among the rabbis. But," he continues, "the majority believed in the legitimacy of pursuit of this-worldly happiness, including the enjoyment of material goods bestowed upon one by grace divine." However, there have been some important exceptions to the general consensus that asceticism is a marginal Jewish phenomenon. Studies by Allan Lazaroff, Steven Fraade, and Moshe Sokol have examined the nature of Jewish asceticism. As will be made clear later, Fraade's thinking has been particularly helpful in my own analysis of the problem.

The assumption that Judaism is non- or anti-ascetic has often served as the handmaiden of a theological agenda; the terms "ascetic" and "nonascetic" serve roughly the same function in the nineteenth and twentieth century that "spirit" and "flesh" do in late antiquity. For Jews viewing asceticism as a physically and spiritually injurious practice contrary to human nature, its purported absence in Judaism has been evidence of spiritual health—and of the superiority of Judaism's worldliness to the "pathological" ascetic withdrawal of Christianity. For Christians, on the other hand, Christianity's rejection of the flesh in favor of the spirit has been a sign of the transcendent superiority of the new Israel. Even those Christian scholars who acknowledge the presence of asceticism within Judaism often see it as an imperfect precursor of Chrisitanity's more fully developed spirituality.

This assumption has become a self-fulfilling prophecy; most scholars, whenever they encounter Jewish behavior that smacks of asceticism, attribute it to nonascetic motives and origins or ascribe it to influence from other religions. Naziritism is not ascetic, argues T. C. Hall, because Nazirite vows are merely "survivals of primitive Semitic religious customs"; the attendant abstinence from wine "is a survival of nomad morality protesting against the agricultural stage." Arthur Vööbus is so certain that "Judaism was not interested in asceticism" that he attributes all of the asceticism he finds in the Qumran scrolls and in rabbinic sources to foreign influences, which, he says, affected Judaism only marginally.

The entire question of the degree of asceticism within Judaism is further complicated by the profound lack of agreement about what the term "asceticism" means. Among historians of religion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was vast disagreement about how to define ascetic behavior and ideology. In the introduction to their recent collection of studies on asceticism, Vincent Wimbush and Richard Valantasis enumerate three comprehensive definitions of asceticism that have been proposed in this century. The first, Hall's, posits two major forms of asceticism: "disciplinary,"

which has as its goal the training of the body, spirit, and will, and "dualistic," which functions as a means of escaping the inherently evil body and the functions associated with it. The second definition, that of Oscar Hardman, speaks of three types of asceticism. "The mystical ideal—fellowship," has as its goal both unio mystica and communitas with fellow mystics. "The disciplinary ideal— righteousness," seeks obedience to divine laws and order. "Sacrificial asceticism" regards certain ethical behaviors as offerings that serve to remove pollution and evil. Finally, Max Weber speaks of four types of asceticism: "innerworldly asceticism," innerworldly mysticism," otherworldly asceticism," and "otherworldly mysticism." I shall have more to say about Weber's conceptual scheme.

In the face of the plethora of definitions that have been offered for asceticism, contemporary students of asceticism are reluctant to offer definitions altogether. Moreover, one can (and scholars of rabbinic Judaism do) pick particular definitions of asceticism and thereby "prove" that rabbinic Judaism is, or is not, ascetic. The debate between Yitzhak Baer and E. E. Urbach as to whether or not rabbinic Judaism is ascetic can be explained in this way. Baer defines asceticism as התעמלות רוחנית, "moral striving," which takes the forms of self-education, character development, service to God, and boundless generosity toward others, all of which can be found in Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. Urbach, on the other hand, associates asceticism with dualism, mortification of the flesh, and the creation of an elite class of ascetics. He finds none of these elements in rabbinic Judaism—though the first is arguably present in rabbinic Judaism and the latter two show up among the medieval German Jewish pietists and the sixteenth-century Safed mystics.

In truth, Baer and Urbach are talking past each other, and not simply because they are working with different definitions of asceticism. Baer is trying to locate rabbinic Judaism within the historical and ideological context of the Graeco-Roman world. He therefore isolates what he believes to be the essential elements of askesis for Greek thinkers and shows that they are present in rabbinic thought as well. (In fairness to Baer it should be noted that he is also careful to identify those aspects of the rabbinic religious regimen, such as gemîlût ḥasādîm, acts of lovingkindness, which distinguish it from the practices of the Greek philosophical schools.)

Urbach, on the other hand, seems intent on using asceticism as a means of distinguishing Judaism from Christianity. Thus the definition of asceticism that he adopts is taken straight from early Christian practice. Self-imposed suffering, including self-mutilation, was common among some early Christians (but not, it should be noted, among the Neoplatonists and Pythagoreans, who most would grant were ascetics nonetheless); there were numerous early Christians who actively sought martyrdom and those, most notably the desert fathers, who practiced varying degrees of self-denial. Urbach clearly thinks Judaism the better for eschewing such ascetic practices. In this regard his study is part of the aforementioned long-standing tradition of scholars of Christianity and Judaism using the comparative method as a way of proving the relative superiority of one faith or the other.

The most balanced and insightful discussion of asceticism within Judaism is that of Steven Fraade. He urges that we change the terms of the conversation concerning rabbinic asceticism in at least two important respects. First, given the multiplicity of available definitions of "asceticism," he suggests that a definition be found that is broad enough to encompass the varied forms of ascetic practice but not so inclusive as to be meaningless. The two components he sees as basic to asceticism are: "(1) the exercise of disciplined effort toward the goal of spiritual perfection (however understood), which requires (2)

abstention (whether total or partial, permanent or temporary, individualistic or commun-alistic) from the satisfaction of otherwise permitted earthly, creaturely desires." Second, given the complex interplay of history, external influences, and the human psyche, "ancient Jewish 'asceticism' … cannot be interpreted simply as a reflex of specific historical events or foreign influences … but as a perennial side of Judaism as it struggles with the tension between the realization of transcendent ideals and the confronting of this-worldly obstacles to that realization." Or, as Fraade puts it elsewhere, "The question is not: Is ancient Judaism ascetic or non-ascetic? but: How is asceticism … manifested and responded to in the ancient varieties of Judaism, including that of the rabbis?"

The vagueness of a phrase within the second half of his proposed definition for asceticism—an intentional vagueness, Fraade tells us—deserves elucidation. He speaks of abstention from "otherwise permitted earthly, creaturely desires." Fraade alludes here to the elitist nature of asceticism, or at least the asceticism he and I are interested in studying. If one were to omit the two words "otherwise permitted" from Fraade's definition, it would include all of rabbinic Judaism, and for that matter any religious system that places constraints upon its adherents. Is not kaŝrût, for example, a case of abstaining from "creaturely desires" as part of a "disciplined effort toward the goal of spiritual perfection"? If the answer is yes—and it is—then Fraade's definition has become useless, because we have identified asceticism with religious discipline in general. Thus, for asceticism to be something other than a synonym for religious praxis, it must involve the voluntary acceptance of a spiritual discipline that is not binding on one's larger religious community. If one thinks of almost any major group that we speak of as being ascetic—be it the desert fathers, Buddhist monks, or Hindu renouncers—we will see that they have existed against the background of, and in complex relationship to, a larger community of fellow believers that is not ascetic, at least not to the same degree. Even those, like the Essenes and the Encratites, who saw themselves as the only true believers found it necessary to engage and proselytize unbelievers; the Miqṣat Maʿasē Tôrâ of the Qumranites and the Encratite Acts of Thomas come to mind as examples. The athletic imagery used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 captures both the elitism and the sense of communal responsibility that informs Paul's ascetic practice:

> Do you not realize that, though all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, only one of them gets the prize? Run like that—to win. Every athlete concentrates completely on training, and this is to win a wreath that will wither, whereas ours will never wither. So that is how I run, not without a clear goal; and how I box, not wasting blows on air. I punish my body and bring it under control, to avoid risk that, having acted as herald [κηρύξας] for others, I myself may be disqualified.

On the one hand Paul speaks of religious praxis, and its self-denying aspects in particular, as being a form of competition (with the evil within one's self?) in which few are victorious. On the other hand, as the "herald" to the Christian community, he urges all its members to strive for the prize of spiritual achievement.

Similarly, the sages saw themselves as Israel's vanguard, but they neither separated themselves completely from the ʿamē hā-'āreṣ ("the people of the land," rabbinic parlance for the nonrabbinic Jewish populace) nor did they see any Jewish male as being barred from joining their ranks; on the contrary, they saw them all as equally obliged to do so, as the following passage suggests:

> Our rabbis taught: The poor, the rich and the evildoer are [all] brought to judgment [in the world to come]. They ask the poor man, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he replies, "I was poor and burdened with sustaining myself," they say to him, "Were you any poorer than Hillel?" … They ask the rich man, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he replies, "I was wealthy and burdened by [the responsibilities of] wealth," they say, "Were you any richer than R. Eliezer [b. Harsom]?" … They ask the evildoer, "Why did you not engage in Torah study?" If he replies, "I was handsome and [therefore] burdened by my sexual impulses," they say, "Were you handsomer than Joseph?" … (bYoma 35b)

Fraade has pointed us in the right direction. In order to move his approach to rabbinic asceticism forward, we must identify the manifestations of asceticism peculiar to rabbinic Judaism. To do so, we must refine still further our understanding of asceticism by making four observations, the last of which I shall dwell upon at length.

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First, I understand asceticism as being as much a dynamic—or, in Geoffrey Gait Harpham's phrasing, an imperative—as it is a particular group of behaviors. To put it differently, asceticism can be present in attitude as it is in action (or restraint). This is particularly true of what Weber calls "worldly asceticism" (about which see later); such ascetics operate within the larger world of commerce and have families as do their nonascetic neighbors, but enjoyment of wealth and excesses of affection and erotic feeling are forbidden to them. Thus even a religious culture that allows or even demands gainful employment and family life of its members may still hold an ascetic perspective on work and love. We therefore encounter sages who, while fulfilling the obligation to be fruitful and multiply, reduce physical intimacy and pleasure during intercourse to a minimum.

Second, as a religion that, more than most, requires detailed and extensive self-restriction of all its adherents in matters of sex and diet, Judaism, and particularly rabbinic Judaism, might be said to have an inherently ascetic temperament. That is, Judaism teaches again and again that the path to spiritual excellence goes through self-denial. The following rabbinic teaching embodies this notion: "The commandments were given only in order to refine humanity. Does God care whether one slaughters from the throat or the neck?! [Rather], it must be that the commandments were given only in order to refine humanity."59 This does not mean that the attitude of rabbinic Judaism toward physical and material is negative. However, it does open Judaism to two ascetically oriented moves: the further minimizing of pleasure in the pursuit of greater spirituality, and the instrumentalization of this-worldly behavior, which deemphasizes its pleasurable components. The Talmudic phrase "the commandments were not given as sources of pleasure,"60 though it has the specific legal meaning that fulfillment of a commandment is not considered a this-worldly benefit, serves nicely to encapsulate this latter notion as well.

Third, it is important to state that two of asceticism's faces are withdrawal from the body and withdrawal from society.61 In the first case one gives up eating, sex, or some other bodily pleasure in an attempt to reach a spiritual goal; in the second, one withdraws from communal meals, conversing, engaging in commerce, or other interpersonal activities because they are seen as inherently sinful or at least an obstacle to one's spiritual growth. In Christian asceticism the flight from the world usually

functions as a necessary means for practicing bodily self-denial. It is not surprising, therefore, that Christian asceticism in the Egyptian and Palestinian deserts begins with the solitary eremeticism of Anthony and only later develops into Pachomius's coenobitic monasticism.

On the other hand, among the sages, as among the Essenes, and perhaps the Pharisees, of the Second Temple period, asceticism seems to begin with and sometimes focuses on the formation of a fellowship within or apart from society at large. Thus at least some of the Essenes go out to the desert to form a community of strict purity, celibacy, and communal property. Possibly the Pharisees, and certainly the early sages, established ḥabûrôt or table fellowships that abided by meticulous norms of tithing and purity and thereby excluded most Israelites from breaking bread with them. At least some sages imagined a world in which they would engage solely in Torah study, having little or no contact with women, children, and nonrabbinic Jews, while being supported by the work of others.

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Finally we must recognize the existence of what I shall call an "instrumental" asceticism alongside the "essential" asceticism which is usually discussed. Essential asceticism entails explicit renunciation of some aspect of conventional existence because the self-denial itself is seen as inherently spiritually salutary. Instrumental asceticism involves the passionate commitment to a spiritual quest so consuming that one feels it necessary to minimize or eliminate worldly pursuits and pleasures because they detract from or distract one from one's godly objectives. The widespread characterization of rabbinic Judaism as nonascetic or even anti-ascetic is usually based on the absence of essential asceticism in the form of celibacy or other forms of stipulated self-denial. Thus, for example, Urbach says concerning the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud: "We find sages possessing great spiritual powers[בעלי הנפש] who imposed various restraints upon themselves; however, the denial of physical needs was merely a means and not an end unto itself etc."65 However, extreme devotion to the study and practice of Torah on the part of some of the rabbis results in self-denial indistinguishable behaviorally, if not motivationally, from that of the classic ascetic.66 Thus, rabbis marry and father children, but some delay marriage for many years in order to study without the "millstone" of family responsibility around their necks while others marry and then spend years away from home engaged in scholarship. Furthermore, an examination of rabbinic sources makes clear that for many of the rabbis dedication to Torah study meant that it took precedence over fulfilling other commandments, engaging in a profession or occupation, conjugal and familial obligations, general physical comfort, and even, in times of persecution, life itself. We therefore have an interesting situation in which economic, social, and familial life, while acknowledged as an integral part of the life of a rabbinic Jew, are subject to significant neglect without being renounced outright. Moreover, we shall see that this hierarchy is affirmed by, and enshrined in, rabbinic halakhah which, with some important exceptions, codifies the primacy of Torah study over all other obligations.

The idea of instrumental asceticism is not a new one, nor is it limited to the sages. Eusebius of Caesarea, in a previously cited passage, offers a number of responses to the Jewish claim that Christian celibacy is not in accordance with behavior of the biblical patriarchs. His second reply is as follows: "The men of old days lived a easier and freer life, and their care of home and family did not compete with their leisure for religion …, but in our days there are many external interests that draw us away, and involve us in incongenial thoughts, and seduce us from our zeal for the things which please God." In this view the major good of celibacy is that it frees one from the distractions and responsibilities of family life, and

from the threats to one's spiritual vocation that accompany them, and allows for the single-minded pursuit of godliness.

A conception of instrumental asceticism also informs some of Friedrich Nietzsche's reflections on the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche distinguishes between the Christian ascetic ideal, which he denounces as being directed against life and the self, and that of the philosophers:

> What does the ascetic ideal mean to the philosopher? My answer is … on seeing an ascetic ideal, the philosopher smiles because he sees an optimum condition of the highest and boldest intellectuality [Geistigkeit],—he does not deny existence by doing so, but rather affirms his existence and only his existence, and possibly does so to the point where he is not far from making the outrageous wish: pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, fiam! ["Let the world perish, (but) let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let me exist."]

Change the word "philosopher" to "rabbinic sage" and you have a succinct summation of the rabbinic ascetic ideal, at least in its most extreme form. The philosopher, says Nietzsche, wishes to avoid marriage and children not because he is opposed to sexuality and procreation in principle, but because they are a hindrance to his philosophical vocation. As we shall see, although the rabbis could not forgo creating families, because they saw themselves as being religiously obligated to do so, a good number of them minimized their involvement—physical, financial, and emotional—with these families. For them the perpetuation of Torah scholarship was paramount. There are numerous rabbinic statements that make the world's existence depend upon the Torah and those who study it, as in the following rabbinic chreia:

Rabbi Judah the Patriarch sent R. Hiyya, R. Assi, and R. Ammi to pass through the towns of Israel and establish scribes [i.e., Bible teachers] and reciters [of oral law] in each. They went to a place in which they found neither a scribe nor a reciter. They said to [the townspeople], "bring us the guardians of the town." They brought them the town's senatores. [The rabbis] said to them, "These are the town's guardians!? These are nothing but the town's destroyers!" [The townspeople] asked, "And who are the town's guardians?" They replied, "The scribes and the reciters. This is what scripture states: 'Unless the Lord builds the house [its builders labor in vain on it] (Psalms 127:1)." (yHagiga 1.7, 76c)

Because rabbinic ascetics do not forswear family life but rather allow the demands of Torah to take precedence over their involvement in worldly matters, their objectives are often represented as being in conflict with those of their families. Rabbinic sources reflect a range of reactions to this tension, from condemnation of the absent husband and father to an affirmation of the commitment (p.14) to study even at the cost of one's family's privation. Plainly, rabbinic asceticism is not as clear-cut as the self-denial of the Christian anchorite or the Hindu renouncer; this difference accounts, in part, for its rarely having been recognized as asceticism.

A useful comparison can be made between rabbinic asceticism and the worldly asceticism of seventeenth-century Protestantism described by Max Weber. One of Weber's great contributions to our understanding of asceticism is the insight that askesis need not involve a rejection of the mundane but instead may consist of its transformation. The Protestants identified by Weber as ascetics do not forswear a life of commerce, family, and society; rather, they refashion its significance. In their industrious pursuit of wealth they seek not to gain the material pleasures that wealth can yield but rather to magnify God's glory and to obtain certainty of their salvation:

> [Puritan] ascetic conduct meant a rational planning of the whole of one's life in accordance with God's will. … The religious life of the saints, as distinguished from the natural life, was … no longer lived outside the world in monastic communities, but within the world and its institutions. This rationalization of conduct within this world, but for the sake of the world beyond, was the consequence of the concept of calling of ascetic Protestantism.

Every aspect of life had to be evaluated in terms of God's will and dedicated to God's greater glory. Believers were expected to make an ongoing accounting of their actions, using the same scrupulous accounting methods for their spiritual life as they used in their businesses. "The process of sanctifying life," concludes Weber, "could thus take on the character of a business enterprise."

As was noted earlier, one aspect of this emphasis on constant self-discipline was "the continually repeated, almost passionate preaching of hard, continuous bodily or mental labour" among the Puritans. Weber attributes this to two causes, the first being that constant labor was seen as a means of avoiding the various temptations that beset the believer. The second is "that labour came to be considered in itself the end of life, ordained as such by God."

This near-sanctification of labor had far-reaching consequences for the Puritan community. It meant, first of all, that any form of idleness, including any activity that was not seen as adding to God's glory, was not tolerated. This included overeating, oversleeping, ostentatious dress, "frivolous" engagement in the fine arts—in short, anything other than work, worship, and the carrying out of one's familial and social duties. Second, because work was seen as one's calling, people were seen as the stewards of the profits that accrued from their work, and every penny had to be used in accordance with God's will. This meant both refraining from spending money on "useless" pleasures and investing funds with an eye to receiving the greatest possible return. Consequently, many Puritans were placed in the paradoxical position of having a great deal of wealth and being forbidden to spend it.

If one stops to compare the picture painted by Weber with the one that emerges, as will be seen, from rabbinic sources, one is struck by the similarity between these two communities. The rabbis, like the Puritans, insist on constant labor and they abhor idleness; sex is permitted but significantly regulated. For the rabbis, as for the Puritans, these requirements and limitations are formulated in great part in deference to a vocation that is supposed to occupy the vast majority of their time and energy. The major difference between these two communities is that while for Protestants one's calling is one's work, and the result is a self-denying but financially and therefore familially and socially secure community, for the rabbis one's "work" is Torah study, and so a tension is created between one's religious calling and one's familial obligations.

Weber is aware of this distinction. Thus he notes that while the Puritan demonstrated his piety through the scrupulousness of his business practices, "the pious Jew never gauged his inner ethical standards by what he regarded as permissible in the economic context." Rather, "the Jew set up as his ethical ideal the scholar learned in law and casuistry, the intellectual who continuously immersed himself in the sacred writings and commentaries at the expense of his business [emphasis mine], which he very frequently left to the management of his wife." In fact, as a consequence, Weber concludes, the rational organization of the rabbinic Jew's life in order to allow immersion in the study of the law and the fulfillment of its dictates "is not 'asceticism' in our sense."

On the one hand one cannot take issue with Weber; for him true asceticism must be an organizing principle for all of life. Because he does not find such a principle in Judaism, particularly with regard to economic life, he classifies Judaism as a nonascetic religion. Nonetheless, one can wonder whether Weber's definitions of asceticism are overdetermined by his intense concern with the economic aspects of religious life and, perhaps, by the stereotypical assumptions about Christianity, Judaism, and asceticism that prevailed in his time.

Moreover, Weber's conclusion is based on faulty evidence. Weber seems unaware of the strain of Talmudic thought that connects piety with scrupulousness in money matters, and he does not mention the medieval Jewish conception of one's possessions as a piqqādôn, an object temporarily vouchsafed by the owner—in this case, God—to the holder for safekeeping. Neither is there mention of the thoroughgoing critiques of wealth and the wealthy by the ascetic German-Jewish pietists in thirteenth-century Germany and sixteenth-century Poland. These caveats notwithstanding, one can avail oneself of Weber's analysis without sharing his conclusions about Judaism and asceticism.

One might object that if instrumental self-restraint is included in the definition of asceticism then the category of asceticism becomes so broad as to be meaningless. A boxer who refrains from sex during his training period because he believes that "women weaken legs" would then be an ascetic as well—a perhaps not inapt conclusion given the athletic origins of the term "asceticism." Some contemporary thinkers, especially those drawn to what they see as the aesthetic dimension of asceticism, happily accept this notion; I do not. The term ἄσκησις as used by Christian writers, although borrowed from the gladiatorial arena, refers specifically to self-discipline in pursuit of spiritual redemption. As Susanna Elm puts it in her discussion of Christian askesis, "Asceticism is in essence a statement about the relationship between the body, the soul, and the human potential for salvation." The rabbis, in turn, sought through their acceptance of ascetic self-restraint the blessing of the world to come. The asceticism that is the focus of the present work is self-denial in the pursuit of a spiritual ideal that transcends all forms of earthly self-gratification.

In chapter 1, I will make in detail the case that I have outlined: that rabbinic Judaism does in fact contain ascetic elements, but that the asceticism of rabbinic Judaism is significantly different from that of Christianity in that it is largely incidental and instrumental rather than essential and that this asceticism could co-exist—though uneasily at times—with involvement in the social, economic, and familial spheres. The key to this asceticism is a single-minded focus on the study of Torah, a commitment—dare I say obsession?—that leaves little time, energy, or desire for life's other pursuits. The rabbis themselves acknowledge this point with regard to sex and commerce in particular, but we shall see that it applies as well to other aspects of life—and even death.

Furthermore, two elements of rabbinic theology encourage an ambivalent attitude, at best, toward the pleasures of this world. The first is the rabbinic reaction to the problem of theodicy. One of their responses is that God front-loads, as it were, the reward due the wicked, paying them off in this-worldly coin so that they will have no claim to the pleasures of the next world. Underlying this rejoinder is the belief that the pleasures and rewards of the next world far surpass those of this one. The original intent of this theology presumably was to comfort the suffering righteous, who had to suffer the added indignity of seeing the wicked prosper, and to argue the justice of God's ways in the face of evidence to the contrary. However, its implication is that one who is enjoying this world overly much ought to be

concerned that he is being bought off with the base coin of this world and will thereby be barred from the pleasures of the next. One way to ensure that this is not the case, of course, is to minimize one's this-worldly pleasures. A second, closely related notion, is the belief in the finitude of one's reward. This means that whatever is consumed now will not be available later. Even aside from the theological principle just mentioned, therefore, rabbis are wary about depleting their spiritual capital by withdrawing from their account in this world and thereby having little left in the world to come. Chapter 2 examines these beliefs and their implications for the rabbinic pursuit or avoidance of pleasure.

Until now I have inferred an ascetic stance from the behaviors and attitudes described in rabbinic texts and limited the discussion almost entirely to instrumental asceticism. In fact, there are two terms, פרישות (abstinence) and קדושה (holiness) and their variants, with which the rabbis describe explicitly an ascetic ethos which encompasses essential asceticism as well. In chapter 3 I survey the use of these terms in the rabbinic corpus and evaluate what this usage tells us about rabbinic asceticism. It emerges that these terms are often used with regard to the types of voluntary self-denial characteristic of essential asceticism.

Essential asceticism figures most prominently in rabbinic Judaism in the form of fasting. Once again, however, arises the problem of defining asceticism in rabbinic Judaism. Numerous scholars are aware of the centrality of fasting to Rabbinic Judaism but do not consider it asceticism because they do not consider the motives for rabbinic fasting to be ascetic. I reject this view both because of my behavioral approach to asceticism and because I understand at least some of the rabbinic motives for fasting to be consistent with an ascetic mind-set. This becomes clear from a survey of prerabbinic sources that mention fasting.

One can ask how fasting became an accepted and, for some, an encouraged form of asceticism within rabbinic Judaism. In chapter 4 I suggest that fasting is the post-destruction substitute for its biblical predecessor, the Nazirite. Although the Nazirite did not fast, food and drink restrictions were a primary part of the Nazirite's regimen, and the rabbis' discussions of whether naziriteship is positive or negative seem a means of approving or criticizing asceticism in general and fasting in particular. However, the original significance of the Nazir's practices is far from certain. After explaining what I believe to have been the original significance of biblical naziriteship, I will suggest how and why the Nazir came to be understood somewhat differently by the rabbis. Finally, a link will be suggested between the virtual cessation of naziriteship and the institutions of sacrifice and the maʿamadot (groups of non-officiant Priests and Levites as well as Israelites who would fast, pray, and read from the Torah while the daily sacrifices were being offered) as a result of the destruction of the Temple, as well as mourning for the destruction itself, and the rise of fasting.

Chapter 5 explores the differences in attitude toward fasting, and perhaps toward active ascetic behavior in general, between the rabbis of the Land of Israel and those of Babylonia. The Babylonian rabbis seem negatively disposed toward fasting, while their counterparts in the Land of Israel favor it. I suggest that these differences are due both to the different historical experiences of each community and to the differences in the cultural and religious values in the surrounding societies. Jews in the Land of Israel were heirs to a legacy of destruction and oppression; the rabbinic movement itself was born and began to flourish in the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple and the brutal suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt. Babylonian Jewry, on the other hand, was under the relatively benign rule of the

Parthian and Sassanian dynasties and was subject only to sporadic persecution. Furthermore, the Graeco-Roman culture surrounding the Jews of Palestine recognized and valued fasting, and asceticism generally, as useful instruments for attaining visions of the gods and, in the view of the Stoics in particular, as a key to a life of apatheia. On the other hand, Babylonian Jewry's Zoroastrian neighbors abhorred fasting as a sin against the divinely created human body. While it is not certain to what degrees Palestinian and Babylonian Jews were affected in their attitudes towards fasting by their surrounding culture, it is clear that the parallels between rabbinic and general cultural attitudes deserve further consideration.

There are a number of important questions related to rabbinic asceticism that are not addressed by this study. Numerous individuals are given the appellation hasid, "pious one," in rabbinic literature. The nature of their piety, and whether or not they constituted a definable group, have long been the subject (p.18) of scholarly debate. To what extent do the Hasidim represent an ascetic stream with the rabbinic community? This question still awaits a full study.

Medieval Judaism includes groups of Jews, such as the Haside Ashkenaz, the German-Jewish pietists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who engaged in self-flagellation as a form of penance. Are these practices solely the result of Christian influence, or are they also the consequence of a turn to the ascetic voices within rabbinic tradition? The answer to this question also lies beyond the parameters of my investigation.

Whatever errors of omission and commission I may have made, I feel grateful to have the opportunity to draw the interest of the scholarly and general community to an important but heretofore neglected aspect of rabbinic culture. It is my hope that scholars of rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, as well as students of religion both amateur and professional, will find much in my work that is both interesting and useful.

Before presenting the fruits of my labor, it is important that I address three methodological issues that are central to my work. First, I have been speaking of rabbinic Judaism here in an undifferentiated fashion. Rabbinic Judaism of late antiquity was not, however, monolithic. One of its outstanding characteristics, in fact, in contradistinction to its predecessors, was its legitimation and institutionalization of intramural dissent. Further, rabbinic Judaism developed in two different geographical locations, Palestine and Babylonia, with different traditions and cultural influences.85 It would seem impossible, then, to represent any particular viewpoint as that of rabbinic Judaism as a whole.

In fact, I am not claiming that all rabbis of late antiquity were in perfect agreement on matters of asceticism. On the contrary, my contention is that Palestinian and Babylonian sages differed in their attitudes toward fasting and other forms of ascesis. My assertion is only that the types of asceticism outlined earlier and to be presented in detail were widespread among the sages. With regard to each ascetic behavior and attitude I will indicate whether the sage citing or exhibiting it is tannaitic or amoraic, Babylonian or Palestinian. In a number of cases I will also discuss whether a tradition quoted in the name of a Palestinian sage in the Babylonian Talmud, or in the name of a Babylonian in the Palestinian Talmud, should be regarded as Palestinian or Babylonian in origin.

A second issue is the problem of attributions in rabbinic literature and their reliability. It is by now a truism among most contemporary scholars of rabbinic history and literature that the attributions found in rabbinic sources are to treated with great caution. It has been shown that they are often inaccurate or even knowingly fictitious and that the rabbis themselves are aware of this fact. This problem has raised questions about whether or not rabbinic biography is possible and, more germane to the work at hand, whether it is possible to write a history of rabbinic thought. Richard Kalmin and Christine Hayes89 have delineated three schools of thought on the question of the reliability of rabbinic attributions. The so-called traditional school, which includes many Israeli scholars such as Ephraim Elimelech Urbach, assumes that attributions are essentially reliable as they stand. A second group, which includes Jacob Neusner and his disciples in America and Arnold Goldberg in Europe, sees rabbinic attributions as essentially useless for historical purposes. Neusner does concede, however, that one can speak of ideologies of rabbinic documents, which can be dated, however, no earlier than their date of publication, despite the fact that they contain material attributed to an earlier period. This view assumes that each of the major rabbinic documents—the Mishnah, Tosefta, halakhic (legal) midrashim, Yerushalmi, Bavli, and aggadic (exegetical and homiletical) midrashim—is the product of a thoroughgoing final redaction the date of which can be determined; in fact, however, with the exception of the Mishnah, there is considerable debate as to when each of these texts was edited.

My own approach is closest to that characterized by Christine Hayes as the source-critical approach. This approach notes that in its presentation of traditions of particular sages, rabbinic documents appear to follow a consistent chronological order. That is, later rabbis know of the views attributed to earlier ones and elucidate or question them. Rarely if ever do we find an entirely new set of views attributed to earlier sages by later ones. Furthermore, the use of specialized citation terminology and temporal markers indicates that rabbinic texts consist of teachings from different sources and periods. Consequently, I endorse Hayes's statement that "with proper attention to the distinctive features of [rabbinic] texts and the use of literary and source criticism, some relatively reliable diachronic and cultural-historical analyses of rabbinic texts beyond the level of redaction become possible." In other words, although one cannot attest to the specific historicity of the vast majority of rabbinic traditions—we do not know if a particular sage actually said or did what rabbinic sources attribute to him—we can reasonably assume that in most cases the dicta and actions attributed to sages of a particular time and place accurately reflect the views during that period and at that locale.

Let us now consider the relevance of this position for the study that follows. On the one hand, I treat each rabbinic source as a unit apart from the document in which it is found and I assume, absent evidence to the contrary, that it dates from the locale and period indicated in the citation. On the other hand, I do not claim that each tanna (sage from the period circa 70 C.E. to circa 220 C.E.) and amora (sage from the period 220 C.E. to circa 500 C.E.) to whom a statement is attributed actually made that statement. When I say, therefore, that Rabbi X said thus and such, I actually mean that such a statement is attributed to Rabbi X in the rabbinic corpus. However, because I am not writing rabbinic biography but merely establishing whether, where, when, and to what extent certain ideas and practices were current in rabbinic circles, the issue of the historical reliability of the attributions of the sources cited is mainly moot. When I attribute a view to the rabbis or sages without further qualification, I mean that this view is cited in several sources and that to my knowledge no dissenting view appears in rabbinic literature. This does not mean that every sage agreed with this view, only that such opposition has not

been recorded. In those cases in which issues of history or attribution are important, they will be addressed in the body of the study.

Finally, an important component of my methodology in this study is to suggest conceptual and behavioral parallels between rabbinic and Christian asceticism. In particular, I will point out parallels between rabbinic materials and the apophthegma of the desert fathers, a phenomenon already examined at some length by Catherine Hezser. This approach invites a third methodological concern. At the 1997 conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, during the question and answer period following my paper on rabbinic asceticism, my friend and colleague Ya'akov Elman suggested that the asceticism I was describing was so different from that of the Christian variety that perhaps they ought not be compared or studied together. My response, then and now, is that given the Jewish predilection to see itself as nonascetic, it is necessary and important to establish a continuum between Christian behaviors commonly labeled as ascetic and rabbinic ascetic praxis, which, as I will demonstrate, share the same sensibility of self-denial in the pursuit of spiritual excellence. Thus my debate with Elman and those who share his point of view is not whether or not asceticism is present in rabbinic Judaism. Given the innumerable definitions of asceticism, as we shall see, this would be a pointless discussion. Rather, the question is whether one can find enough points of contact between rabbinic and Christian asceticism to conclude that they are conceptually similar and therefore capable of illuminating each other. My answer to this question is affirmative, based in part on the similarities between the asceticism of the rabbis and that of the desert fathers. With these caveats in mind, let us turn to the texts themselves. <>

A History of Kabbalah: From the Early Modern Period to the Present Day by Jonathan Garb [Cambridge University Press, 9781107153134]

This volume offers a narrative history of modern Kabbalah, from the sixteenth century to the present. Covering all subperiods, schools and figures, Jonathan Garb demonstrates how Kabbalah expanded over the last few centuries, and how it became an important player, first in the European then subsequently in global cultural and intellectual domains. Indeed, study of Kabbalah can be found on virtually every continent and in many languages, despite the destruction of many centers in the mid-twentieth century. Garb explores the sociological, psychological, scholastic and ritual dimensions of kabbalistic ways of life in their geographical and cultural contexts. Focusing on several important mystical and literary figures, he shows how modern Kabbalah is deeply embedded in modern Jewish life, yet has become an independent, professionalized subworld. He also traces how Kabbalah was influenced by and contributed to the process of modernization.

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Review

'While the study of Kabbalah in both scholarly and popular circles remains vibrant, until now there has not been a history of Modern Kabbalah stretching from the sixteenth century. With his usual deep learning, conceptual rigor, and lucidity, Jonathan Garb offers a broad and creative rendering of how Jewish Kabbalah developed from the Lurianic circle to New Age Religion and the late modern commodification of mysticism. Garb deftly navigates through the early period to draw out the threads that will become emblematic in modernity. A major contribution to the study of Kabbalah and the History of Religions more generally. — Shaul Magid, Professor of Jewish Studies, Dartmouth College

This volume represents the first attempt to provide modern Kabbalah with a comprehensive and autonomous history. It is a good idea to stress at the outset that while Gershom Scholem, a founder of academic research in Jewish mysticism, began his own account of modern Kabbalah with the 1492 expulsion of the Jews from Spain, here we commence (for reasons to be explained in Chapter 1) with the spiritual revolution that took place in the Galilean town of Safed around the mid-sixteenth century. Since this time and even somewhat earlier, Kabbalah has been an important player not only Jewish history, but also in the cultural and intellectual life of Europe.

It was only in the modern age of print and other forms of rapid communication that Kabbalah became a major factor in Jewish textual, liturgical and ritual life, engendered mass social movements (Sabbateanism, Hasidism and the Zionist school of R. Avraham Itzhak Kook) and also significantly impacted European intellectual life (mostly notably in the case of Baruch Spinoza). Fueled by print and lately digital technology, modern Kabbalah is quantitatively vast (and constantly expanding): the literature composed in various kabbalistic worlds in this period is staggeringly voluminous (rendering any attempt to summarize it in one volume a true challenge). For example, the Otzar Ha-Hokhma database (created in recent years in traditional Yeshiva circles in Jerusalem), one of several, contains approximately io,000 Hasidic hooks (all modern) and printed works of Kabbalah (almost all modern). On the qualitative level, we are dealing with a highly diverse array of complex theosophical systems, intricate techniques, radical ecstatic and revelatory experiences and intense conflicts (also in scholarship...). All these spread not only throughout Kabbalah's continents of origin, Europe and the Middle East (especially impacting the sociopolitical development of the state of Israel) but also, later, to the Americas (as well as other global locations such as South Africa and India). All of the above processes greatly accelerated in the late modern period and hence my stress on the last two centuries.

Yet surprisingly, there is no scholarly (or even popular or traditional) book on the history of modern Kabbalah. Actually, there is no English language work on the history of Kabbalah as such. Scholem's canonical Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism is explicitly confined to what he himself regarded as the central schools of kabbalistic and pre-kabbalistic Jewish mysticism, mostly premodern (thus, there is virtually no discussion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in this 1941 book). Scholem's focus on the late antique, medieval (and at most early modern) periods is in tension with his above-noted emphasis on the very early modern event of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, as well as his obvious fascination with the seventeenth-century Sabbatean movement and its offshoots. Furthermore, the next generation of phenomenological overviews of prominent kabbalistic themes was also focused mainly on premodern periods (as in the works of Moshe Idel, Elliot Wolfson and Charles Mopsik). This is obviously true of what is perhaps the most successful publishing project in the field, Stanford University Press' multivolume translation of the thirteenth-century classic, the Zohar. It is only in recent years that the autonomy of modern Kabbalah and its discontinuities with premodern forms have been increasingly recognized, due mainly to the work of Shaul Magid, Boaz Huss, myself and the new generation of scholars. As a result, we have seen a marked increase in specific studies devoted to modern figures and developments, yet without any attempt at organizing these in an unbroken and comprehensive narrative, which would also include the numerous unresearched (or entirely unstudied, even in traditional circles) centers, figures, texts and trends.

Actually, there are two schools that have captured the popular imagination from the early twentieth century, due to the writing of Scholem and his archrival Martin Buber: the radical Sabbatean movement and the highly colorful Hasidic worlds. More recently, these have been joined by the twentieth-century schools of Kook (due to his remarkable influence on the history of Israel) and R. Yehuda Leib Ashlag (due to his universalistic reading of Kabbalah, facilitating massive popular reception and reworking). However, all of these have been sequestered in discrete conversations, rather than being integrated within the panorama of modern Kabbalah or, more ambitiously, within that of modern intellectual history. In this sense, the present project is complemented by broad studies of modern Judaism, such as those penned by David Ruderman and Leora Batnitsky.

This volume will provide a detailed century-by-century description of the major developments, schools, figures, works and challenges of modern Kabbalah. This narrative format, utilizing the convenient centennial convention (which does not always work neatly in actual practice), facilitates contextualizat ion and dialogue with other fields of research. Yet again, the focus here shall he on the role played by Kabbalah in the development of modern Judaism (with the history of Christian Kabbalah/kabbalistic Christianity and its tributaries assigned a supportive role). The five historical chapters (whose respective length will favor later periods, as indicated above), will be preceded by a chapter explaining the uniqueness of modern Kabbalah and detailing the limes that it carried over from premodern periods. The concluding chapter will trace recurrent topics over the entire modern period, summarizing the differences between subperiods, and briefly pointing at domains for further research. The purpose of this structure is to combine a focus on recent and contemporary developments with long-term historical perspective.

Major scholarly positions and disputes, both early and current, will be extensively addressed, yet interwoven into the discussion of the kabbalistic materials, in order to prioritize the texts themselves.

This choice reflects the heavily exegetical nature of kabbalistic discourse (referring both to canonical Jewish sources and, increasingly, to the kabbalistic canons and subcanons), In which the text itself is seen as an embodiment of the divine, with its study being regarded as the quintessential form of world-maintenance and world enhancement. It can be well argued that this dominance of the text sets Kabbalah apart from most other forms of mysticism (alongside other differences). Of course, this is not to negate non textual dimensions of kabbalistic life, whether we are dealing with oral transmission, mystical or magical forms of life and practice or ineffable inner experiences. Nonetheless, unless we are speaking of contemporary or very recent phenomena, we only have access to the para-textual through its recording and preservation in texts.

This text- centered approach is also expressed in numerous, yet concise quotes from striking passages, found in existing translations or first translated here (thus increasing the scope of key texts available to readers in English). While the emphasis shall be on studies available in English, one of the aims of this work is to acquaint readers with the best of scholarly writing in other languages (naturally mostly Hebrew), in all three generations of modern Kabbalah research (the history of which shall be described in its context in Chapter 6, while its present state shall be addressed in Chapter 7). Thus, readers shall be exposed to the current burgeoning of graduate and postgraduate work in the field, alongside a taste of the vast material yet to be researched. Social scientific approaches, particularly sociology and psychology, shall also be engaged in dialogue, in order to explore the nexus of intellectual, cultural and social history (as in the case of formation of elite circles and later of mass movements).

The overall implications of the book include the need to place modern Kabbalah in its own context, thus capturing its autonomy from (yet also continuity with) earlier periods, its dialogue with mystical traditions in other religions, its basic coherence over five centuries and its unique impact on modern culture. It shall be argued that the reflexive nature of modernity carried over into the self-awareness of modern kabbalists (calling for a different toolkit from that employed in the study of medieval Kabbalah). Recurrent themes to be encompassed, century by century and also in tandem, will include: forms of social organization; new genres of writing (especially autobiography and hagiography) and literary style; the impact of print culture; systems of psychological thought; emergent forms of self-cultivation and regimes of ritual and daily life; increased sophistication in the cultivation of meditative or trance states; transformations of discourse on gender and sexuality; the increase of nationalistic discourse; and new ways of interpreting canonical, non-kabbalistic works (such as the Bible and the Talmud), joined by modern Kabbalah's self-interpretation. In sum, the main contributions of the book will be the first-time (in English) comprehensive historical-chronological presentation of kabbalistic literature, combined with a manageable and justifiable focus on the modern period; pioneering exposure to central schools, figures and works; especial treatment of recent and contemporary developments; a coherent account of central recurring themes; placement of the subject in a broader Jewish and extra-Jewish historical context; dialogue with the social sciences; an updated, critical and hopefully nonpartisan history of scholarship in various languages, pointing toward areas for further research.

Premodern and Modern Kabbalah: Breaks and Continuities

The premise behind a separate history of modern Kabbalah lies in its autonomy from premodern Kabbalah. This is evident first and foremost on the intrinsic level - the self-consciousness of modern kabbalists and their unique forms of social organization and new genres of writing. Yet this claim also

rests on extrinsic factors - the impact of the dramatic changes heralded by Jewish and general modernity. At the same time, autonomy by no means entails independence or isolation, so that the chapter will take up the major themes continuing premodern kabbalistic approaches. These include exegesis of canonical texts (Bible and Talmud), gendered views of the divine world and perceptions of theurgical or magical impact of embodied human action on the supernal and, conversely, the demonic realms. In this context, we shall follow specific historical chains of continuity and examine the changing role of canonical premodern kabbalistic corpora, especially the thirteenth and fourteenth-century Zoharic literature (composed in Castile, Spain). However, the excessive dominance of the influence of this corpus in existing studies of modern Kabbalah shall be critiqued.

It is well beyond the scope and goals of this work to examine in detail nonkabbalistic premodern influences on modern Kabbalah. These include general (Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism) and Jewish (Heikhalot, or chambers of the supernal realm, literature and magical writings) forms of mysticism in late antiquity. These were then joined by medieval phenomena: Jewish (Hasidut Ashkenaz, or German Pietism and Judeo-Sufi Pietism and Spanish mystical poetry) and general (Islamic and Christian mysticism). Some of these shall be alluded to throughout, yet strictly when the topic at hand calls for it. It is even less appropriate to do more than mention the complex and contested question of the interrelationship between mythical mystical sources (Jewish or otherwise) dating to even earlier antiquity (e.g. the period of the Mishna, as in the second chapter of tractate Hagigah, Gnostic sources or the corpus of Philo) and the open manifestation of Kabbalah (literally reception of transmission), under that very name, in the Middle Ages! Therefore, this chapter shall focus on modern Kabbalah's dialogue with its immediate predecessor, namely the tradition surfacing or developing, mainly in Southern Europe (Provence, Spain and Italy), between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Thus, it should be stressed, it does not purport to provide any history of medieval Kabbalah (though such a volume, placing this lore in its often neglected historical-geographical context, would be greatly desirable). Rather, it shall provide the modicum of detail necessary for appreciating the prelude to modern Kabbalah, a screenshot, as it were, of the state of affairs at its inception.

Kabbalah in Transition to Modernity

The great variety of traditions, corpora, locations (as in the unique development of the Kabbalah in Italy or the Byzantine Empire) and interactions with earlier or parallel worlds, make it difficult to assume that there was a singular, consistent and coherent body of thought and practice known as Kabbalah by the end of the medieval period. Kabbalah should be seen as autonomous, rather than independent, in relation to the wider context of medieval life, both Jewish and general, with specific corpora or schools tied to complex strands to cultural forces ranging from German Pietism to Maimonidean philosophy (as in the case of Abulafia). Nonetheless, the kabbalists themselves assumed that there was such a 'reception' (the literal meaning of the term Kabbalah), as well as a social group composed of kabbalistic exegetes and/or practitioners. Furthermore, we have followed the tendency to cluster around canonical groups of texts, even prior to the solidification of canons by the modern advent of print. As a result, the approach taken in this chapter was that of isolating common denominators that, as we shall see, carried forward into the Renaissance and modern periods. Yet all the while, one should recall that modern kabbalists inherited not a doctrine, but a series of tensions, complexities and debates. The manner in which these played out, fueled by the dynamic processes of modernity itself, account for the sheer

richness and vastness that is modern Kabbalah. It is this very richness that enabled the crystallization of the professional, discrete identity of the kabbalistic practices and circles. <>

Nature and Norm: Judaism, Christianity, and the Theopolitical Problem by by Randi Rashkover [New Perspectives in Post-Rabbinic Judaism, Academic Studies Press, 9781644695098]

Nature and Norm: Judaism, Christianity, and the Theopolitical Problem is a book about the encounter between Jewish and Christian thought and the fact-value divide that invites the unsettling recognition of the dramatic acosmism that shadows and undermines a considerable number of modern and contemporary Jewish and Christian thought systems. By exposing the forced option presented to Jewish and Christian thinkers by the continued appropriation of the fact-value divide, **Nature and Norm** motivates Jewish and Christian thinkers to perform an immanent critique of the failure of their thought systems to advance rational theopolitical claims and exercise the authority and freedom to assert their claims as reasonable hypotheses that hold the potential for enacting effective change in our current historical moment.

Review

"**Nature and Norm** is constructive philosophical thinking at its best, probing the meaning of making theological, moral, political and scientific claims in the real social contexts in which we find ourselves implicated and enmeshed. Rashkover's argument is in part a philosophical story of how facts and values have been continually partitioned in modern and even contemporary Jewish and Christian thought. But it is also an important intervention that seeks to model a kind of inferential thinking that tends to the plurality of ways claims are made intelligible, even seemingly irreconcilable ones, from out of the communal spaces of reasoning we occupy. Beginning with the critical juncture at which scientific thinking gained autonomy from theological justification, however, Rashkover argues that modern and post-liberal Christian and Jewish thought have failed to account for inherited epistemological antinomies that serve as blindspots in philosophical, theological, and especially what she calls theopolitical claim-making. Rashkover's argument is thus a necessary intervention. Any philosophical theologian would do well to consider Rashkover's argument, if coherence is what they seek. Then again, even those willing to resist Rashkover's conclusions will nonetheless benefit from the rigorous re-reading of some of the most important philosophical problems in modern Christian and Jewish thought presented here, as well as from her call for rigorous immanent critique and self-reflection. Indeed, readers who might not reach the same conclusions as Rashkover will yet find this work compelling for the critical reflection on knowledge claims it demands and observes. *Nature and Norm* is truly a remarkable work of thinking."
—Paul E. Nahme, Dorot Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies, Brown University

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Nestled deep in the middle of Gillian Rose's essay "Athens and Jerusalem: A Tale of Three Cities" is a reproduction of a painting by Poussin entitled *Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion.* "Recently," Rose says, "I discovered a painting by Poussin which illustrates the unintended consequences of our substitution of the New Jerusalem for the missing analysis of the old Athens." The painting, she tells us, is inspired by Plutarch's *Life of Phocion.* Phocion was an Athenian general and statesman who, despite a lifetime of public and political service, was ultimately accused of treason, forced to take hemlock, and denied burial. His body, Rose tells us, "was taken outside the city walls and burnt by a paid alien; his ashes left untended on the pyre." The painting depicts Phocion's wife and a companion gathering Phocion's ashes in anticipation of giving them a proper resting place.

Rose first encountered Poussin's *Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion* through a television show called *Sister Wendy's Odyssey* that showcased the nun Sister Wendy and her love and interpretations of painting. However, Rose and Sister Wendy disagreed on how to interpret the painting: the gesture of the women, the backdrop of Athens in its architectural dominance, and the position of the women in

relation to it. Sister Wendy, Rose tells us, interpreted "the wife bending down to scoop up the ashes as an act of perfect love.." According to this argument,

> The classical orders as such stand for the tyranny of the city of Athens.... In this presentation of the rational order in itself as unjust power, and the opposition of this domination to the pathos of redeeming love, I discerned the familiar argument that all boundaries of knowledge and power, of soul and city, amount to illegitimate force and are to be surpassed by the new ethics of the unbounded community.

Phocion's women, Sister Wendy's interpretation suggests, commit the ultimate act of ethical critique by refusing to engage the city and its structures, insisting instead upon the privacy and individuality of their sentimental love and sadness in the wake of the city's indifferent cruelty.

For Rose, Sister Wendy's reading effaces the philosophical and political character of the women's act as a public appeal to the city's norms of justice. As Rose says, "to oppose the act of redeeming love to the implacable domination of architectural and political order—here, pure, individual love to the impure injustice of the world—is completely to efface the politics of the painting."' Rose points to the women's physical proximity to the city and the architecture of Athens, which elegantly frames them. Athens is no sinister symbol of political tyranny and cruel insensitive dominion. Rather, confident in its structures and in the possibility that they may provide justice, Phocion's women perform not a private act but a very public and unsentimental rite of mourning. By taking up space and making itself visible, their rite wagers on the world as a place that can accommodate it—a place within which the women may present the claim implicit in their mourning, a place where their ethical line in the sand can be publicly acknowledged and generate a legislative response.

With this act, the women defend the rationality of their claim that Phocion's treatment was unjust and call for a legislative response. There ought to be, their action attests, a law against prohibiting a person's right to a proper burial. Phocion's women exercise self-conscious philosophical authority by justifying normative claims on the grounds of their contribution to the current worldly conditions within which they find themselves. They demonstrate the philosophical courage to boldly assert their normative claim as a justifiable hypothesis in light of the material conditions of the world in which they live.

No doubt Rose interprets Phocion's women in her own philosophical image, and no doubt Rose's philosophical self-awareness is a product of the history of modern Western intellectual reflection that she inherits. Stated otherwise, there is a backstory to Rose's deep appreciation for worldly conditions as the context within which philosophical reflection about norms occurs. More specifically, it is the story of the slow process by which modern Western intellectual culture came to terms with the scientific revolution and its valorization of natural knowledge over and against theological, ethical, and political discourse, what is commonly referred to as the "fact-value" or "nature-norm" divide, by apprehending the logical significance of both scientific and non-scientific knowledge, or what are understood as "fact" and "value" claims.

NATURE AND NORM draws inspiration from Rose's hard-earned interpretation of Phocion's women and recognizes its back-story in the specific intellectual trajectory of modern and contemporary Western Jewish and Christian thought. If Rose's philosophical courage emerges from the gradual process by which Western European thought comes to apprehend the significance of the material conditions

within which communities live as the conditions for the justification of scientific and non-scientific claims, *Nature and Norm* offers a picture of how Jewish and Christian thought finally catches up with and participates in this same philosophical apprehension.

NATURE AND NORM is a book about the encounter between Jewish and Christian thought and the fact-value divide. The fact-value divide is the belief that statements of facts concerning the objective world alone may be considered true or false, whereas claims about values are subjective or strictly relative to those who hold them and are devoid of intelligibility or validity. Entranced by the new developments arising from natural science, scientists and philosophers alike began to take for granted that scientific knowledge offered the most accurate representation of reality and that only claims concerning the natural world could be considered potentially true or false.

Not an attempt to tear down the value of scientific inquiry to prop up theological discourse, *Nature and Norm* argues for a logic of discourse that gives ample space to both religious thought and scientific inquiry by dissolving the so-called "fact-value" binary. At its core sit three observations. First, a good deal of modern and contemporary Jewish and Christian thought has adhered to the logic of the fact-value distinction. Second, adherence to this logic has had calamitous results for Jewish and Christian thought, including an inability to articulate clear and meaningful claims, an inclination towards utopian theopolitical positions, a vulnerability to skepticism, a tendency for coercion, and an overall inability to advance effective platforms for theopolitical change. Finally, contemporary Jewish and Christian thought needs a logical reorientation that would illuminate conceptual practices capable of issuing on-going and changing measures of the justifiability of claims derived from both natural and social orders of discourse.

In 1610 Galilei Galileo confirmed Copernicus's heliocentric model using a self-designed telescope. In 1620, Francis Bacon published *Novum Organum Scientiarum (New Instrument),* which introduced his observation-based method of scientific inquiry. In 1687 Isaac Newton published the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy),* laying the foundations for classical mechanics. The rise of modern science sent shock waves through Europe and dramatically altered the contours and standards of Western thought, generating what Jonathan Israel has referred to as the "crisis of the European mind." In his classic text, *The Radical Enlightenment,* Israel states that, during the Middle Ages and the early modern age down to around 1650, western civilization was based on a largely shared core of faith, tradition, and authority. By contrast, after 1650, everything, no matter how fundamental or deeply rooted, was questioned . . . challenged or replaced by startingly different concepts generated by the New Philosophy and what may still be usefully termed the Scientific Revolution.

Undoubtedly, those of us living in the early twenty-first century are the beneficiaries of these shock waves and the fruits they have borne in medical science, chemistry, biology and technology. Nonetheless, it is the central claim of this book that this crisis of the European mind has reverberated throughout modern western Jewish and Christian thought since the seventeenth century and continues until our current time.

According to Israel, the crisis of the European mind arises from the impact of the scientific revolution upon philosophical thinking.

It was unquestionably the rise of powerful new philosophical systems, rooted in the scientific advances of the early seventeenth century and especially the mechanistic views of Galileo, which chiefly generated that vast *Kulturkampf* between traditional, theologically sanctioned ideas about Man, God and the universe and secular, mechanistic conceptions which stood independently of any theological sanction.

Israel's book offers an exquisitely detailed documentation of the scientifically primed "philosophical radicalism" of the early European Enlightenment and the challenge this new picture of reality and its "mechanistic conceptions" posed to traditional ideas about God, authority, and morality. Most importantly for my purposes, Israel's project attests to the logical valorization of these new ideas or claims over and against non-scientific claims concerning God, morality, and politics, or what has come to be known as the fact-value divide.

Israel makes a convincing case for identifying Baruch Spinoza as the primary exemplar of the fact-value divide insofar as his "general philosophy was profoundly influenced by his conception of science [and science constituted for him] the only certain and reliable criterion of truth we possess." According to Israel, Spinoza's thought is transformative because he explicitly maintains that, "the laws science demonstrates through experiment and mathematical calculation are universally valid and the sole criterion of truth."

The import of identifying logical validity with scientific knowledge for the logical status of non-scientific claims is clear. Either one considers them thinly veiled claims about the natural world or one dismisses them as logically invalid. On the one hand, therefore, Spinoza "seeks natural causes for every phenomenon which has impressed or frightened. On the other hand, Spinoza also insists that some phenomena have no place in the natural order of things and that claims about them therefore have no logical validity. Israel offers Spinoza's treatment of miracles as an example.

The discussion of miracles in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* vividly illustrates the centrality of scientific criteria and modes of explanation in the overall structure of Spinoza's system. . . . Nothing [for Spinoza] happens or exists beyond Nature's laws and hence there can be no miracles; and those that are believed, or alleged, to have occurred, in fact had natural causes which at the time men were unable to grasp.

However, miracles are not the only phenomena that have no place in the natural order of things. In both the *Theologico-Political Treatise* and the *Ethics,* Spinoza asserts that there are no values in nature either." Normative claims derive from the subjective human experiences of nature and its laws and are therefore relative to the individuals who have these experiences. Ethics, politics, and religion are discourses that express these kinds of claims and different ways of organizing and managing them. Consequently, they cannot satisfy the logical standard of adequate knowledge or the scientifically determined criterion of truth." Certainly, as we will see, Spinoza is not the only thinker whose work exemplifies the fact-value divide, nor do all thinkers influenced by the fact-value divide agree on how knowledge of nature is achieved. However, regardless of whether scientific facts arise through empirical observation or by way of *a priori* natural laws, the fact-value divide presupposes that knowledge of nature is the logical standard of "true knowledge." In the shadow of this confidence, theopolitical or normative claims—claims whose subject matter is theology, ethics, or politics—are excluded or reduced away.

Immanuel Kant—an unabashed Enlightenment cheerleader for the power of reason—recognized these implications of Spinoza's thought. Kant expressed a deep concern for the potential crisis of the same Enlightenment if and when reason was used to undermine traditional beliefs and social norms and associated this crisis with Spinoza's thought. Left unchecked, reason could lead to "materialism, fatalism, [and/or] atheism." It could, in other words, revert to Spinozism. Ultimately, the rise of scientific materialism led to the inscription of Spinoza's fact-value divide onto the dominant academic distinction between *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften,* and neither Jewish nor Christian thought was immune to its influence. As Timothy Reiss maintains, "scientific discourse was to remain the model and exemplar of all discourses of truth—of all knowledge with few doubts until the last third of the nineteenth century and, even with increasing attacks, until the present."

Most often, the notion that value statements are excluded from "the domain of rational discourse" is associated with a philosophical school known as logical positivism. As Hilary Putnam explains, "according to the positivists, in order to be knowledge, ethical 'sentences' would have to be either analytic, which they manifestly are not, or else 'factual. And their confidence that they could not be 'factual' ... derived from their confidence that they knew exactly what a fact was." Like Spinoza, the logical positivists took for granted the identification of truth with true knowledge about the objective world." In the *Tractatus,* Ludwig Wittgenstein expresses the logical positivist's account of the world as a realm of facts without meaning.

> "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world, everything is at it is and everything happens as it does happen... In it no value exists. But since for the early Wittgenstein, as Omri Boehm explains, "talk of what is outside the world is meaningless"" and since in this objective world, no values exist, it follows that there is no potential truth to value claims. As Robert A. Harris states, "the positivists [also] rejected all talk about values (ethics, morals, religion, philosophy) not only as 'references without foundation' but as meaningless or 'non-cognitive' babble."

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* G. W. E Hegel describes this prioritization of the logical status of natural scientific claims as the privileging of Substance over Subject. Such a position neglects subjectivity both as the subject matter of knowledge (that is, human "values") and as the activity of the knower, or the vantage point of those who take up and live with objective knowledge. In these terms, the "fact-value divide" is the assumption that the standard of truth for all knowledge derives from our knowledge of substance, the physical and so-called "objective world", or as Timothy Reiss describes it, "a way of conceptualizing the world that 'marks a total distancing of the mind from the world."

The fact-value divide has undoubtedly undergone damaging criticism by philosophers and scientists. As Robert A. Harris notes, "positivism's claim that 'only statements of [objective] facts have meaning' was a claim not subject to [objective verification] and thus, by its own definition ... had no meaning. Thus was the philosophical basis for positivism refuted. A long line of thinkers as diverse as William James, Leo Strauss, and Thomas Kuhn have demonstrated the extent to which "the practice of science involves much more than the compilation of self-evident facts. Nonetheless, despite this pushback, as Putnam says, "the idea that 'value judgments are subjective' is a piece of philosophy that has gradually come to be accepted by many people as if it were common sense"" and this is no less the case among Jewish and Christian thinkers who continue to assert arbitrarily determined ethical and theological claims.

Certainly, I am not the first to take note of the influence of scientific naturalism and the attending logical prioritization of natural scientific claims over and against theopolitical claims upon modern and contemporary Jewish and Christian thought. In *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars,* Benjamin Lazier tells a new story about inter-war and post-war Jewish and Christian theology as polarized between a this-worldly incarnationalism and a return to naturalism characteristic of Strauss and Schmitt on the one hand and the neo-gnostic acosmism of the *Krisis* theologians, Barth, Rosenzweig and Gogarten on the other hand. In this lively review, Lazier categorizes thinkers as critics or defenders of the thematic contents of Spinozistic philosophy. "For a variety of reasons," he asserts, "the interwar period witnessed an explosion of interest in Spinoza." During this time, the Spinoza-gnostic rivalry [manifests itself] in one of its purest forms. Barth and his minions count as the theological expression of a sentiment that insisted man drain his cup to its dregs. . . . But for many, it offered an overly bleak outlook on the world.... This very fact made Spinoza's revival important.... In its depth and breadth, Spinoza's revival ... outstripped by far the gnostic recrudescence.

In Lazier's estimation, the force of Spinoza's influence at this time even pitted theologically minded thinkers like Schmitt and Barth against each another. As Lazier explains, "it should perhaps come as no surprise that interwar Catholics . . . would invoke Spinoza in the name of banishing once and for all the bugbear that would not go away. . . . The Catholic (and Spinozist) penchant for inclusion ... stood in sharp contrast to the demand the crisis theologians laid upon man to decide—either for the world or for God."" And if Lazier concedes that, "Schmitt . . . did [not] expressly mobilize Spinoza to contest the gnostic spirit, . . ." his thought, unlike Barth's, could be associated with the Spinozistic focus on this world.

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In light of this account, we can appreciate why immanent critique affords a plausible strategy for resolving the theopolitical problem. Arising as it does from out of the ashes of the potential dissolution of key Jewish and Christian claims, immanent critique prompts a process of reflection that gives rise to a new standard of logical validity, and one that *does* apply to and *can* be used in the assessment of Jewish and Christian claims. In particular, immanent critique bridges the apparent divide between theopolitical claims and claims about the "world" by reflecting upon how theopolitical claims are related to other claims a community makes about the world at the current time. As a reflection upon the inferential practices of a given community, immanent critique does not posit a fundamental difference between the condition of the possibility of the meaningfulness of a theopolitical claim and that of a scientific claim. Theopolitical claims do not operate outside of the normal conditions of rationality used to determine the intelligibility of claims concerning the natural world, but according to the same inferential rules a community deploys with respect to any claim. This logical reorientation equips Jewish and Christian thinkers to identify the intelligibility conditions of their claims and avoid the threats of meaninglessness, acosmism, utopianism, and dogmatism characteristic of their adherence to the fact-value logic.

In chapter five, I also identify Peter Ochs and Nicholas Adams as examples of contemporary Jewish and Christian thinking that show what this kind of reflection looks like and how it establishes an inextricable connection between the articulation of Jewish and Christian claims and the network of other knowledge claims held by particular Jewish and Christian communities. These examples clarify how a post-fact-value Jewish and Christian thinking exercises a continued appreciation for worldly inquiry without succumbing

to the damaging consequences of the fact-value logic. Consequently, it will also become clear that the fact-value divide and its appropriation by Jewish and Christian thinkers was itself a pragmatic response to the emergence of scientific knowledge. As such, the recalibration of the logical orientation of Jewish and Christian thought turns out to be part and parcel of the Western cultural and intellectual project of thinking through the significance of the scientific revolution.

Nature and Norm's attention to this process of cultural and intellectual self-reflection follows in the footsteps of G. W F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* which provided one of the first and certainly the most influential immanent critiques of the fact-value divide. Like *Nature and Norm,* the *Phenomenology* documents a process of reflection that arises from the problems confronting t*h*e modern European identification of natural scientific claims and logical validity in one that does apply images in a portrait of a new standard culminates of logical validity, and historical activity of reflection on the conditions for the integrability claims that Hegel calls, "absolute knowing?'

Chapter six of *Nature and Norm* illuminates this important overlap between the two projects in order to highlight the extent to which *Nature and Norm* participates in this long Western process of reflection on science and its impact upon logic and epistemology. Both *Nature and Norm* and the *Phenomenology* are motivated by the skepticism that accompanies the factvalue divide as a theory of knowledge. As has been discussed above, the fact-value divide identifies the logical validity of natural scientific claims as the criterion for the logical validity of all knowledge claims. *Nature and Norm* identifies the problems caused by the appropriation of the fact-value divide by Jewish and Christian thinkers. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* identifies the problems caused by taking the fact-value divide as the ground for the validity of *any* knowledge claim.

Like Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* before it, Hegel's *Phenomenology* presents a philosophical quest to identify the conditions of the possibility of knowledge claims. Unlike Kant's *Critique,* however, Hegel's *Phenomenology* provides a negative transcendental deduction of these conditions since, like *Nature and Norm,* it begins with an epistemology that Western thinkers have taken for granted and identifies the skeptical threat facing this apparently self-evident standard. However, when appraised for its utility as a viable theory of knowledge, this standard cannot account for itself and turns out to be indistinguishable from any other contestable knowledge claim. "Facts," the *Phenomenology* demonstrates, are not self-justifying ideas, but presuppose particular conditions (that is, relations to other claims as these claims are held by communities) in order to be justified. This is as much the case for "scientific" facts as it is for any other kind of knowledge claim. Described by Hegel as a "way of despair," the *Phenomenology* documents the long trail of responses to the initial failure of natural empiricism to ground itself. In the process, the *Phenomenology* reveals itself as a quest to uncover an unconditioned ground for a theory of knowledge. It uncovers this ground, however, not through a transcendental deduction of some set of facts or preestablished categorical conditions for the objective validity of knowledge. As is well documented, refusing this strategy is the core of Hegel's critique of Kant's theory of knowledge." Instead, the unconditioned ground of knowledge is Reason's ongoing *activity* of grounding, of offering accounts of the validity of claims by perpetually challenging their intelligibility, what Hegel calls the "negative". Reason grounds not as a "fact" or a "law" or a self-certifying idea. It grounds in the *act of grounding* that never rests secure in its past achievements but is effective only when it responds to the ever-changing challenges to communally agreed upon habits of propositional intelligibility.

Hegel's account of the condition of the possibility of knowledge claims in Reason's ongoing activity of grounding echoes **NATURE AND NORM**'s account of both the stages in the process of coming to terms with the fact-value divide documented in *Nature and Norm,* that is, acceptance, redescription, and external critique as well as *Nature and Norm*'s appreciation for the forced option and demand for immanent critique and the process of reflection upon the "who," "how," and "when" of the Jewish and Christian claims introduced above. Both offer philosophical analyses of the logical limits of the fact-value divide. Both document the process by which Western thought has slowly reflected upon and ultimately gained a more mature apprehension of science, such that natural science no longer bears the burden of establishing universal criteria of logical validity but rather, like other discourses, offers a body of knowledge whose rationality depends upon the continued assessment of its suitability for human social existence. *Nature and Norm* pays particular attention to the implications of this logical reorientation for Jewish and Christian thought since it has taken longer to recognize the negative impact of the fact-value divide upon the sustainability of Jewish and Christian claims. Still, the goal of both is the same: as Hegel put it, "Spirit's insight into what knowing is.. . ." When it is achieved, scientists and religious thinkers alike acquire the freedom and authority to assert their knowledge claims as rational when by rational we mean, useful for those communities who hold them in a changing world. Once thinkers recognize that logical criteria are not given by the sciences, they realize the authority of philosophy to address those questions by its own transcendental method.

Ultimately, *Nature and Norm* invites the shocking and unsettling recognition of the dramatic acosmism that shadows and undermines a considerable number of modern and contemporary Jewish and Christian thought systems. Exposing the forced option presented to Jewish and Christian thinkers by the continued appropriation of the fact-value divide, *Nature and Norm* motivates Jewish and Christian thinkers to perform an immanent critique of the failure of their thought systems to advance rational theopolitical claims. By identifying the critical juncture at which many Jewish and Christian thinkers currently find themselves, *Nature and Norm* uncovers a new standard of logic whereby Jewish and Christian thinkers gain the authority and freedom to advance their claims as reasonable hypotheses that hold the potential for enacting effective change in our current historical moment.

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The above comparison between **NATURE AND NORM** and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* exposes how modern Jewish and Christian responses to the factvalue divide run parallel to non-religious cultural and intellectual attempts to come to terms with the philosophical significence of developments in modern science. Like **NATURE AND NORM**, *the Phenomenology* ends by emboldening the western European intellectual community to exercise its philosophical authority for the sake of sustaining the rationality of its knowledge claims. For in recognizing the need to engage in ongoing immanent critique, the community also recognizes a responsibility and an authority to engage in this labor for the sake of the life of the community in the here and now.

Implicit in the task of immanent critique are several implications that bear upon the ongoing work of Jewish and Christian thinkers.

a) The theopolitical problem is a characteristic of our *current* historical climate, arising out of the conditions of a forced option. It thus signals the inadequacy of pre-philosophical attempts to offer an adequate account of the logical validity of theopolitical claims at the current time.
b) Consequently, immanent critique is not a critical judgment on the relevance or adequacy of prior efforts at logical explanation *for their time* but a commentary on the adequacy of these explanations for our own.
c) Immanent critique therefore presupposes an *apprehension of the historicity* of logical assumptions about the validity of knowledge claims held by modern Jewish and Christian thinkers.
d) This awareness generates a self-consciousness of our own historical moment and what we need to do in light of it. This particular historical moment *calls* for Jewish and Christian thinkers to exercise the kind of speculative or philosophical reflection outlined here and endows them with the pragmatic authority to do so. Jewish and Christian knowledge claims relate to scientific claims when the latter are no longer taken to be the self-evident standard of rationality but rather, like the former, are understood as knowledge claims whose validity depends on particular forms of life.
e) Rational determination of Jewish and Christian claims sustains the Enlightenment's concern with empirical knowledge about the world, since justifying theopolitical claims depends upon on-going assessments of the worldly conditions within which knowledge claims are held.
f) Immanent critique includes the entire process by means of which a form of life generates accounts of the rationality of its claims *as needed* and in *different moments of historical challenge.*
g) In the current climate, we can no longer afford the luxury of taking for granted the self-evidence of our knowledge claims scientific or otherwise. Knowledge is something we use and for which we are responsible. Like Phocion's women, it is incumbent upon us as scientists and religious thinkers to exercise our historically mandated philosophical authority to preserve the vitality of the knowledge claims with which we most successfully live in and with our world. <>

IN THE PRESENCE OF SCHOPENHAUER by Michel Houellebecq, preface by Agathe Novak-Lechevalier, translated by Andrew Brown [Polity, 9781509543250]

The work of Michel Houellebecq – one of the most widely read and controversial novelists of our time – is marked by the thought of Schopenhauer. When Houellebecq came across a copy of Schopenhauer's Aphorisms in a library in his mid-twenties, he was bowled over by it and he hunted down a copy of his major philosophical work, The World as Will and Representation. Houellebecq found in Schopenhauer – the radical pessimist, the chronicler of human suffering, the lonely misanthrope – a powerful conception of the human condition and of the future that awaits us, and when Houellebecq's first writings appeared in the early 1990s, the influence of Schopenhauer was everywhere apparent.

But it was only much later, in 2005, that Houellebecq began to translate and write a commentary on Schopenhauer's work. He thought of turning it into a book but soon abandoned the idea and the text remained unpublished until 2017. Now available in English for the first time, **IN THE PRESENCE OF SCHOPENHAUER** is the story of a remarkable encounter between a novelist and a philosopher and a

testimony to the deep and enduring impact of Schopenhauer's philosophy on one of France's greatest living writers.

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The history of a revolution

When, in 2005, Michel Houellebecq began this translation of and commentary on Schopenhauer's work — an arduous and somewhat surprising enterprise for Houellebecq, and one which alone testifies to the strength of his admiration — he had just finished writing *The Possibility of an Island.*[1] He devoted a few weeks to this new project, and initially thought of turning it into a book; then, rather quickly, he abandoned it. But he had in the meantime translated and commented on almost thirty extracts from two of the most famous works by Schopenhauer (1788-1860), *The World as Will and Representation,* and 'Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life'.[3]The former, the philosopher's main work, was also the work of a whole lifetime: the young Schopenhauer, who had just defended his thesis, worked intensely on it from 1814 to 1818, and a first version appeared in 1819; but he continued to add to it, and the work grew with successive editions until it became the imposing tome, often published in several volumes, which we know today. However, it was only with the publication of *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851), where he brought together various essays (including the 'Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life') setting out the essential points of his doctrine, that Schopenhauer finally — very late in life — found the public success he had always hoped for: `The comedy of my celebrity begins', he is supposed to have said, 'what am I to do with it now that my hair is grey?'

In the Presence of Schopenhauer, however, is not only a commentary: it is also the story of an encounter. At the age of around twenty-five or twenty-seven — which sets the scene in the first half of the 1980s — almost by chance, Houellebecq borrowed the 'Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life' from a library.

At the time, I already knew Baudelaire, Dostoevsky, Lautréamont, Verlaine, almost all the Romantics; a lot ofscience fiction, too. I had read the Bible, Pascal's Pensees, *Clifford D. Simak's* City, *Thomas Mann's* The Magic Mountain. *I wrote poems; I already had the impression I was rereading, rather than really reading; I thought I had at least come to the end of one period in my discovery of literature. And then, in a few minutes, everything dramatically changed.*

This was a decisive shock: the young man dashed across Paris, finally getting his hands on a copy of *The World as Will and Representation* which had quite suddenly become 'the most important book in the world'; and as a result of this new reading, he says, 'everything dramatically changed'.

`An author', says Francois, the narrator of *Submission,* `is above all a human being, present in his books', and 'only literature can give you access to a spirit from beyond the grave — a more direct, more complete, deeper access than you'd have in conversation with a friend'. No doubt it is precisely this mysterious and startling sensation that Houellebecq first felt on his discovery of Schopenhauer's work; no doubt, too, it was this encounter, so decisive for him, that he wanted to share with his readers by embarking on the writing of this text, significantly entitled *In the Presence of Schopenhauer.* The strength of the revelation of Schopenhauer's work was indubitably linked to the shock of recognizing an alter ego, someone with whom you immediately realize that you are going to enjoy a long companionship. Schopenhauer, the expert in suffering, the radical pessimist, the solitary misanthrope, proved to be 'reinvigorating' reading for Houellebecq — you feel less lonely when there are two of you. Indeed, one wonders whether Houellebecq was Schopenhauerian before reading Schopenhauer — or was it this reading that turned him into the man we know? Was he already, fundamentally, `unreconciled'? (with the world, with men, with life), or did Schopenhauer sow the seeds of conflict? Houellebecq already loved dogs better than he loved the human race — or should we recognize, here as elsewhere, the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer? Of course, it barely matters: we are here prying into the secrets of a long-term couple. What is certain, however, is that in 1991, the year when the first of Houellebecq's works were published, Schopenhauer was everywhere: in the (devilishly Schopenhauerian) title of his essay on Lovecraft, *Against the World, Against Life;* in the very first sentence of *Rester vivant (Staying Alive),*

`The world is an unfolding suffering', which angrily recalls the Schopenhauerian axiom that 'Suffering is essential to all life'; and even in these astonishing (to put it mildly) lines of verses from his first collection, *La Poursuite du bonheur (The Pursuit of Happiness):*

> I want to think of you, Arthur Schopenhauer,
> I love you and I see you in the reflection of the windows,
> The world is a dead end and I'm an old clown
> It's cold. It's very cold. Earth, adieu.

This encounter was almost love at first sight, then — but it also looks remarkably like a revolution. For Schopenhauer's philosophy, which aims to develop a `single thought' able to account for the real as a whole, in all its complexity, struck Houellebecq right from the start as a formidable operator of truth. Schopenhauer opened Houellebecq's eyes and taught him to contemplate the world as it is in itself — as entirely driven by a blind and endless 'will to live' which is the essence of all things, from inert matter to men, via plants and animals. In Schopenhauer, this foreign to the principle of reason, is the basis of the absurd and tragic character of all existence, whose sufferings are at once inevitable (because 'all willing proceeds from need, and thus from deprivation, and thus from suffering') and devoid of any justification. It also explains the author's legendary pessimism. This is certainly a radical pessimism; but it is also a dynamic pessimism, since, according to Houellebecq, 'disillusion is no bad thing'. And. Schopenhauer, according to Nietzsche's formula in the third of his *Untimely Considerations,* proves to be the best of 'educators'. His words are comparable, says Nietzsche, to those of a father instructing his son: it is 'an honest, calm, good-natured discourse before an auditor who listens to it with love'.[16] Schopenhauer's work is a school of morality which instils into the reader the qualities of honesty, serenity and constancy which characterize its author; it is also, according to Nietzsche, a lesson in style (because morality and style are two sides of the same coin): `Schopenhauer's rough and somewhat bear-like soul teaches us not so much to feel the absence of the suppleness and courtly charm of good French writers as to

disdain it' . Did Nietzsche always draw all the consequences of this? Houellebecq certainly did: it is no coincidence if he constantly replies to all those who eternally reproach him for lack of style by quoting Schopenhauer's famous saying 'the first — and virtually the only — condition of a good style is having something to say'.

As Michel Onfray has decisively shown, it is, in fact, the whole of Houellebecq's work that could be read through the filter of Schopenhauer's philosophy. In both cases, suffering is taken for granted, and there is the same pessimism, the same conception of style, and even the same central emphasis on compassion as the general basis for ethics; we also find the same salvific character of aesthetic contemplation, and the same impossibility of 'being at home' in the world. Once we have observed this influence, it comes as no surprise that Houellebecq initially conceived **IN THE PRESENCE OF SCHOPENHAUER** as a homage: 'I propose to show, through some of my favourite passages, why Schopenhauer's intellectual attitude remains to me a model for any future philosopher; and also why, even if you ultimately find yourself in disagreement with him, you cannot fail to be deeply grateful to him.'

But the enterprise — and herein lies its strength, and one of its major interests — reveals that Houellebecq does not stick to this project: in his dense, sometimes difficult commentaries on the extracts he takes the trouble to translate himself, Schopenhauer's work appears to him to be, not so much a lesson patiently and admirably assimilated, or even a model, as a formidable machine for thinking with. Little by little, the analysis emancipates itself from the letter of the text, and what we find is the outline of an investigation into the problems posed by splatter films and the representation of pornography in art, a criticism of the philosophies of the absurd, and, a little further on, a reflection on the emergence of urban poetry, the transformations of twentieth-century art, and the 'tragedy of banality' which 'remains to be written'. A wide-ranging set of ideas is reflected in this intensely personal exercise (everything here seems singularly Houellebecquian, including his note comparing 'the life of nomads' that arises from 'need', to the 'life of tourists' that arises from 'boredom'); and this thought experiment seems already to be opening up other horizons. Thus, it is doubtless no coincidence that *In the Presence of Schopenhauer* precedes *The Map and the Territory,* which is perhaps, of all Houellebecq's novels, the most Schopenhauerian.

Love stories end badly, and Houellebecq claims to have moved away from Schopenhauer 'a decade or so' after discovering him. Another encounter, with Auguste Comte, compelled him, he says, to become a positivist, `with a kind of disappointed enthusiasm': an (inevitably) reasonable new direction for him to take, but one without any warmth, deprived of the passionate exaltation that had accompanied the discovery of Schopenhauer. The article entitled `Approches du desarroi' (`Approaches to Disarray'), first published in 1993, must date back to roughly those years. In it, Houellebecq shows Schopenhauer overtaken by the very thing that he had refused to believe in and that lies right at the heart of the positivist doctrine: the movement of history. Schopenhauer's revelation of the world as 'on the one hand existing as will (as desire, as vital impulse), and on the other hand perceived as a representation (in itself neutral, innocent, purely objective, capable as such of aesthetic reconstruction') now seems, he says, to have fizzled out. This revelation, one that Schopenhauer viewed as definitive, proves to have been defeated by the 'logic of the supermarket' that prevails in contemporary liberalism: instead of 'the total organic force obstinately striving for fulfilment' suggested by the word contemporary man only knows 'a scattering of desires' and 'a certain depression of the will's as for representation, 'deeply

infected by meaning', weakened by a permanent state of self-consciousness, it has 'lost all innocence' — undermining `artistic and philosophical activity' at the same time as the very possibility of communication between men. We then slide 'into an unhealthy, fake, utterly derisory atmosphere'.[25] History will not have saved us from pessimism, then — far from it: by ruining the foundations of Schopenhauer's philosophy, it has ultimately merely aggravated its conclusions. Does this mean that history has deprived that philosophy of any validity? To answer this question, it is enough to read the solution that Houellebecq recommends at the end of his article: `Each individual, however, can produce in himself a sort of cold revolution, by moving for a while outside the flow of information and advertising. This is quite simple: it has never been so easy to adopt an aesthetic position towards the world: you just need to step aside.'[26] Suspend the will, be aware of the gap, actively practise being out of sync: Schopenhauer, now and forever. —Agathe Novak-Lechevalier <>

Society without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us about Contentment (SECOND EDITION) by Phil Zuckerman [New York University Press, 9781479878086]

First edition "Silver" Winner of the 2008 *Foreword Magazine* Book of the Year Award, Religion Category

Before he began his recent travels, it seemed to Phil Zuckerman as if humans all over the globe were "getting religion"—praising deities, performing holy rites, and soberly defending the world from sin. But most residents of Denmark and Sweden, he found, don't worship any god at all, don't pray, and don't give much credence to religious dogma of any kind. Instead of being bastions of sin and corruption, however, as the Christian Right has suggested a godless society would be, these countries are filled with residents who score at the very top of the "happiness index" and enjoy their healthy societies, which boast some of the lowest rates of violent crime in the world (along with some of the lowest levels of corruption), excellent educational systems, strong economies, well-supported arts, free health care, egalitarian social policies, outstanding bike paths, and great beer.

Zuckerman formally interviewed nearly 150 Danes and Swedes of all ages and educational backgrounds over the course of fourteen months. He was particularly interested in the worldviews of people who live their lives without religious orientation. How do they think about and cope with death? Are they worried about an afterlife? What he found is that nearly all of his interviewees live their lives without much fear of the Grim Reaper or worries about the hereafter. This led him to wonder how and why it is that certain societies are non-religious in a world that seems to be marked by increasing religiosity. Drawing on prominent sociological theories and his own extensive research, Zuckerman ventures some interesting answers.

> This fascinating approach directly counters the claims of outspoken, conservative American Christians who argue that a society without God would be hell on earth. It is crucial, Zuckerman believes, for Americans to know that "society without God is not only possible, but it can be quite civil and pleasant."

Religious conservatives around the world often claim that a society without a strong foundation of faith would necessarily be an immoral one, bereft of ethics, values, and meaning. Indeed, the Christian Right in the United States has argued that a society without God would be hell on earth.

In **SOCIETY WITHOUT GOD, SECOND EDITION** sociologist Phil Zuckerman challenges these claims. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews with more than 150 citizens of Denmark and Sweden, among the least religious countries in the world, he shows that, far from being inhumane, crime-infested, and dysfunctional, highly secular societies are healthier, safer, greener, less violent, and more democratic and egalitarian than highly religious ones.

SOCIETY WITHOUT GOD, SECOND EDITION provides a rich portrait of life in a secular society, exploring how a culture without faith copes with death, grapples with the meaning of life, and remains content through everyday ups and downs. This updated edition incorporates new data from recent studies, updated statistics, and a revised Introduction, as well as framing around the now more highly developed field of secular studies. It addresses the dramatic surge of irreligion in the United States and the rise of the "nones," and adds data on societal health in specific US states, along with fascinating context regarding which are the most religious and which the most secular.

Review

"Zuckerman has been at the forefront of the growing field of Secular Studies for the best part of two decades. From *Society Without God*, it's easy to see why: beautifully written and engaging, drawing on both deep scholarship and an insightful mind. This is classic Zuckerman." -- Stephen Bullivant, Professor of Theology and the Sociology of Religion, St Mary's University, UK

Sociologist Zuckerman spent a year in Scandinavia seeking to understand how Denmark and Sweden became probably the least religious countries in the world, and possibly in the history of the world. While many people, especially Christian conservatives, argue that godless societies devolve into lawlessness and immorality, Denmark and Sweden enjoy strong economies, low crime rates, high standards of living and social equality. Zuckerman interviewed 150 Danes and Swedes, and extended transcripts from some of those interviews provide the book's most interesting and revealing moments. What emerges is a portrait of a people unconcerned and even incurious about questions of faith, God and life's meaning. Zuckerman ventures to answer why Scandinavians remain irreligious—e.g., the religious monopoly of state-subsidized churches, the preponderance of working women and the security of a stable society—but academics may find this discussion a tad thin. Zuckerman also fails to answer the question of contentment his subtitle speaks to. Still, for those interested in the burgeoning field of secular studies—or for those curious about a world much different from the devout U.S.—this book will offer some compelling reading. *(Oct.)*

"Puts to rest the belief that you need God in order to be a moral person, that irreligious societies are wracked by social problems, and that godless people are unhappy and unmoored. . . . In the case of Scandinavia: God may be dead, but Swedes and Danes lead rich, full lives. *Society Without God* is a colorful, provocative book that makes an original contribution to debates about atheism and religiosity. Ideal for classroom use, it will get students thinking about their own lives and choices." -Arlene

Stein,author of *Shameless: Sexual Dissidence in American Culture*

"For those interested in the burgeoning field of secular studies' or for those curious about a world much different from the devout U.S.—this book will offer some compelling reading." -*Publishers Weekly*

"**SOCIETY WITHOUT GOD, SECOND EDITION** succeeds in documenting how the conditions of a liberal social welfare state promote contentment." -*Choice*

"*Society without God* is both a sociological analysis of irreligion and Zuckerman's apologia *pro vita sua*. He wants us to know that, contrary to the deeply held beliefs of some Americans, a society without god can be a good society and an irreligious person can be a moral person, too. To his credit, Zuckerman provides enough nuance and detail to allow a skeptic like me to see what Peter Berger called 'signals of transcendence' in the society without god he portrays. Along with the volume's engaging writing style, this makes it ideal for classroom use. I know my students will enjoy reading and discussing *Society without God*." -David Yamane,author of *The Catholic Church in State Politics*

"His reporting of previously published material is invaluable to persons not previously familiar with such information." -*Humanism Ireland*
"Most Americans are convinced that faith in God is the foundation of civil society. *Society Without God* reveals this to be nothing more than a well-subscribed, and strangely American, delusion. Even atheists living in the United States will be astonished to discover how unencumbered by religion most Danes and Swedes currently are. This glimpse of an alternate, secular reality is at once humbling and profoundly inspiring— and it comes not a moment too soon. Zuckerman's research is truly indispensable." -Sam Harris,author of the *New York Times*

"*Society Without God*" offers a unique perspective on the active debate regarding the necessity of religion . . . By turning to one of the most secular societies in the world, Scandanavia, Phil Zuckerman offers an empirically grounded account of a successful society where people are happy and content and help their neighbors without believing in God. The book is fluently written and highly illuminating. It offers an accessible entry to important questions in the study of religion and secularism." -Michael Pagis,Journal of the American Academy of Religion

"Despite this book's weighty topic, with its conversational writing style, Society Without God is amazingly readable, even fun. It presents rigorous arguments that are deceptively simple to understand, but that are, when you think about them more deeply, quite transformative."-*PopMatters*

"[Zuckerman] tells of a magical land where life expectancy is high and infant mortality low, where wealth is spread and genders live in equity, where happy, fish-fed citizens score high in every quality-of-life index: economic competitiveness, healthcare, environmental protection, lack of corruption, educational investment, technological literacy . . . well, you get the idea. Zuckerman (who has explored the sociology of religion in two previous books) has managed to show what nonbelief looks like when it's 'normal, regular, mainstream, common.' And he's gone at least partway to proving the central thesis of his book:

‘Religious faith—while admittedly widespread—is not natural or innate to the human condition. Nor is religion a necessary ingredient for a healthy, peaceful, prosperous, and . . . deeply good society. -Louis Bayard,Salon.com

“In an anecdotal and eminently readable manner, Zuckerman offers a novel idea within the study of religious sociology.” -*Library Journal*

CONTENTS

It was the presidential election of George W. Bush, back in 2004, and then a statistical question posed to me about atheists that provided the inital seeds that would blossom into the writing of this book. Although Bush's presidency and statistics on atheists may have very little to do with each other, they became closely connected in my mind and played their part in propelling me to move to Denmark for over a year to conduct research on secular culture in Scandinavia.

Let's start with George W. Bush's election. It was the first week of November 2004, and Bush had just won a second term as president, beating the Democratic nominee, John Kerry, by two percentage points. The day after the election, I was sitting in my car, wedged between countless other cars, on a smoggy and crowded freeway in Southern California, *listening* to news radio. All the voices that day—from the progressive pundits on NPR to the right-wing personalities on the AM dial—were Bering their analyses of why Bush had won, and a main thesis put forth by all of them was that Bush's victory had been strongly linked to his ability to galvanize the support of "values voters," that is, those religious Americans out there compelled by "moral" issues. For example, in exit polls taken on the day of voting, one national survey found that people cited "moral values" as the issue that had mattered most to them in selecting their choice of candidate.' And many observers noted that Bush's victory had been bolstered by the fact that proposed legislation banning gay marriage had been placed on the ballots in eleven states; according to a *New York Times* article from November 4, 2004, these numerous anti-gay-marriage ballot measures "appear to have acted like magnets for thousands of socially conservative voters in rural

and suburban communities who might not otherwise have voted," and "in tight races, those voters . . . may have tipped the balance" for the Bush ticket.

For weeks, various versions of this thesis were repeated, with pundits continually citing the significance of people of faith—mostly evangelicals—as being motivated by their "morals" and "values" in accounting for Bush's successful reelection.

But for me, the fact that morals and values would be of motivational importance for people when voting for a president didn't seem all that surprising. After all, doesn't everyone decide how to vote on the basis of their morals and values? Of course.

What was surprising to me, however, was what those Bush-voter "values" and "morals" specifically consisted of: antipathy toward gay marriage and opposition to abortion. I found it quite noteworthy that being against gay marriage and antiabortion were positions so readily spun by the political observers—and uncritically characterized by the news media—as "moral," with those who harbored such views being unanimously labeled as "values voters:'

Of course, it could be argued that opposing gay marriage is moral because it is in accordance with certain people's deeply held beliefs regarding their God's presumed disapproval of homosexuality. And many people believe that opposing abortion is moral because it expresses lifeaffirming care for potential life and concern for the well-being of zygotes, embryos, and fetuses. However, support for both gay marriage and abortion can also be framed in equally moral terms. Many people argue, for instance, that it is moral to support gay marriage because such a position propels fairness and equality, and gay marriage allows people who love each other to be legally wed, with all the rights, privileges, and symbolic stature that goes with such a union. As for abortion, many people believe that it is moral to support its legality because it allows women to control their own bodies, prevents unsafe, back-alley abortions that can result in injury or death, and protects women whose lives might be in danger due to complications during pregnancy. And yet, despite both sides of the gay-marriage and abortion issues being able to couch their positions in terms of morals and values, it was only the oppositional side that was dubbed "moral." It was only those who voted against gay marriage and were against abortion who were bequeathed with the mantle of "values voters."

But again, why? I think it has something to do with Americans' deeply entrenched association of morality with Christianity specifically and religion in general. In the United States, almost any value steeped in religious dogma is automatically seen as moral, whereas any value steeped **in** secular, nontheistic ethics is not granted such a vaunted status. And **this** has something to do with Americans' discomfort with a godless w**orldview, which** many see as inherently destructive and uncivil.

Such matters pounded in my head and heart in those postelection November days of 2004. And then, out of the blue, I was asked to find **out** how many atheists there are in the world.

Early into Bush's second term, I received an email from the late Michael Martin, who was then a professor of philosophy at Boston University. The author of many books on religion and atheism, Martin was putting together a new edited volume, **THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ATHEISM** *(2007).* It would be a comprehensive resource, with chapters covering various aspects of atheism: its meaning and philosophical justifications; the history of atheism; atheism's relation to naturalism, ethics, evolution,

feminism, and so forth. And Martin also wanted to include **a** chapter on the sociology of atheism. Specifically, he wanted a chapter **that** presented data on just how many atheists there are in the world, by country. And that's what he was hoping I would write. I accepted the invitation, not only out of personal interest but also because I assumed such statistical information would be readily available and easy to find.

I was wrong. No one had ever attempted to estimate the number of atheists in the world—and for good reason: reliable data on how many people lack a belief in God is hard to generate. First off, you need a lot of funding to conduct national or international surveys—composed of random, representative samples—that will render generalizable information about large populations. Second, even if you can conduct such surveys, response rates are notoriously low; most people, when asked to respond to a survey, don't. And when only a small percentage of a given population responds to a survey, their responses cannot be generalized. Third, many societies are nondemocratic, run by secular despots who are antireligious (such as Vietnam) or religious regimes that are antisecular (such as Saudi Arabia). In such oppressive societies, being religious or nonreligious can have seriously dangerous ramifications. So, just as religious people living under secular dictatorships will be reluctant to admit to their belief in God, so too will atheists living under religious dictatorships be reluctant to admit to their atheism. Fourth, even in open, democratic societies without any threat of government reprisal, many individuals often feel that it is necessary to say that they are religious or that they do believe in God, simply because such a response is socially desirable or culturally appropriate, with atheism often being a highly stigmatized identity.' Finally, terminology in national or international surveys can be an intrinsic problem; definitions of specific words seldom translate well cross-culturally, with terms such as "faith," "religious," "God," or even "atheist" having different meanings in different cultures, making cross-national comparisons, or overall global assessments, tricky.

However, rather than let the foregoing limitations discourage me, I went ahead and did the best I could, searching for whatever existing studies and published data I could find that would at least provide a rough estimate of the number of atheists worldwide. After all, in my field of expertise—the social sciences—we must work with whatever data we can muster in our ongoing attempt to make some sense of human existence, rather than just throw up our hands in defeat in the face of ever-present methodological stumbling blocks and evidence-gathering limitations.

Thus, in preparation to write the chapter for Martin's new volume, I spent about six months getting my hands on any and every contemporary national and international survey I could find that included any questions on belief in God. And from the various responses contained within that gathered heap of studies, I estimated that there were approximately somewhere between 505 million and 749 million nonbelievers in God in the world in the early 2000S.[5] It was a crude estimate, to be sure, and has since been greatly improved and updated by the sociologists Ariela Keysar and Juhem Navarro-Rivera, who, in 2013, put the global total of atheists more accurately at somewhere between 450 million and 500 million, constituting approximately 7 percent of the world's population.'

But what stood out for me in researching and writing that initial chapter was observing which specific countries around the world had the lowest levels of religious belief and behavior.

Enter Denmark and Sweden.

In survey after survey, I found that the people of Denmark and Sweden—in comparison with most other countries—exhibited some , of the lowest levels of belief in God, belief in heaven and hell, belief in the existence of sin, belief in life after death, and belief in the biblical miracles of Jesus. They also had among the lowest levels of weekly and monthly church attendance in the world. Thus, they seemed to be among the most secular societies on Earth—and not because some oppressive, atheist dictatorship persecuted religious people and made faith and worship illegal, as was the case in the former USSR, but because contemporary Danes and Swedes, on their own volition, in an open and free society, just didn't care all that much about God or church anymore.

Now, what does a high degree of secularity in Denmark and Sweden have to do with the presidential election of George W. Bush and all of the support he got from those religious "values voters" with moral concerns?

In my mind, it worked like this: having backpacked through Denmark and Sweden several times in my late teens and early 20S and having an aunt and cousin living in Copenhagen and having taken several classes on Scandinavia while an undergraduate at the University of Oregon, I knew that the nations of Denmark and Sweden were not only among the most peaceful and prosperous in the world and among the most egalitarian and just, as well as the happiest and most content—but also among the most moral societies in the world: they had among the lowest rates of murder and violent crime and the lowest levels of corruption in government and business, along with excellent schools, child care, elder care, and health care.

And yet they were among the least religious democracies out there.

This, I thought, was something that my fellow Americans needed to know. Here were well-functioning, safe, and productive countries that were well-functioning, safe, productive, prosperous, and deeply humane without much in the way of religious faith or church attendance. And thus, while religion can often contribute to societal well-being, it clearly isn't necessary or required for such well-being. Societies in which God has been relegated to the margins can and do thrive and prosper—and not just economically but morally as well. Such information, I felt, should cause Americans to rethink the taken-for-granted connection between religion and morality.

While many of those "values voters" who supported George W Bush tend to think of atheists as immoral—and also to associate secularism with the breakdown of civil society—the existence of well-functioning, ethical, and healthy societies like Denmark and Sweden, with highly secular populations that are quite content and secure, provides strong counterexamples to such views. I wanted to flush this matter out in a sociologically rigorous fashion.

Thus, my desire to explore and expose a highly secular society that was also moral and humane was a major motivation for writing this book. But it wasn't the only one. I also wanted to dig beneath the survey data that I had found and uncover the nuances, contours, and meanings of secular culture in Scandinavia. How do men and women who live their lives without much in the way of religious faith or involvement do it, actually? For example, how do they find meaning in life? How do they deal with death? And what are their personal thoughts and opinions about God and religion? And what might an in-depth,

ethnographic account of life in a highly secular society tell us about religion and secularization in the United States?

Such were the driving questions that sustained my initial research in Scandinavia, conducted over the course of 14 months in 2005 and 2006, published in the original edition of this book in 2008 and now revised, expanded, and updated in this new edition. While some aspects of religion and secularization have remained the same in Scandinavia since 2008, others have changed. And in the United States, unprecedented levels of secularization—popularly typified by the so-called rise of the Nones—have taken almost everyone by surprise. Additionally, a new discipline of Secular Studies has arrived on the scene, with pioneering social scientific research having been published since 2008 that directly looks at secular people and secular culture. Insights from and references to this new research, as well as reflections on and discussions of what has changed and what has stayed the same with regard to religiosity and secularity, both in Scandinavia and in the United States, are provided in the pages ahead.
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How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others by Tanya Marie Luhrmann [Princeton University Press, 9780691164465]

The hard work required to make God real, how it changes the people who do it, and why it helps explain the enduring power of faith

How do gods and spirits come to feel vividly real to people—as if they were standing right next to them? Humans tend to see supernatural agents everywhere, as the cognitive science of religion has shown. But it isn't easy to maintain a sense that there are invisible spirits who care about you. In *How God Becomes Real*, acclaimed anthropologist and scholar of religion T. M. Luhrmann argues that people must work incredibly hard to make gods real and that this effort—by changing the people who do it and giving them the benefits they seek from invisible others—helps to explain the enduring power of faith.

Drawing on ethnographic studies of evangelical Christians, pagans, magicians, Zoroastrians, Black Catholics, Santeria initiates, and newly orthodox Jews, Luhrmann notes that none of these people behave as if gods and spirits are simply there. Rather, these worshippers make strenuous efforts to create a world in which invisible others matter and can become intensely present and real. The faithful accomplish this through detailed stories, absorption, the cultivation of inner senses, belief in a porous mind, strong sensory experiences, prayer, and other practices. Along the way, Luhrmann shows why faith is harder than belief, why prayer is a metacognitive activity like therapy, why becoming religious is like getting engrossed in a book, and much more.

A fascinating account of why religious practices are more powerful than religious beliefs, **How God Becomes Real** suggests that faith is resilient not because it provides intuitions about gods and spirits—but because it changes the faithful in profound ways.

Review

"Luhrmann has brilliantly illuminated the magical attunement that constitutes a great deal of evangelical charismatic belief."**---James Wood, *New Yorker***

"A generous and erudite study of how people believe." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"One of The New York Times' Three Books That Gaze Upward to Heaven and Inward to the Heart"

"Drawing voraciously on her own and others' research into faiths as far-flung as Messianic Judaism, the Goddess movement, Indigenous spirituality and Santeria, Luhrmann seeks to map how modern believers make their gods real."**---Ariel Sabar, *New York Times***

Review

"T. M. Luhrmann has a rare gift and this book is a rare achievement—beautifully accessible, intellectually humble, genuinely objective."**—Mark Noll, author of *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada***

"This is a brave, subtle book. Luhrmann draws on her rich career of fieldwork in a range of religious communities around the world to reveal the basic scaffolding of spiritual experience—the combination of habits, practices, relationships, sensations, and stories that enable humans to experience God as real. She delves into the differences across faiths and cultures while also offering a bold, persuasive case for all we share in common."**—Molly Worthen, author of *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism***

"**HOW GOD BECOMES REAL** is bold, thought-provoking, and very accessible."**—Amira Mittermaier, author of *Giving to God: Islamic Charity in Revolutionary Times***

"This is a brilliant book that tackles an issue of great importance: How do our minds apprehend religion, how do we work to fashion our religious ideas and emotions, and how does that work change us? **HOW GOD BECOMES REAL** is profound—and also a great read."**—Pascal Boyer, author of *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought***

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We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. —Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windemere's Fan*

When I ponder why faith endures, I am struck by how little our theories consider two straightforward features of religion. First, religion is a practice in which people go to effort to make contact with an invisible other. Second, people who are religious want change. They want to feel differently than they do. Yet instead of exploring these features, most theories of religion begin by treating belief in an invisible other both as taken for granted and as a cognitive mistake. They assume that a prayer for rain is actually a prayer for rain and that it fails. Then these theories go on to explain why apparently foolish beliefs can be held by sensible people. People are afraid of aloneness and so project a parent (Freud); the experience of the social is so powerful that people have symbolized it as God (Durkheim); people dream and have odd experiences that seem evidence of something supernatural (Tylor, James); people have evolved an attributional style such that when they think quickly and automatically they intuit the presence of an invisible other (Boyer, Barrett); translations of nature stories have slipped and stumbled so much over the course of time that a "disease of language" led to mythologies about otherworldly beings (Muller). These theories presume that belief is direct and unproblematic—that in most cultures, people simply take spirit and the supernatural to be there.

That doesn't make sense. Gods and spirits cannot be seen. You cannot shake their hands, look them in the eye, or hear their voice when they speak. It seems odd to assume that people just take for granted that they are present. Moreover, people sometimes have elaborate ideas about what these invisible beings will deliver to them, and these promises often fall short. In many cases, gods are supposed to know one's thoughts and determine one's fate, and in many cases they promise justice and rewards to those who worship them. Yet even for the faithful, life can sometimes feel arbitrary and unfair. We should not assume that it is easy to feel that such powerful, benevolent, invisible beings are simply available and responsive.

If we start not with a presumption of belief, but with the question of whether the effort people invest in their faith helps them to feel that their gods and spirits are real, we are forced to focus on what people do when they worship gods and spirits, and on how those practices themselves might affect those who engage in them. Then we can ask whether the practices themselves help to make the beliefs compelling. And once we allow ourselves to ask whether people everywhere need to persuade themselves that their gods are real, religious rituals suddenly make more sense. After all, if spirits are believed to be unproblematically present—simply there, responsive and available—why do you need an all-night drumming ceremony to call them forth? If God is always present and aware, why does anyone need to pray?

I argue here that the puzzle of religion is not the problem of false belief, but the question of how gods and spirits become and remain real to people and what this real-making does for humans. This is not a claim that gods are not real or that people who are religious feel doubt. Many people of faith never express doubt; they talk as if it were obvious that their gods are real. Yet they go to great lengths in their worship. They build grand cathedrals at vast cost in labor, time, and money. They spend days, even weeks, preparing for rituals, assembling food, building ritual sites, and gathering participants. They create

theatrical effects in sacred spaces—the dim lighting in temples, the elaborate staging in evangelical megachurches—that enhance a sense of otherness but are not commanded in the sacred texts. They fast. They wear special clothes. They chant for hours. They set out to pray without ceasing.

Of course, one might say: they believe, and so they build the cathedrals. I am asking what we might learn if we shift our focus: if, rather than presuming that people worship because they believe, we ask instead whether people believe because they worship. I suggest that prayer and ritual and worship help people to shift from knowing in the abstract that the invisible other is real to feeling that gods and spirits are present in the moment, aware and willing to respond. I will call this "real-making," and I think that the satisfactions of its process explain—in part—why faiths endure.

By "real-making," I mean that the task for a person of faith is to believe not just that gods and spirits are there in some abstract way, like dark energy, but that these gods and spirits matter in the here and now. I mean not just that you know that they are real, the way you know that the floor is real (or would, if you paused to think about it), but that they feel real the way your mother's love feels real. I mean that people of faith come to feel inwardly and intimately that gods or spirits are involved with them. For humans to sustain their involvement with entities who are invisible and matter in a good way to their lives, I suggest that a god must be made real again and again against the evident features of an obdurate world. Humans must somehow be brought to a point from which the altar becomes more than gilded wood, so that the icon's eyes look back at them, ablaze.

This book describes some of the ways through which invisible others come to feel real to humans. I focus my anthropological attention on the mind, or on inner awareness, because knowing the unseen involves the imagination: the human ability to conceive of that which is not available to the senses. As Maurice Bloch (2008) reminds us, the capacity to imagine makes religion possible. Much of what I describe involves microprocesses of attention, ways of using the mind so that the invisible other can be grasped—sometimes more vividly, sometimes more indirectly, but always in a way that enables the person of faith to hold on to the possibility of presence. I call these acts of real-making "kindling," because they are small events, like the twigs and tinder from which a great fire can be lit, that shape where and how the fire burns. The microprocesses of attending—socially shaped, locally specific—kindle divine presence for a person of faith by using the mind to shift attention from the world as it is to the world as it should be, as understood within that faith. I will argue that the kindling processes through which invisible others come to feel real changes people and that the change becomes a powerful motivation for their faith.

This book lays out a set of hypotheses that emerged from my previous ethnographic work with evangelical Christians. I have explored many other faiths—British magic, American Santeria, Indian Zoroastrianism, and others. It was, however, in the evangelical tradition that I saw a process of real-making that I set out to understand in depth. Much of what I saw there occurs in other religions. Much is different, of course.

But the problem that spirits are invisible is common to many social worlds. Here I ask whether the basic processes I saw at work in the religions I know may illuminate something about religion in other social worlds.

The basic claim is this: *that god or spirit—the invisible other—must be made real for people, and that this real-making changes those who do it.* When I look at the social practices that surround what we call religion, I see a set of behaviors that change a practitioner's felt sense of what is real. These behaviors both enable what is unseen to feel more present and alter the person who performs them.

Each chapter of *How God Becomes Real* lays out a step in the argument—a proposition, or a hypothesis. Each chapter leaves open how widely the hypothesis can be generalized to other religions and other social worlds. Readers will disagree with each other. No one has ever settled the question of what counts as religion, nor whether gods are necessarily invisible, nor whether a football fanatic is engaged in the same kind of activity as a devout Catholic. There is also the problem of whether real-making is more important for the "big gods" (as Ara Norenzayan [2013] describes them) who are powerful, omniscient, and moral, than for the "little gods" who hang around particular trees or rivers and whose powers are limited. But I do think that the practices I describe here are common to many, many religions, and that these practices explain something about how unseen and invisible others come to be experienced as present.

And so the book is an invitation—a provocation, as we say these days. It lays out some hypotheses and asks you, the reader, how much of what we call religion they explain. Here is a list of these main hypotheses. It is a roadmap to the chapters of this book.

- First: *People don't (easily) have faith in gods and spirits.* People do not, in fact, behave as if gods and spirits are real in the way that everyday objects are real. The great realization of the cognitive science of religion is that people quickly, easily, and automatically generate ideas about agents they can't see when they are scared or startled. But to have a sustained commitment to the reality of invisible agents, the deeply held feeling that gods and spirits are real in a way that matters, someone must interpret the world through a special way of thinking, expecting, and remembering. I will call this a faith frame. That faith frame coexists alongside the ordinary ways people make sense of the world, and sometimes contradicts them. The priest says, *this is my body,* but it looks like a dry cracker. The sermon insists, *my God can do anything,* but God didn't stop the divorce. And so faith is hard—particularly when an invisible other is supposed to love you, care for you, and keep you safe.
- Second: *Detailed stories help to make gods and spirits feel real.* Detailed stories make the faith frame more accessible and help people to experience invisible others as more real. The work of making an invisible other feel present begins with a good story, and good stories are compelling because they have rich and specific detail. Good, detailed stories—vividly imagined worlds—enable suspended disbelief. They also introduce invisible others as characters who interact with people, and they set out ways to talk with these others and to experience them as talking back.
- Third: *Talent and training matter.* What people do and what they bring to what they do affect the way they experience gods and spirits. People who are able to become absorbed in what they imagine are more likely to have powerful experiences of an invisible other. Practice also helps. People who practice being absorbed in what they imagine during prayer or ritual are also more likely to have such experiences. This absorption blurs the boundary between the inner world and the outer world, which makes it easier for people to turn to a faith frame to make sense of the world and to experience invisible others as present in a way they feel with their senses.

- Fourth: *The way people think about their minds also matters.* The intimate evidence for gods and spirits often comes from a domain felt to be in between the mind and the world, from the space betwixt a person's inner awareness and the sensible world—the thought that does not feel like yours, the voice that feels whispered on the wind, the person who feels there and yet beyond the reach of sight. How people in a particular social world represent the mind itself—how they map the human terrain of thinking, feeling, intending, and desiring into a cultural model—shapes the way they attend to these odd moments so that the moments feel more or less sensory, more or less external, more or less real, more or less like evidence of gods and spirits.
- Fifth: *The sense of response is "kindled."* A person's sense of an invisible other's presence is not only kindled from the tinder of these small practices of attention, but kindled in a particular way. The fire reignites more easily, but also in more specific ways. The chapter lays out a theory of what kindles spiritual presence and how. These moments when someone hears a god, sees a spirit, or feels the presence of the dead are important because they become evidence, for the person of faith, that does not rely on the testimony of others. Such moments make it easier to reach for a faith frame to make sense of the world.
- Sixth: *Prayer practice changes the way people attend to their thoughts.* Prayer is a specific way of using a faith frame, and it changes people because it changes the way they attend to their own awareness, their inner worlds. Prayer is an act of thinking about thinking. Prayer shifts the way those who pray attend to their own thoughts in much the same way that cognitive behavioral therapists teach their clients to alter the attention they pay to theirs. Prayer is the first extended example of how real-making changes people.
- Seventh: *People create relationships with gods and spirits.* This is the second extended example of how real-making changes people. As people practice, as the invisible other becomes more real to them, people remake themselves in relationship with that other. These relationships can be intensely intimate and drenched in feeling—something not quite captured by the word "belief." When real-making works, it makes that god real in a particular way, and people create particular relationships with that god that have in some ways the back-and-forth qualities that all social relationships do. That now-real god will change what feels real to people in other ways, sometimes in ways dramatically different from those in other faiths who have relationships with different gods. These relationships anchor the faith frame in the ordinary world and make it matter.

This is not an atheist's book. It is not a believer's book. It is an anthropologist's book and a work of the anthropology of mind, that filter through which humans become aware of their world. Nothing I say here speaks for or against the genuine reality of gods and spirits. What anthropologists can see is the human side of the relationship with the invisible other. The complexity and ambiguity of that relationship are as apparent to the person of faith as they are to the skeptic. We all of us see through a glass darkly, and none of us have direct access to the Real...

***

Both on a cellular level and in the brain, the invisible other is experienced as a social relationship. That is, we know that the nature of one's relationship with God affects immune function and loneliness, and we know that the act of talking with God looks (from the point of view of an fMRI machine) like talking

with a friend. Moreover, people certainly talk as if they have social relationships with their gods. They talk about speaking with their gods, being teased, comforted, encouraged, chastised, and so forth.

In 1953, D. W. Winnicott invented the term "transitional object" to capture that which was not quite part of a child's body but not part of external reality, neither separate from the self nor identical to the self, "an area of experiencing to which inner reality and external life both contribute" (1953: 90). He argued that this in-between realness enabled children to use toys to substitute for their mothers in their absence, and to feel that love emanated from toys despite their awareness that the bear is not "really" alive. Winnicott also argued that this was the psychic domain from which creativity, art, and religion were born—that gods, in effect, worked the way teddy bears did.

Self-psychologists have a name for the mental construct this trust creates in the mind: a "self-object." This is a term coined by the Chicago analyst Heinz Kohut (1971), who argued that what made intensive long-term psychotherapy effective was that patients learned to experience the empathic therapist as an internal "object" that was loving, caring, and concerned with what was best for them. A patient who was helped by therapy was able to act and think and feel as if always aware of that therapist's loving concern, as if the patient became the person created within that responsive, attentive relationship. From this perspective, the ideal self-object is a cross between a coach and a teddy bear, always available, never intrusive, whose emotional presence keeps hope alive and self-doubt at bay.

In her study of a Mexican convent, Rebecca Lester (2005) described a trajectory through which religious practice might create God as a soothing self-object, that wise internal teddy bear coach. She set out a seven-stage process through which postulants—women (really, girls) who have not professed their vows—travel across the course of a year if they come to experience their vocation as rightly chosen. The seven-stage process is not simply a movement toward the acceptance of a vocation but also a process of coming to have a relationship with God.

1. *Brokenness:* the postulant acknowledges a sense of discomfort as a call from God to become a nun.
2. *Belonging:* the postulant comes to feel socially integrated within the convent.
3. *Containment:* the postulant comes to experience her body as complete within and contained within the convent walls.
4. *Regimentation:* the postulant learns to enact certain practices that she experiences as remaking her rebellious, desiring human body into one more suitable for God.
5. *Internal critique:* the postulant chooses to subject herself to intense self-scrutiny, and identifies her faults as the source of the broken relationship with God.
6. *Surrender:* the postulant chooses to turn herself, faults and all, over to God.
7. *Recollection:* the postulant comes to experience herself as truly present with God.

The sequence depends first and foremost on "brokenness." The postulant deliberately makes herself feel badly, and again and again practices replacing that feeling with a sense of being in relationship with a loving God. See also Johanna Richlin (2019) on the way God works as a therapeutic presence for Brazilian immigrants in the United States, and Thomas Csordas, *The Sacred Self*

Meanwhile, on the way presence can be understood as an interaction, see a very interesting essay by Cordelia Erickson-Davis and Anna Corwin (2020) and work by Herbert Clark, *Using Language,* where he argues that interaction generates presence.

Having said that anthropologists tend to treat God as a belief and to not write ethnographies about the way God works as a relationship, it is with pleasure that I report that Amira Mittermaier is writing an ethnography of God. <>

Apperception and Self-Consciousness in Kant and German Idealism by Dennis Schulting [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350151390]

In **Apperception and Self-Consciousness in Kant and German Idealism**, Dennis Schulting examines the themes of reflexivity, self-consciousness, representation and apperception in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and German Idealism more widely. Central to Schulting's argument is the claim that all of human experience is irreversibly self-referential and that this is part of a self-reflexivity, or what philosophers call transcendental apperception, a Kantian insight that was first apparent in the work of Christian Wolff and came to inform all of German Idealism.

In a rigorous text suitable for students of German philosophy and upper-level students on metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, and aesthetics courses, the author establishes the historical roots of Kant's thought and traces it through to his immediate successors Karl Leonhard Reinhold, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. He specifically examines the cognitive role of self-consciousness and its relation to idealism and places it in a clear and coherent history of rationalist philosophy.

Review

"In this volume Dennis Schulting goes beyond his earlier close studies of Kant's Transcendental Deduction by explaining in detail how Kant's critical conception of self-consciousness plays a central and positive role in the philosophies of Reinhold, Fichte, and Hegel. A distinctive feature of the work is its extensive attention to recent secondary literature on this topic, as well as its nuanced articulation and defense of a systematic position on German Idealism that develops many related themes emphasized by scholars such as Robert Pippin." *—Karl Ameriks, McMahon-Hank Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, University of Notre Dame, USA*

"This highly engaging study provides a subtle and intelligent interpretation of Kant's concept of transcendental apperception. It sheds welcome light on Kant's significant debt to Leibniz and Wolff and highlights Kant's profound influence on his successors, Reinhold, Fichte and Hegel. This is an eminently readable and thought-provoking study." *—Stephen Houlgate, Professor of Philosophy, University of Warwick, UK*

Ineliminable Reflexive Human Experience

When I experience a particular object that is in front of me, the screen of the laptop on which I am currently typing these words, say, I can justifiably assert that *I* am the one experiencing the screen, or more precisely, the window in which I type those words. I need not be explicitly aware of my typing words on the keyboard and seeing them appear on the screen—it would be impractical if I were constantly aware of my typing and the letters appearing in the window as I type. But I must at least be able to be explicitly aware of my so typing and seeing the words appear on the screen. That is, I must be able to think of myself as being engaged in the activity of typing and reading. This reminds us of the well-known and oft-cited phrase at the start of the actual argument for the deduction of the categories of experience in the B-Deduction of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* namely that 'the *I think* must *be able* to accompany all my representations' . This phrase has often been misinterpreted as to its scope' but what is at any rate clear is that it expresses Kant's principle of transcendental apperception, which basically says that all my representations ... must stand under the condition under which alone I can ascribe them to the identical self as my representations, and thus can grasp them together, as synthetically combined in an apperception, through the general expression *I think.*

This is a trivially true, 'analytical proposition' (B135): it does not say that I must grasp all representations that are had (those which occur in someone's mind) as my representations, but rather it says that I can say of those representations occurring in someone's mind that they are mine only under a certain condition under which these representations share an identical element which makes them mine in the strict sense (of being all together my representations). To put this differently, any set of representations that I have, such as a representation of the keyboard of my laptop, a representation of the white window or interface of my word processor, or a representation of the various words that appear in the window as I type, is not just a set of consecutive representations occurring during a specific time interval, but they are representations that I *take to* be mine just in case I apprehend them together to indicate the activity of typewriting that I am undertaking. What is conspicuous about this way of looking at representing is that a kind of self-awareness of one's representing is always in principle involved in the first-order representing that is going on. Note that I say 'in principle. Representations *need* not be apprehended in such a way that I always apprehend them together by `ascrib[ing] them to the identical

self as my representations'; representations could just be varyingly prompted over time without myself noticing that they constitute a unitary representation of 'all *my* representations' together. For example, I could just, while looking up from my screen, find myself staring into the distance, momentarily lost for words; that is, more precisely, I could just *be* staring. In that case, various representational goings-on—catching a glimpse of the clear sky outside, detecting the smell of the coffee I had made earlier etc.—occur in my mind without them having a unitary focal point, that is, without them sharing the mark of an identical self to which I would necessarily ascribe them if they were to have that unitary focal point. This implies that representations being represented would not constitute a necessary unitary representation of 'all my representations' together if I didn't notice it; the noticing and the necessary unity among my representations hang together.

What is important here is to realize that Kant is not making a simple claim as to the fact that all representations necessarily share an identical representing 'T', an identical self, just in virtue of *being* representations. Nor, even, does he claim that, while not all representations need *actually* share the same self, they nonetheless necessarily *entail* sharing the same self; in other words, that representations *could not fail* to be accompanied by a same self at least at some point in time, or that they have a necessary disposition to being accompanied by a same self. The principle of apperception is not a psychological principle that stipulates the necessary conditions under which one can have representations *simpliciter.* The relevance of Kant's point lies rather in the fact that in order to have a unitary representation of some object or objective event, a representation that is *objectively* valid, for it to be something for one, the representations that make up this unitary representation must stand under a condition of them belonging together necessarily, and this condition is precisely the condition of ascribing them to an identical self that takes these representations together, a universal criterion, in metaphysical studies up until Kant's times, in virtue of which the objective validity or truth of metaphysical claims can be assessed. Philosophers have erected whole systems of thought dealing with the conceptual analysis of all kinds of metaphysical issues and beliefs, but they failed first to properly analyse the very capacity to understand by means of which such claims are being made (A65/B90). Only through such an analysis can a pure criterion of understanding be found in virtue of which the validity of metaphysical claims can be appraised.

By instead bringing the capacity to understand itself into the focus of philosophical analysis, Kant moves metaphysics away from a direct preoccupation with the standard metaphysical topics towards a more formal approach. The result of this is an abandonment of a realist ontology, for which the concepts analysed map being itself, in favour of what Kant comes to call transcendental idealism—but in the *Prolegomena,* after being unfavourably compared to Berkeleyan idealism, he prefers to call it a 'formal' idealism (Prol, AA 4:375). Though it is often denied by commentators, there is a direct connection between, on the one hand, Kant's formal concerns with the objective validity of knowledge claims, as a whole and not just those aspects that concern our human sensibility—that is, his *epistemology—and,* on the other hand, his doctrine of idealism, namely the doctrine that the objects of our knowledge are in fact nothing but representations, and not things outside these representations, namely, not things in themselves—that is, his *metaphysics* strictly speaking. *The Copernican hypothesis thus directly entails transcendental idealism.* This is because Kant's Critical theory of knowledge is not a standard theory of knowledge but a theory of knowledge that is as much a metaphysical investigation into the very categories that determine objects *as* objects. Kant aims to show that the categories are constitutive of

the very objectivity of objects, but since the categories are in fact nothing but the functions of our representations, more specifically, the functions of our judging, objects are therefore nothing but functions of our judging too, that is, insofar as their objectivity is concerned. These objects Kant calls appearances. Inasmuch as the objects are functions of our judging, the objects of our knowledge or cognition are limited to the appearances of things in themselves. Transcendental idealism is *both* an epistemology and a metaphysics, but at the same time it is not a theory about how things are in themselves, that is, an old-style ontology.

The central theme of this book is the inseparable connection between representation, idealism, objectivity and self-consciousness, whereby the latter, the representing *sell,* is the pivot around which everything else turns. This arguably holds even more so for the post-Kantians —but I argue, this is not despite Kant, but rather because of their Kantian heritage. Apperception, as developed by Kant, fundamentally and centrally informs not just Kant's thought but *mutatis mutandis* also that of his followers Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. The central thesis of this book is that all of them should be seen as Kantians in the systematic sense of being centred on the principle of transcendental apperception, and that absent an understanding of the centrality of apperception their philosophical systems cannot be really understood.

Karl Leonard Reinhold (1757-1823) argues that what we represent of things is only the represented as the direct objects of the representing consciousness, literally nothing about how the things are in themselves. Of all the post-Kantians, Reinhold remains closest to the spirit if not the letter of Kant, but unlike Kant he seems to base what in the Kant literature has been called the restriction thesis on a self-standing pure principle of representation. I believe Reinhold is absolutely right to emphasize the representationalism in Kant, but by seemingly basing his system on a self-standing principle of representation, rather than on an analysis of the capacity to understand, as does Kant, Reinhold thus might seem to risk making it impossible to utter true analytic statements about things in themselves such as God and the soul.

At first blush, for Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) the idealism becomes much more radical, one that dispenses entirely with the thing in itself. For Fichte and even more for Hegel, the identity that lies in the activity of the judging subject becomes an absolute identity that is no longer constrained by pure forms of sensibility that, in Kant's view, alone gives our concepts real possibility. Transcendental idealism has turned, with Hegel, into an absolute idealism that has no use for independently given intuitions (or things in themselves) as markers of real possibility. The self's knowledge of its own thinking activity is no longer bound by constraints from outside, and maps onto being itself *simpliciter—there* is an identity of sorts between the thinking self and its apperceptive activity, on the one hand, and the world of objects insofar as it can be known, on the other hand; and there is no restriction that says that we can have knowledge of appearances only, but not of things in themselves. This has often been considered a ground for dismissing absolute idealism, for while Kant's restriction thesis modestly refrains from making unwarranted existence claims, absolute idealism apparently makes intemperate metaphysical claims that it cannot not prove. But I think (and shall argue in Chapters 7-9) that especially
Hegel's conception of absolute idealism is much closer to Kant's formal idealism than most so-called metaphysical interpretations make it out to be. Hegel, in other words, builds on Kant's transcendental

Turn, rather than turning his back on it by returning in some way to a pre-Critical metaphysics, that is, by advancing an old-style metaphysics or some sort of conceptual realism in pseudo-critical form. My view is closer to Pippin's so-called a-metaphysical or non-metaphysical reading of absolute idealism than to most other current interpretations, which tend to read it in a more ontologically committed way much less beholden to a Kantian, transcendental approach.

First, in Chapter 2, I examine the central element of Kant's metaphysics which he himself highlighted in the already mentioned preface to the second edition of the *Critique,* namely its Copernican nature. The pivotal role of the subject in Kant's thought can be traced back to his so-called Copernican Turn. Kant's analogy with Copernicus's revolution in astronomy is of course often cited and discussed, but it is also often misunderstood. I claim that there are clear systemic parallels between Kant's revolution in metaphysics and the Copernican revolution in astronomy. It is commonly thought that Kant makes the Copernican analogy solely in order to point out the fact as such of a paradigm shift in philosophy. The reference to Copernican is then merely a *facon de parley,* in the sense that one should not read it as if a *systematic* parallel should be drawn between Copernicus's thoughts and Kant's. I argue that this is too historical an interpretation of the analogy. It leaves unexplained both Kant's and Copernicus's *reasons* for advancing their respective hypotheses, which brought about major changes in the conceptual schemes of philosophy and astronomy. My contention is that something much more specific, systematic is at issue, which contrary to the received understanding makes Kant's analogy in fact particularly apt. Understanding the basic facets of the Copernican revolution in general as well as the Copernican 'revolution in the way of thinking, as Kant called it, will greatly help grasp the centrality of the subject in Kant's philosophy, and why the subject as agent of thought is an ineliminable, constitutive feature of human cognition. It will also help in comprehending the specific nature of *transcendental* idealism.

In Chapters 3 to 5, I focus on the theme of transcendental apperception in Kant and his predecessors. Although the notion of transcendental apperception as such is original to Kant, the term 'apperception' itself is, as I said earlier, of course owed to Leibniz, and there are parallels especially with Wolff 's idea of consciousness of self as derivative of object consciousness, as a kind of reflexive consciousness that accompanies the consciousness of objects.' For Wolff a central aspect of consciousness is that it expresses a two-way relation to objects: consciousness is not just consciouness of things but also, at the same time, a consciousness of self.. There is thus always a reflexive element involved in the perception of an object, and this element is consciousness or apperception *(apperceptio),* which points to the subject of representation or perception. Apperception is the consciousness of the self's own activity present *in perceiving objects outside of herself* This idea of apperception is based on Wolff's definition of consciousness as the capacity to distinguish. In being conscious of things, one differentiates things from one another, but also thereby from *oneself* as the agent of differentiation. So the subject is differentiated from objects precisely in her being conscious of those various objects through differentiation.

This fundamental and specifically non-psychological concept of self-consciousness as reflexivity, which has its roots in Wolff, is to become central to Kant's thought and that of the later German Idealists, not least Hegel's. Kant's view of self-consciousness is similar to Wolff's in that the 'derivative' model of consciousness that Wolff adopts (Thiel 2011:308) is *mutatis mutandis* applicable to Kant's view of transcendental consciousness as constitutive of the objective unity of representations as defining an object. While Kant's view is much less overtly characterized in terms of explicit subject-object

oppositions, as are later, presumably, Fichte's and Hegel's, transcendental apperception must not be seen as prior to, and somehow independent of, the perception of objects, but—to put it in terms proposed by Pippin (1997a)—as 'adverbial' to it. Transcendental consciousness and consciousness of objects are, in some sense, equiprimordial. As Kant puts it at A108,

> the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances in accordance with concepts ... for the mind could not possibly think of the identity of itself in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this *a priori,* if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its action, which subjects all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, and first makes possible their connection in accordance with *a priori* rules.
>
> my underlining

The 'necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances' is—as explained in this section of the A-Deduction—what first constitutes a possible object of experience. However, this necessary unity is nothing but the necessary unity that results from **the** act of synthesis of representations that also, simultaneously, first constitues one's identity as self-consciousness. 'I here is no discrepancy between the application of a priori rules that bring unity to ones representations of an object and the a priori rules that unity tine's very repections as one's own

They are the same set of rules. Both the representation of an object and self-consciousness rest on the very same act of synthesis, i.e. transcendental apperception. Transcendental apperception could then be said—similarly to Wolff's reflexive understanding of consciousness—to be that which lies at the origin of the differentiation between subject and object,[4] and is, in a sense, `derivative' of, or adverbial to, the consciousness of objects, since it does not exist other than in the act of synthesis that enables the perception of objects. The equiprimordiality of the synthesis that enables object perception and the consciousness of one's identity *in* this very act explains Kant's phrase 'at the same time' in the above-quoted passage at A108 in the A-Deduction.

In Chapter 3, I first approach apperception historically, through a discussion of its appearance chiefly in the metaphysics lectures that are contemporaneous with the Critical phase of Kant's work. The lectures give a good idea of how apperception is rooted in Kant's reading of the works of his predecessors, chiefly Wolff and Baumgarten. I explore to what extent, and in which context, transcendental apperception and consciousness are featured in the lectures and what changes (or not) in the conception of these notions from the pre-Critical to the Critical phase of Kant's lecturing activity. After introducing the theme of apperception and consciousness in Kant and addressing some terminological issues, I look first at the Leibnizian and Wolffian background of Kant's theory of apperception, and the usage and occurrence of the term 'consciousness' in the lectures notes and in Kant's pre-Critical published work. I also address aspects of Leibniz's theory of obscure representations in order to clarify Kant's differentiation of apperception from mere consciousness. Subsequently, I examine how Kant's conception of 'consciousness' develops from the pre-Critical *Herder* and *Politz* metaphysics lectures to the lectures of the Critical period, specifically the *Metaphysik von Scholl* and *Metaphysik Mrongovius,* where the notion of 'apperception' first crops up and which show that Kant departs from the Leibnizian-Wolffian conflation of apperception and consciousness, although there appear to remain some carry-overs from the pre-Critical lectures. I then briefly consider a lingering ambiguity about the relation

between inner sense and transcendental apperception in the *Mrongovius* notes and conclude that, in line with Leibniz's gradual theory of perceptions and his law of continuity, Kant espouses a gradual theory of consciousness. The central argument of the chapter is that Kant's principle of apperception should not be conflated with a putative principle of consciousness *simpliciter*.

In Chapter 4, in a systematic account of Kant's theory of self-consciousness I concentrate On two connected elements: the transcendental conditions for establishing the identity of self-consciousness, which first enable the awareness thereof, namely self-consciousness strictly speaking, and the relation between self-consciousness and self-knowledge. I contend that two mistaken assumptions underlie the critique of Kant's 'derivative' or so-called 'reflection-theoretical' view of self-consciousness, namely the belief that it does not accommodate a *sui generis* theory of self-consciousness: (1) that the identity of self is somehow a priori given, and presumably any act of transcendental apperception, which is interpreted as an act of reflection, always already resupposes this a priori self-identity, and (2) that the awareness of the identity of self-consciousness *ipso facto* amounts to self-knowledge. Concerning assumption (1), often it is thought that Kant's so-called reflective 'I think, which accompanies my representations, is only secondary to, or derivative' of, the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, or indeed, secondary to the identity of self-consciousness.

In Section 4.2, I address some more general, systematic issues, which directly bear on the aforementioned topics. In particular, I address criticisms of putatively Kantian type forms of self-consciousness as grounds of cognitive knowledge (`epistemic consciousness'), which, presumably, lack the means to account for a *sui generis* self-consciousness. The general criticism, which goes back to Fichte, is that if the identity of self is first established in the *reflection on* oneself (a turning back into oneself), then the self-identity and the knowledge thereof is not immediate, but secondary to the reflection. But at the same time, it is argued, the reflection *presupposes* the identity of the self in order to be able to carry out the reflection, for the reflection is of course done by the same person or self whose identity is reflected upon. Such a cognitive model of self-consciousness *ipso facto* cannot attain determination of self-identity per se, or indeed self-consciousness, because it fundamentally misconstrues the nature of self-consciousness or the 'I' as a function of thought or cognition. I point out that Kant's view of transcendental consciousness is not vulnerable to this charge of circularity.

In Section 4.3, I approach assumption (1) from an interpretative point of view, by looking more closely at Kant's argument in §16 of the B-Deduction (B131-6). This will show that Kant's view of self-consciousness is in fact not derivative (in the 'reflection-theoretical' sense of unoriginal), and that instead it shows how any account of self-consciousness and the identity of self is first made possible by transcendental consciousness or transcendental apperception, which is nothing but the act itself of accompanying, through the 'I think, one's representations as one's own. Transcendental consciousness is an original consciousness, which a priori grounds any form of self-consciousness or self-knowledge, and is `the consciousness of mysel as original apperception' (A117n). In Section 4.4, I consider *(ad* assumption 2) why, for Kant, awareness of the identity of self-consciousness does not *ipso facto* amount to self-knowledge, and explain that, in addition to transcendental self-consciousness, what Kant calls the 'affection' of inner sense is needed for self-knowledge to be possible.

Chapter 5 addresses a topic that concerns the possibility of animal perception in relation to Kant's conception of objectivity, and the question whether Kant allows animal intentionality in the same vein as

human discursive objective intentionality. This relates centrally to Kant's concept of object and the necessary form of reflexivity that is part and parcel of that concept. Kant observes that the principle of apperception is uniquely characteristic for beings that have a representation of themselves as subjects: as an 'I' that thinks and is thereby aware of herself as existing as thinker CI am'). This implies that non-human animals do not apperceive the representations that they have. In early work and in the lectures, Kant clearly sided with his rationalist predecessors in denying animals inner sense, that is, a consciousness of self, identified with inner sense (V-Met/ Herder, AA 28:901). But commentators have read this as saying that animals have no consciousness *simpliciter.* That belief appears to be informed by the standard interpretation of the principle of apperception as a principle of mere consciousness. If animals do not have apperception, then by implication they do not have consciousness. But this reading of apperception is mistaken on purely interpretative grounds, as I have argued in detail elsewhere. Transcendental apperception is not a necessary nor a sufficient condition of consciousness. Scientific evidence moreover supports the view that most vertebrates do arguably have at least creature consciousness and some mammals such as dolphins and elephants have shown evidence even of some form of bodily self-awareness. Another implication of the claim that animals do not have the capacity for apperception is that, because apperception grounds objective cognition, animals also do not have awareness of, or represent, objects. But this seems a rather unwelcome consequence of Kant's claim about the intimacy between self-consciousness (apperception) and the experience of objects. Animals are as much part of phenomenal nature as we are, one should think. In this chapter I argue that Kant's concept of object and what it means to be reflexively aware of an object excludes the idea that animals can have objective intentionality; but also that it does not exclude complex animal interaction with determinate spatial objects nor that animals have creature consciousness.

Chapter 6 is dedicated entirely to Reinhold, who must be considered the first major post-Kantian, but, at least in his early work, also the most consistently *Kamion* post Kalman, despite his reputation as being the first to have (Wooed the original Kantian message. Like Kant, Reinhold wants to base his theory of knowledge on a firm a priori, transcendental footing, which for him is the principle of consciousness. With this principle in hand, we can further analyse the diverse elements of cognition as well as the transcendental constraints of knowledge. One of the most significant outcomes of Reinhold's account is the idea that the concept of representation itself provides the ground of cognition. Reinhold denies that in our representations we represent anything of the thing itself that we represent because we represent the thing only *as* represented, not *as* it is in itself. So nothing *of* the thing itself qua thing in itself is represented in our representation of it as represented. We still need the thing as it is in itself, metaphysically, though. So, unlike Fichte and in some sense Hegel, Reinhold does not give up on the thing in itself. In this chapter, I want to zero in on the Kantian idea that Reinhold elaborates on in his first major work *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermogens,* published in 1789, namely that, whilst things in themselves must logically be presupposed as the ground underlying appearances and things are not reducible to their representations, (1) objects as appearances are not properties *of* things in themselves, and (2) things in themselves or the thing in itself cannot properly be represented or even thought—though the *notion* of a thing in itself must of course be able to be conceived, and things in themselves must be taken to exist independently. I am here interested neither in the extent to which Reinhold's interpretation of Kant is correct or even adequately represents Kant's thought in all of its aspects, nor whether Reinhold's attempt to present a systematic philosophy based

on a rigorous deduction from a single principle (his strong foundationalism) stands up to scrutiny. I am here solely interested in some of Reinhold's positive insights, in the *Versuch,* concerning elements of his representationalism that may shed light on Kant's idealism, specifically, the relation between appearances (as objects of knowledge) and things in themselves, i.e. points (1) and (2) described above. I read the early Reinhold of the *Versuch* as confirming the Kantian view that objects as appearances are not properties of things in themselves and that we are radically ignorant of things in themselves, in the sense that we can neither know things in themselves (through the senses) nor even intellectually grasp things in themselves through the understanding alone. Reinhold's representationalism, which is based on what he calls the principle of consciousness, is not a tautological representationalism. It is not based on the trivial idea that whatever is not a representation can not he represented. By comparing his views to Sellars' view on representationalism in his *Science and Metaphysics (1992* 119681) I show that Iteinhold's representationalism provides useful insights as to why Kant rightfully restricts possible knowledge to appearances and prohibits knowledge of things in themselves.

In Chapter 7, I am particularly interested in pursuing the question of how, following Hegel's critique of Kant, Hegelians have recently interpreted, under the influence of a Fichtean reading, Kant's theory of apperception and the cognitive role of self-consciousness, as chiefly elaborated in the Transcendental Deduction. Hegelians such as Pippin think that in the Deduction Kant effectively compromises or wavers on the strict separability between concepts and intuitions he stipulates at A51/B75. For if the argument of the Deduction, in particular in its B-version, is that the categories are not only the necessary conditions under which I think objects, by virtue of applying concepts, but also the necessary conditions under which anything is first given in sensibility, the fixed separation of concepts and intuitions seems incompatible with the very aim and conclusion of the Deduction. I want to examine these charges by looking more closely at Pippin's reading of the Deduction and his more general approach to Kant's strategy, in particular by looking at Pippin's reading of the scope of the principle of apperception as the principle of representational content. Pippin believes the orthodox Kant cannot be retained if we want to extract something of philosophical value from the Deduction. He defends a Kantian conceptualism shorn of the remaining nonconceptualist tendencies, which are in his view antithetical to the spirit of Kant's Critical revolution. I believe, however, that we must retain the orthodox Kant, including its nonconceptualist tendencies, in order not to succumb to an intemperate conceptualism. This means, as I argue, that the principle of apperception must be read in a modally less strong sense than Fichte and following him Hegel and Pippin do. Not all representations that are occurrent in one's head need be accompanied by an 'I think', even if it is of course true to say that representations must be so accompanied for them to have epistemic relevance, that is, objective validity.

In Chapter 8, I consider the relation between Kant and Hegel from a different, more overtly Hegelian angle, while expanding on the central theme of Chapter 7.

This will be done in a somewhat more programmatic or speculative vein than before. The rationale for this and the following chapter is to show that there is a direct connection between Kant's theory of apperception to Hegel's idea of a metaphysical logic, and that Hegel's metaphysics is wholly continuous with Kant's. I want to look at some aspects of Pippin's compelling arguments, in his recent essay logik and Metaphysik: Hegels "Reich der Schatten"' (Pippin 2016),

for seeing Hegel's logic as a metaphysics, which takes objects, in some sense, to be a product and content of thought. Pippin's general conceptualist approach to Hegel's metaphysical logic is, it seems to me, the only viable one, interpretatively as well as philosophically, though other recent readings that are more ontologically inclined, such as Martin (2012), and Kreines (2015), and in particular Houlgate (e.g. 2006, 2015, 2018), merit closer attention (I have only space to look at some of Houlgate's arguments). I beg to differ however with respect to some of the details of Pippin's reading in relation to Kant, which I shall be focusing on in this chapter. Pippin rightly emphasizes the subjective, reflexive element of Hegel's metaphysics. As Pippin says, it is noteworthy that Hegel connects the 'universal' *(Allgemeine)* with 'activity' *(Tatigkeit).* Concepts themselves do not make assertions. Rather, it is *self-consciousness,* thinking, which 'drives' the logic of concepts. But equally, Pippin is keen to point out that Hegel is not a mere category theorist. The logic of concepts is not merely a logic of the intelligibility of our conceptual claims, but it is a metaphysical logic that concerns Being itself. Hegel's absolute idealism is therefore not a form of subjective idealism that reduces reality to how things are merely for us; rather, it is an idealism that demonstrates the conceptual conditions under which reality itself can and must be understood without there being a gap between a putative conceptual scheme and its objective application conditions.

However, as Pippin argues, Hegel wants the identity that exists between the two set of conditions that govern the 'making sense of our understanding' and the 'making sense of things' of how things are, to go deeper than Kant's putatively `excessively subjectivist approach (2016:172). The identity between thought and being is a real one, and not restricted to *human* spatiotemporal experience. Pippin argues that Kant did not go far enough in affirming the identity between the forms of thought and the categories of objective experience, reasoning that the relation between general logic and transcendental logic is far closer than Kant acknowledges. This brings me back to the theme of the previous chapter: For Hegel, there simply is no gap that needs bridging, given his denial of a sharp distinction between the pure concepts and pure intuitions, and given the systematic and consistently immanent deduction of the pure concepts, which does not require any application, schematization, or demonstration of the instantiation, of concepts in objects or intuitions of objects. But I argue that, appearances to the contrary, Kant is much closer here to Hegel than Pippin and Hegel make it out to be, despite the fact that Hegel insists more overtly on the intrinsic intelligibility of Being itself, more so than Kant would appear to allow.

In the last chapter of the book, Chapter 9, I elaborate on the arguments broached in the previous two chapters by addressing two broadly naturalist readings of Hegel's criticism of Kant's transcendental logic and idealism. Such a reading espouses the idea that nature or reality is not reducible to what subjects make of nature or reality, but is rather that into which the cognitive agent or subject is herself integrated. The subject is, on such an account, as much *part* of nature as it has *knowledge of nature,* and as such it is constrained and determined by it. Hegel is often read as if he abandoned the transcendental perspective that Kant inaugurated in philosophy, whereby nature or reality, insofar as the physical realm of spatiotemporal objects is concerned, depends for its objectivity wholly on the transcendental subject. Hegel, it is thought, rejects such a subjective, transcendental idealism in favour of an idealism that is actually a fully-fledged realism in all but name, a realism *sans phrase* which makes substantial claims about the fundamental structure of reality itself and that encompasses knowledge about how things in themselves are constituted. Unlike Kant, Hegel is often considered a thoroughbred naturalist. There are a couple of assumptions here that persist among Hegelians discussing Kant's philosophy and Hegel's

relation to it, and that create the continuing misunderstanding of the core of Kant's Copernican thought. Unlike what Hegelians—but not Pippin, it seems—continue to believe, Kant's category theory is not at all subjective in the bad sense ("bad' as opposed to my 'radically' subjectivist reading as espoused in Schulting 2017a), and so least of all 'solipsist' in whatever sense, and it does not entail scepticism or epistemological relativism. On the other hand, Hegel should not be read as if he were returning to a pre-Kantian metaphysics, which sees our forms of thought as conforming to the objects, rather than the objects as a priori conforming to our thought forms as it is on the Copernican hypothesis. In my view, Hegel's absolute idealism is informed by a *transcendental* logic that is thoroughly Kantian in spirit, which excludes the possibility of reading absolute idealism as a naturalism or realism *sans phrase* which is seen to replace transcendental logic. The main difference with Kant is that Hegel sees no reason to restrict this idealism to *empirical* objects. The idealism in absolute idealism is, if anything, not less but more idealist than transcendental idealism. <>

EMOTION AND VIRTUE by Gopal Sreenivasan [Princeton University Press, 978-0691134550

A novel approach to the crucial role emotion plays in virtuous action

What must a person be like to possess a virtue in full measure? What sort of psychological constitution does one need to be an exemplar of compassion, say, or of courage? Focusing on these two examples, *Emotion and Virtue* ingeniously argues that certain emotion traits play an indispensable role in virtue. With exemplars of compassion, for instance, this role is played by a modified sympathy trait, which is central to enabling these exemplars to be reliably correct judges of the compassionate thing to do in various practical situations. Indeed, according to Gopal Sreenivasan, the virtue of compassion is, in a sense, a modified sympathy trait, just as courage is a modified fear trait.

While he upholds the traditional definition of virtue as a species of character trait, Sreenivasan discards other traditional precepts. For example, he rejects the unity of the virtues and raises new questions about when virtue should be taught. Unlike orthodox virtue ethics, moreover, his account does not aspire to rival consequentialism and deontology. Instead Sreenivasan repudiates the ambitions of virtue imperialism.

EMOTION AND VIRTUE makes significant contributions to moral psychology and the theory of virtue alike.

Review

"**EMOTION AND VIRTUE** presents a new and very appealing account of virtue and its relationship to emotion. Sreenivasan elaborates a view of virtue exemplars, focusing on two virtues: compassion and courage. In his arguments, Sreenivasan engages in illuminating discussions of topics of central importance to virtue theory in the recent literature, including the unity of the virtues, situationism, and moral deference. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in ethics as well as the nature of virtue."**—Julia Driver, author of *Consequentialism***

"**EMOTION AND VIRTUE** is a book of considerable sophistication and rigor. The originality of the arguments provided and the author's novel approach to perennial questions are second to none."**—Kristján Kristjánsson, author of *Virtuous Emotions***

CONTENTS

As the title suggests, this is a book about virtue. More specifically, it is about the role that emotion plays in virtue. In a line, my view is that emotion plays a central and indispensable role in virtue. Naturally, there are various ways to understand what makes different roles in virtue more or less `central. For my part, I take it that acting virtuously is the central and most important dimension of virtue. By 'acting virtuously,' I do not mean to emphasise *how* one acts—in this manner, as opposed to that. Rather, I simply mean doing the virtuous thing—actually performing the virtuous act, as opposed to some other act or to not acting at all. Thus, as I understand it, the centrality of roles in virtue is a matter of their being tied to virtuous action somehow. Any such role is more central than every role in virtue that is not tied to virtuous action.

By contrast, in some other traditions, including illustrious Western ones, reference to virtue serves to emphasise the moral significance of certain ways of *being,* instead of doing—for example, being Tor the good,' to borrow from Robert Adams's (2006) subtitle. Emotion may be held to play a notable role in virtue on this other front, too. I do not deny or oppose any such claim. Indeed, it may be considerably easier to defend. However, it is not the claim I mean, to advance myself.

In discussing emotion and virtue, I am mostly interested in individual virtues and particular emotions. On my view, particular emotions play a central role in specific virtues. By and large, I shall concentrate on two virtues (compassion and courage) and two emotions (sympathy and fear). Within each category, my

two examples are meant to stand in for various others. For opening, purposes, though, I shall confine myself to compassion, since courage **is actu**ally a fairly complicated case (as we shall discover).

With compassion, the fundamental thesis I shall defend in this book is that having a modified sympathy trait is indispensable to being a reliably correct judge of which action, if any, compassion requires in this or that practical situation. What 'ties' this role for sympathy to virtuous action—thereby making it centural to virtue—is the very basic fact that reliably doing the compassionate thing $_{pr}$esupposes that one is a reliably correct judge of what the compassionate to do is (under the circumstances).

My fundamental thesis is therefore a thesis in moral psychology More specifically, it is a thesis about the psychological constitution of *exemplars* of virtue, that is, of agents who have a given virtue in full measure (e.g., compassion). I do not claim that doing the compassionate thing on some occasion or sprinkling of occasions requires an agent to have (the trait of) sympathy. But exemplars of compassion must have a reliable sympathy trait. For one of the ways they are distinguished from the rest of us is by their high degree of reliability in doing the compassionate thing. Even for the rest of us, however, it follows that sympathy is needed to do the compassionate thing *as* the exemplar of compassion does it.

Although my fundamental thesis is in moral psychology I aim to contribute to the theory of virtue more generally as well. Now, in any theoretical domain, some measure of controversy is likely to attend declarations that certain positions represent the orthodoxy and others are unorthodox. Nor is it clear which is better. My own analysis of virtue represents a mixture, I think, of the orthodox and the unorthodox. Nevertheless, since it may have some heuristic value, let me describe in advance three points on which my analysis of virtue is either unorthodox or introduces a twist on the orthodoxy.

First and foremost, I should flag a signal respect in which I differ from orthodox virtue ethics. Virtue ethics shares my focus on the relation between virtue and right action (or perhaps I should say, I share its focus). However, virtue ethics combines this focus with an aspiration to accord some distinctive theoretical significance to 'virtue,' as compared to other concepts in ethics or other perspectives on the moral life. At the same time, it equally aspires for virtue to anchor a complete ethical theory. Together these aspirations drive virtue ethics to position itself as a distinctive and complete theory of right action to rival consequentialism and deontology.

I reject this 'imperialist' ambition, as I call it. In my view, the virtues are simply one province of morality among others. As a result, the perspective that virtue offers on right action is essentially incomplete, though not any less significant or interesting for that. While I understand that virtue winds up being less distinctive on my approach, I am more interested in what is true of virtue than in what may be distinctive of it. I engage very little here with consequentialism or deontology.

Next, there are two distinct ways in which virtue terms are understood in contemporary moral philosophy. On the first understanding, which is more widely established, virtue terms function as evaluations of goodness — ultimately, the moral goodness of the agent who performs some virtuous act. On the second understanding, virtue terms function as evaluations of rightness. If some act is kind, for example, then other things being equal that act is morally right. In other words, other things being equal, the agent *ought* to perform it. While these understandings are compatible, one difference between

them lies in their implied attention to the agent's *motives.* In the first usage, an act's being kind entails something about the moral goodness of the agent's motives, whereas the second usage abstracts from the agent's motives.

In this book, I follow the second, minority usage of virtue terms. My account of the moral psychology of exemplars certainly accommodates the majority usage. For example, in having a reliable sympathy trait, exemplars of compassion will characteristically act from a sympathetic motive and sympathetic motives are morally good motives. However, in discussing compassionate acts, as well as other virtuous acts, I shall largely abstract from the agent's motives. I shall usually be much more concerned with the entailment that the acts in question are ones that *any* suitably situated agent—exemplars of virtue and the rest of us alike—ought to perform, other things being equal. Among other things, following this line will put us in position to articulate a novel aspect of the practical relevance of exemplars of virtue. Exemplars are ideals. But as we shall discover, their relevance is not confined to exemplifying a character trait that the rest of us should strive to cultivate or acquire.

Finally, I reject the ancient thesis of the unity of the virtues. Among contemporary philosophers, this probably makes me one of the crowd. However, the argument I shall develop in defence of disunity is entirely my own. Indeed, as we shall see, it is closely related to anti-imperialism about virtue. Moreover, I shall also pursue the implications of disunity in the virtues rather further than is customary. We shall see that taking the disunity of virtue seriously and in some depth turns out to have some surprising consequences.

EMOTION AND VIRTUE has twelve chapters. Chapters 2 and 6 to 9 represent the heart of the book. Chapter 2 simply lays out the position I wish to defend, which I call the 'integral view.' It corresponds to what I have described as my fundamental thesis, though chapter 2 states this position with more subtlety and completeness than I have attempted here.

My main arguments for the integral view are conducted in terms of two specific virtue and emotion pairs: compassion and sympathy, and courage and fear. I believe the integral view holds for a good number of virtues—many more than two, certainly. But I leave open which other virtues are defensible as examples. I also leave it open that some virtues may not fit the view.

Each of chapters 6, 7, and 8 develops a distinct and independent argument for the integral view, all using the compassion and sympathy pairing. In my experience, many philosophers find something like the integral view either immediately attractive or immediately repellent. But few provide serious arguments for or against it. My paramount aim is to advance some actual arguments for the integral view, arguments that depart from more or less neutral premisses.

The heart of the book can, I think, be read on its own. In fact, each pair of chapter 2 and one of chapters 6, 7, or 8 can be read on its own. Readers who proceed in this way may find some important premisses undefended or some notions either unfamiliar or underdeveloped. But these impediments are far from insuperable. Chapter 7 is where the integral view is fleshed out in the fullest detail.

Chapter 9 recapitulates my previous arguments with the pairing of courage and fear. It adds no new argument for the integral view. One of its functions is to provide a summary and overview of my arguments in juxtaposition. The other is to extend the scope of my conclusion not just to another

example, but to a wholly different kind of virtue. In this chapter, I emphasise courage's character as an *executive* virtue, as distinct from run-of-the-mill virtues like compassion or generosity. As a bonus, I also defend answers to some old chestnuts about courage, namely, must the end pursued in courageous action be a good end? (no) and is Aristotle's distinction between continence and virtue tenable in relation to courage? (no again). Chapter 9 can be read on its own.

The other seven chapters of the book scaffold its heart. Chapters 1 and 3 to 5 lay down various pieces of background material, while chapters io to **12** extract different consequences of the integral view for other moral philosophical puzzles. Such contributions as the book makes to the theory of virtue (or to moral philosophy) are largely to be found in these scaffolding chapters. Its contributions to moral psychology come from the heart.

Chapter i explains what I mean by a 'virtue: I adopt the traditional definition of virtue as a species of character trait, but also distinguish various alternatives to this definition. In addition, I specify what else is involved in a virtuous character trait besides the reliable performance of virtuous actions and discuss the venerable question of what qualifies a character trait to be a virtue. Here I mainly state my theoretical beliefs without argument (hence, 'credo'). I do argue for a few points, either when I have something significant to add or when I just cannot help it. The most original argument is a critique of eudaimonism. This is also where I disavow the imperialist ambition of virtue ethics.

Chapter 3 gives readers who need it a background primer on emotion. It covers a mix of philosophy and science. Various elements of my argument, especially in chapters 7 and 9, employ a moderately sophisticated understanding of emotion. Chapter 3 makes no attempt to contribute anything new to debates about emotion.

Chapter 4 contains my argument against the unity of the virtues. As I have said, my interest in virtue is primarily an interest in individual virtues, taken one at a time. This makes more sense when the virtues are not unified. Some, but not all, of the arguments advanced later in the book presuppose that the virtues are not unified. Part of the argument here also vindicates my antiimperialism about virtue.

Chapter 5 defends the traditional definition of virtue against the situationist critique. This critique is wielded by empirically minded philosophers, but its materials originate in the situationist tradition in social psychology. Chapters 3 and s carry most of the burden of my aspiration to demonstrate that my philosophical arguments and position are consistent with a scientific psychology. Chapter 5 is also where I regiment my use of virtue terms as evaluations of rightness and connect this use to a significant additional way in which exemplars of virtue are relevant to the rest of us.

Chapter io aims to settle one of the debates flagged in chapter i in relation to the definition of virtue. Many philosophers seem to take it as criterial of virtue's being theoretically distinctive that the definition of virtue somehow assign priority to the agent (who acts virtuously). As I have suggested, I harbour no particular hankering after distinctiveness, and I also think that assignments of priority to the agent in these contexts are often overblown. However, I still think it *is* defensible to assign some priority to the agent, and I defend that position here.

Chapter ii shows how and why this modest assignment of priority to agents is nevertheless theoretically consequential. Philosophers who extol the importance of virtue are frequently, though not invariably,

inclined to some form of anti-theoretical stance in ethics or to some form of particularism. In arguing for significant restrictions on the role that moral principles can play in moral justification, I attempt to vindicate a version of this inclination. However, the strategy I employ to this end is radically different from those pursued by either John McDowell or Alasdair MacIntyre, for example.

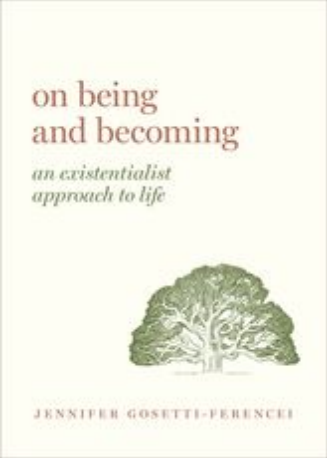
Chapter 12 pursues a very interesting but scarcely discussed question, namely, whether virtue *should* be taught. Philosophical discussions of character education typically assume that virtue should be taught and concentrate instead on whether it can be taught. Plato comes to mind here. I develop two rather different arguments for the paradoxical conclusion that virtue should *not* be taught, even when it can be taught. One of them completes the argument of chapter 4, by conveniently exhibiting a further way in which my moderate disunity position is preferable to the radical disunity of the virtues.

Let me close with a note about my notes. Somewhat unusually, this book features both footnotes and endnotes. The point of this apparent complexity is in fact simplicity. By dividing the notes, I aimed to streamline the reader's progress through the text, without sacrificing a level of precision and detail. Thus, the endnotes are designed to be ignored on a first pass (or any pass, for those robustly disinterested in fine points or further details). Anything I regarded as either vital or an interjection or aside that would be pointless at the back of the book has been placed in the footnotes, which are limited in number. But this is only a rough rule. As with arguments in chapter 1, some things are in a footnote simply because I could not help it. <>

On Being and Becoming: An Existentialist Approach to Life by Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei [Oxford University Press, 9780190913656]

While existentialism has long been associated with Parisian Left Bank philosophers sipping cocktails in smoke-filled café′s, or with a brooding, angst-filled outlook on life, Gosetti-Ferencei shows how vital and heterogeneous the movement really was.

In this concise, accessible book, Gosetti-Ferencei offers a new vision of existentialism. As she lucidly demonstrates, existentialism is a rich and diverse philosophy that encourages meaningful engagement with the world around us, offering a host of fascinating concepts that pertain to life as we experience it. The movement was as heterogeneous as it is now misunderstood, influenced by jazz music, involving diverse thinkers from around the world, challenging received ideas about the meaning of human existence. Part of the difficulty in defining existentialism is that it was never a unified philosophy, but came to identify a set of shared concerns about the meaning and possibility of human freedom, as it may be expressed in authentic choices, actions, and projects. Existentialists all explored how, in the absence of traditional reassurances about the meaning of life, we may transcend our present circumstances, and give our situation new meaning. With existentialism, concrete, lived experience of the single individual emerged from the shadow of abstract systems and long-defended traditions, and became subject-matter in its own right for philosophical inquiry. Far from solipsistic, Gosetti-Ferencei shows that existentialist attention to the human self can be intertwined with ways of conceiving the world, our being with others, the earth, and the encompassing concept of being.



Fully appreciating what existentialism has to offer requires recognizing the rich diversity of its prospects, which involve not only anxiety, absurdity, awareness of death and the loss of religious meaning, but also hope, the striving for happiness, and a sense of the transcendent. **ON BEING AND BECOMING** unpacks this philosophical movement's insights, and reveals how its core ideas promote creative responses to the question of life's meaning.

ON BEING AND BECOMING offers a new approach to existentialist philosophy and literature, as responding to competing demands for universal truth and the defense of the irreducible singularity of the individual. **ON BEING AND BECOMING** traces the heterogeneity of existentialist thinking beyond the popular wartime philosophers of the Parisian Left Bank, demonstrating their critical dependence on sources from the nineteenth century and their complements in modernist works across the European continent and beyond. While quintessentially modern, existentialism inherits ideas of the past and anticipates challenges of the present. Despite its individualism, existentialist attention to the human self is related to conceptions of world, others, the earth, and the more encompassing concept of being. The predominance of ideas of authenticity, individuality, and self-determination makes any existentialist manifesto self-contradictory, while existentialist thinkers above all wanted to make their philosophy relevant to concrete human existence as it is lived. Prevailing models of existential authenticity life tend to overlook the rich diversity of its prospects, which, as this volume shows, involve not only anxiety, absurdity, awareness of death and of the loss of religious reassurances, but also hope, the striving for happiness, and a sense of the transcendent—all of these grounded our human capacity to create meaning. In spite of the diversity of existentialism, all of its thinkers recognize the self as becoming, and recognize the courage and creativity human individuality demands. On Being and Becoming elaborates pragmatic and philosophical relevance of existentialism for being human in the contemporary world.

Reviews

"In this deceptively easy to read book, Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei packs three treatises in one: a smart introduction to continental philosophy, a brisk guide for living well and not dying stupid in an age of selfie-narcissism, and a new bridge between European and American culture linking Sartre with Kerouac, Rilke with Frost, de Beauvoir with Wright, Camus with Ellison, Heidegger with Du Bois, all asking the key question 'Why am I here?' The answer? You'll find it yourself in these pages." -- Jean-Michel Rabat, University of Pennsylvania, American Academy of Arts and Sciences

"**ON BEING AND BECOMING** is a timely book, as existentialism is an evocative response to the deep crises challenging our mortal and vulnerable existence. This book explores the existentialist answer to create our own meaning through our individual choices, not just in solitude but in engaged action seeking to transform the social world. The broad existential movement is sympathetically and accurately portrayed by Gosetti-Ferencei. This book is richly packed with insights and fluidly written for a general audience. It is not just a work of academic philosophy--discussing, among others, Martin

Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Frantz Fanon--but it also documents the influence of existentialism on African-American thinkers, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Ralph Ellison, and Richard Wright." -- Dermot Moran, Boston College

"Digestible summaries and ideas for practical application make this guide accessible to any philosophically minded reader. Even those well versed in existentialist thought will walk away from this with a new appreciation for the philosophy." --Publishers Weekly

Part I Encountering Existentialism

Prologue

Introduces some of the central ideas of existentialism—including subjective truth, finitude, being-in-the-world, facticity, transcendence, inwardness, and the self as becoming—as relevant to an individual living in the contemporary moment. Highlights existentialist concern both for human individuality and for

commonly-shared features of the human condition. Emphasizes existentialist attention both to the despairing aspects of human life and to the affirmation of existence as worthy of wonder. Introduces a few key thinkers—Kierkegaard, Marcel, Heidegger, Sartre, Nietzsche—while also indicating the diversity of existentialism to be emphasized throughout the book. Addresses what existentialism may have to offer in the context of contemporary challenges to objective truth and communal forms of meaning.

Existentialism in Style and Substance

Begins by considering the existential as the popular clichés surrounding existentialism and their limitations. It describes the emergence of existential philosophy among Parisian-based writers of the Left Bank in the 1940s (Sartre, Beauvoir, Camus) as grounded in their reception of nineteenth-century philosophy and literature, particularly Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche, along with their ties to modernist literature and phenomenological philosophy from across the European continent, and to African American literature and jazz. This chapter challenges the characterization of existentialism as nihilistic, despite its thinkers challenging traditional sources of meaning, and as egocentric, despite persistent focus on individual subjectivity. Demonstrating the heterogeneity of existentialist thinking, this chapter also identifies what philosophers and writers associated with existentialism share in common despite their differences.

Part II The Rise of Existentialism: Antiquity to Modernity

A Philosophy for Human Existence

This essay identifies the classical philosophical concepts with which existentialism is concerned—being, non-being, and becoming, existence, and essence. It shows how existentialist philosophers transform these abstract ideas to consider the concrete existence of the human individual from a subjective point of view. Starting from Whitman's recognition of the here and now, and proceeding through Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Beauvoir, it is demonstrated how traditional philosophical categories first conceived by ancient philosophers echo through the existentialist movement. Kierkegaard's rejection of idealist rationalism, Nietzsche's retrieval of Heraclitus's theory of becoming, Heidegger's understanding of the human being as Dasein or "being there," Sartre's notion of "existence precedes essence," and Beauvoir's comparison of existentialist conversion to the phenomenological reduction are discussed in light of existentialist affirmation of the transience and particularity of the human self.

Historical Roots of Existentialism

This essay explores the inheritance by existentialism of ideas from the philosophical tradition. Socrates serves for Kierkegaard and Marcel as a model for the authentic practice of philosophy and for initiating interior reflection of the self. Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus debated Stoicism's understanding of freedom from external circumstances. Husserl and Heidegger interpreted Augustine's conception of time, while Heidegger along with Beauvoir adapted, in a secular context, features of his conception of religious conversion. Augustine, Shakespeare, and Montaigne explored inner reflection and the nature of the self which came to be critically echoed in existentialist conceptions. The Enlightenment generated a philosophy of human freedom, defending the rational autonomy of the individual. Critical engagement of these ideas is shown to have shaped existentialist conceptions of authenticity, subjectivity, inwardness, freedom, and responsibility.

Romantic Upheavals, Modern Movements

The relation of existentialist thinking hovers between Romanticism and modernism. From the late eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries, some philosophers and writers devoted their efforts to subjective aspects of existence, embracing Enlightenment philosophy's focus on individual freedom while rejecting its rationalist constraints. This chapter shows the relevance for existentialism of the rebellion by Romantic thinkers against the cult of reason and what they considered its modern disenchanted vision of a world seen through the prism of mathematics and wholly determined by material forces. Often in conflict with the dominant philosophical positions of their time, these thinkers privileged individual subjectivity and freedom, feeling, and imagination, along with an aesthetic program for philosophy. This chapter shows that the creative philosophies of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky emerged in critical contest with Romanticism, and would in turn feed the existentialist impulse of modernist literature in the following century.

Existentialism as Literature: The Twentieth Century

In the wake of scientific and industrial advances in the nineteenth century and the unprecedented destruction of two world wars in the twentieth, existentialist literature emerges as both a crisis of meaning and an ambivalent sense of possibility. This chapter shows how existentialism's approaches to human existence naturally align with creative forms of expression, particularly those of literary modernism. This chapter examines the literary works by existentialist philosophers including Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus, while demonstrating how other modernist writers—including Rainer Maria Rilke, Kafka, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison—extend the reach of existentialist thought. Absurdity, mortality, freedom, alienation, and the pressure on human consciousness of oppression are among the many themes explored in existentialist literature.

Part III Existentialism in Living Dimensions

The Self

This chapter explores the existentialist dimension of the self. It shows how existentialist thinkers insist on the irreducible nature of subjectivity while also considering critically the nature of the self. While Kierkegaard affirms an inward self, Heidegger and the phenomenologically inspired existentialists describe the self as always outside itself, extended in its interactions with the world. While Sartre may vigorously defend the self's intrinsic autonomy, other existentialists, including Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Beauvoir, paint a more ambiguous picture of freedom. This chapter shows that despite these divergences, existentialist thinkers tend to agree on a few core ideas concerning the self, including its nature as activity, as relational, as a process of becoming, and as the basis for choice or commitment.

Others

The subject of others draws out some of the most significant differences among existentialist thinkers. This chapter shows how consideration of others for some existentialists, including Sartre and Beauvoir, begins with separation and potential opposition between self and others, while for other existentialists, including Heidegger and Marcel, being with others is intrinsic to our very being. Marcel's critique of Sartre's hostile rendering of the self-other relation is considered, along with the apparent ability of Sartre and Beauvoir to account in existential terms for human oppression, and the merits of Camus's notion of rebellion on behalf of the freedom of others.

World

To examine the existentialist challenge to claims of absolute objective knowledge about the world and their rejection of any god's-eye view of reality in favor of the world as a source of existential wonder is a view of the world.. The situatedness of the subject is shown to be constitutive of the world as existentially described. In this context are presented Heidegger's notions of being-in-the-world, and the attunement with which the world is accessed by an existential subject. Beauvoir's notion that we experience the world as a detotalized totality is traced to the phenomenological notion of a world horizon and likened to Nietzsche's promotion of perspectivism. The threat of nihilism and fragmentation, and the possibility of experiencing the world as inhospitable, alienating, or uncanny are also considered in existentialist terms through Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Camus, while existential wonder in the face of the world is considered in light of Camus and Marcel.

Earth

Existentialism's focus on the individual and the human condition may appear to be alien to ecological thinking. Existentialism has been criticized for its anthropocentrism and egocentrism, and describes, Sartre often described nature as a threat to human subjectivity and freedom. Yet other existentialist thinkers, particularly Nietzsche, Camus, and Heidegger, along with the poet Rilke, urged concern for the earth, critically rethinking the human role in nature. The critique of human arrogance and of idealist dismissal of the earthly realm by Nietzsche, reverent descriptions of nature by Camus and Rilke, and the critique of technology in Heidegger are shown to all contribute to reconsidering existentialism as an ecologically minded philosophy.

Being

Being is the most difficult existentialist concept to define, and it is on this topic that the existentialists are most diverse and often obscure. Being encompasses the dimensions of self, others, world, and earth considered in previous chapters, and yet according to existentialists evades objective thought. This essay considers the encompassing, ontological difference in the problem of Being in light of Heidegger's notions of being-in-the-world and the ontological difference, Marcel's conception of the ontological mystery, Jaspers's account of the encompassing. It considers Levinas's turn against existentialism in rejection of its fascination with Being, while also pointing out the persistence of ontology in his own post-existential ethics.

Part IV Existentialism in the Practice of Life

On Imitation, Inspiration, and Authenticity

Choice, decision, freedom, ethics, responsibility offers the existentialist conception of authenticity and how it may be possible to achieve despite the natural human capacity for imitation and in light of inspiration for which one might look to others. It argues against taking any existentialist philosopher's life as a model for authentic living, while also considering the inspiration Kierkegaard found in Socrates and Nietzsche found in Schopenhauer. Apart from the unremarkability, from an external point of view, of some existentialist philosopher's lives, others may be ethically problematic, as exemplified by Heidegger and his entanglement in nationalist politics. This chapter suggests that the ethical failure on Heidegger's part contradicts the existentialist conception of authenticity, which demands singularity and responsibility over and above group identification.

On Seeking and Taking (and Giving) Advice

In light of existentialism as a concrete philosophy for living, this chapter examines Sartre's argument that in contemplating and making ethical decisions one must invent new values. It suggests that seeking advice in such a situation is already part of the process of valuation. Alongside the examples Sartre gives in his "Existentialism" lecture, Rilke's advice to a young poet is considered.

If we are not to look to existential philosophy—or indeed to any philosophy—for a manifesto, this does not mean that we should not seek or take advice about existential matters, or find inspiration where it is helpful. We may seek advice for an experienced assessment of the matter, or solutions we may be unlikely to think of. Others may have more relevant experience or can illuminate something familiar by a new perspective. Existentialism would, however, highlight individual responsibility in both choosing the influences we seek out and the decisions we ultimately take.

Being in the Crowd: Anonymity, Conformity, and Individuality in Modern Life

Conformity and individuality shows how many existentialists conceived the individual in the modern world and the challenges of modern life to individual authenticity. It takes up Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Rilke, and the existential social theorist Georg Simmel, identifying their shared skepticism of modern mass culture and fear that it endangered human individuality. These existential thinkers could not have anticipated globalization, the breadth of mass production and consumption in the current century, or its data-driven anonymization of human culture. Yet how anonymity, conformity, individuality displays that their insights are especially relevant for life in the contemporary world. It considers how the human individual may be existentially sustained despite these challenges.

Into One's Own, or on "Finding" Oneself

The way to express authenticity takes up the popular notion of finding oneself, thematized in literature from the nineteenth-century Bildungsroman to the fiction of Jack Kerouac of the beat generation and the poetry of Robert Frost. It considers Socrates's call to "know thyself" in light of existentialist criticism. It considers especially Sartre's criticism of the idea of the self as an inner core or essence that determines who we are, and that could be thought to be "found" in self-seeking. It examines Nietzsche's notion of self-becoming and the phenomenological rendering of the self as transcendence toward possibility.

I Selfie, Therefore I Am: On Self-Imaging Culture

Inherent narcissism presents the contemporary phenomenon of "selfie" culture from an existentialist viewpoint. The chapter imagines how Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger might have responded to the persistence in contemporary culture of self-imaging. It critically examines the self-objectification inherent in the making and circulation of such images, the anonymity with which they are circulated, and the detrimental effects of the phenomenon for both sense of self and being-with-others. The chapter also considers the artistic nature of some selfie-making. It asks whether the production and circulation of selfies can be understood in some cases as a form of existential self-invention.

On Being and Waiting (Tables), or, The Roles We Play

The ambiguity of roles critically engages Sartre's view that adopting roles in the performance of life's tasks is inherently inauthentic. It examines Sartre's critique in Being and Nothingness of the waiter and

other professions that engage in "public ceremony." It poses the question whether Sartre inadvertently endorses an overly purified vision of authenticity, overlooking the necessity of taking up multiple particular roles in our social interactions with others. This chapter asks whether there are circumstances in which role-playing is not only necessary but authentic, expressing different ways of being-in-the-world in different contexts.

We may take on multiple roles in life, and these may be more or less authentically embodied. Sartre famously argued that a person who takes on a given role too earnestly is inauthentic, comparing such a person to an actor. He presented the example of a waiter who so fully plays the "part" of a waiter that the man would seem to lose any hope of authentic individuality. The waiter imitates the robotic movements that Sartre, observing, associates with the (mere) role or character of a such a person.

Seizing the Day: The Present and Presence

Existentialism is often popularly associated with the mantra "carpe diem" and a focus on the present. This chapter shows that the temporality of existentialist thinking is more complex and necessitates relating presence with future and past. While for Nietzsche and Sartre the present is privileged over the past, the future is valued as the direction of possibility for our present actions and goals. Kierkegaard's notion of authentic repetition, Nietzsche's idea of the eternal recurrence, Heidegger's concept of being-toward-death all present different temporal models for authentic attention in the present. Beauvoir's understanding of ambiguity helps to consider how projects directed toward the future in time become past constraints on, but also conditions for, our freedom in the present. Marcel's notion of creative fidelity allows us to avoid falling prey to nostalgia while respecting memory.

Love in the Time of Existentialism

How best may we love shows how existentialist thinking might pertain to the subject of love and desire. Against philosophy for which love may be an emblem for an ideal, existentialism would affirm the concrete particularity of the beloved. Yet it shows that Sartre's conception of love is essentially antagonistic, despite the intellectual and personal comradery he manifested in a lifelong relationship with Beauvoir. The chapter explores why this relationship remains an object of fascination for commentators on the existentialist movement. The views on the subject of love in the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marcel are considered.

Existential Suffering, Happiness, and Hope

The we suffer from happiness and hope shows that while existentialist thinkers recognize the human condition as wrought with difficulty, their vision of suffering is complex and should be considered alongside existentialist interest in happiness and the possibility of hope. All existentialist thinkers, including Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre, extend philosophical dignity to suffering by considering our experiences of anxiety, dread, the tragic, anguish, forlornness, and despair. While this focus on suffering has led to the vision of existentialism as a nihilistic philosophy, this chapter shows that a number of existential thinkers also propose joyful responses to the difficulties of the human condition. Nietzsche, Camus, and Marcel in particular suggest that pain and joy can be interrelated, that the experience of anxiety is linked to that of happiness, the prospect of despair to the possibility of hope.

Life as a Work of Art: The Existential Need for Creativity

The art to life demonstrates why creativity is a persistent theme in existentialist thought. It shows why creativity may be required, as Nietzsche says, to become who we are, and who we may want to be. It considers why Kierkegaard and Nietzsche made philosophy into an inherently creative enterprise and why Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus wrote fiction themselves and gave tribute to literature or art as crucial to existential understanding. The chapter addresses Heidegger's view that art and especially poetry served to reveal the world and established a form of truth. In this context it is considered why human beings may strive to make art under conditions of oppression. This chapter shows that while existentialists express diverging views about many topics, they all invite individuals to live life with creativity, that existentialist thinking encourages living life as a work of art.

Excerpt: The fact that you have picked up a book like this one and have begun to read it suggests that you strive for a fulfilling life. Presumably you aim, like many people do, to live as well and as meaningfully as possible, well aware that you have only one life, and that it is finite. Each day you press forward with no clear path signposted just for you. Your existence comes with no set of instructions for how exactly to go about it. You will be well aware, perhaps with some anxiety, that only you can make some crucial decisions which will shape your existence, determine how your one life will play out. Existential philosophy begins by thinking from the standpoint of an individual concretely existing, wondering how to make sense of this existence.

This may be anything but straightforward. In a busy, overcrowded world, there will be distractions everywhere from any goal you might try to keep in mind. At times you may not know which goals to strive for. Difficulties will arise. Some demands upon you will conflict with others, and responsibilities may come to feel relentless. Perhaps they do right now. You may come to wonder what this life is all about, and sometimes even despair at the lack of an answer. A sudden loss or change can render exigent otherwise merely nagging uncertainties. All of these concerns are the stuff of existential philosophy.

If philosophy can be applied to spiritual ailments, existentialism is one of the most versatile prescriptions. Most people at some point in their lives will experience moments of suffering that have an existential cast. This is suffering that impacts your sense of self, making you wonder who you really are or ought to be, making you wonder about the purpose of your existence. The works of existentialist philosophers elaborate on such phenomena as despair, anxiety, dread, angst, forlornness, the tragic, the absurd, nothingness, being-toward-death, ennui, oppression, and inauthenticity.

While not solving such human difficulties, existentialism recognizes and studies them in philosophical terms. Indeed, when a crisis is diagnosed as "existential," it is salvaged from the indignity of mere pain and recognized as bearing what the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard called a "subjective truth." The remedy of existential thinking comes in the form of relating individual struggles to a human condition understood as universal, and of illuminating the freedom and responsibility, or the creativity, with which they can be tackled.

Existentialists regard our struggles in the light of human finitude, the limits of our life span as well as of our knowledge. Kierkegaard pointed out that while a life can only be understood in hindsight, or "backward," as it were, it must be lived forward. Your most important decisions come with no reliable prediction of the ensuing results. In order to live you must constantly press beyond the limits of what

you can know for certain, venturing beyond the borders of what is comfortable, taking risks. In order to find fulfillment, you might ask whether it is necessary, as Kierkegaard wrote in relation to himself, to find that idea or purpose for which you would be willing to live and die.

Then there is temporal finitude—the fact that you have only one existence, and no matter how long it is, it will be, from a cosmic perspective, very brief. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger argued that mortality singularizes in an existential sense. Since no other individual can die your own death, or live out the time you alone are allotted, your existence is singular. You are your time. The awareness that you will die someday and cannot know precisely when can provoke angst or anxiety. Yet if you do not flee from, but embrace this awareness, you may experience a moment of reckoning, perhaps one of heightened clarity, about your very being. Existentialism helps us to place such experiences in a philosophical framework. It sheds new light on them, and on the human-wide relevance of our otherwise private predicaments.

Yet for all its focus on suffering, existentialism is also a deeply affirmative philosophy, as I shall emphasize in this book. Existentialist thinkers consider as the most important philosophical topic the marvel that we are here at all. Gabriel Marcel, for example, describes existence as both a mystery and a cause for wonder. He defends this mystery and wonder against any philosophy or science that would reduce existence to a logical formula, a quantitative calculation, an object of manipulation. Existentialism rebels against any way of understanding in which you would be merely an abstraction or a bearer of general traits of the species.

Existentialists notice that at every moment of our self-awareness, there is also a world here for each of us. You are, as Heidegger described, "being-in-the-world"—never isolated but existing in and through the world of which you are a part. Why do these fragmentary bits of the world you experience—just a fraction of all that is—appear to you as part of a complete world, even though you will never experience or even be able to imagine this whole in its totality? What makes you as a human being concerned about your particular place in such a world?

Existentialists argue that while this world has no intrinsic meaning, you give it meaning by your actions and interactions with it, by your ways of seeing and understanding it, through your actions and choices. Through your various projects, you lend the world your feeling, your interpretation, your own existential significance. You contribute to the structure and sense it takes on. Like all of us, and yet in ways specific to you alone, you transform the world through your participation in it, and transform yourself in the process.

For the world which withholds any ready-made meaning is also the world of your possibilities. You did not choose the conditions into which you've been "thrown," as existentialists put it—you did not choose the laws that govern the physical world, the time and place of your birth, the already established meanings, language, culture, laws, and institutions that shape the social world around you, the position from which you start out in life. Within this given context, much about how your existence will unfold is up to you. This freedom of course comes with responsibility. Even if the way forward seems narrow, there is not a single path, but choices along the way. You may venture this way or that way, and you may change the trajectory, too. You recognize various possibilities of what you might do and you may become anxious or enthralled in light of what is possible.

Existentialism offers a means to reflect on the world in this way and on shaping yourself as to take up your own place in it. It allows you to think about your being here, your existence, as an active, creative becoming. For existentialism argues that each of us is not to be regarded as a finished being with a predetermined purpose, or as merely a member of a species, or as a statistic. You are a unique individual, shot through with possibility. You can take up what you are given and transform it. You do not arrive in the world a finished self, but must, as Friedrich Nietzsche insisted, "become who you are."

Liberating us from the idea that our essence is fixed, that our path is set by our given circumstance or inherited identity, existentialism recognizes our freedom to shape our own existence. It does not ignore differences in circumstance among us, but views subjectivity—our free, self-reflective consciousness—as the starting point. It tells us that as subjects we are always "transcending"—going beyond what we have been or already are—toward new actualizations. But it is always from this first-person perspective—from the point of view of "I" as a transcending subject, as a unique individual—that, for existentialists, any philosophical truth is truly relevant.

In the present moment we may find ourselves in the midst of so many assaults to public truth and meaning that existentialists' advocacy of the individual self, of the first-person perspective, may seem particularly appealing to some readers. Yet others may be wary of existentialism's focus on the self for the same reason, associating the philosophy with the selfish individualism or narcissism or even rampant subjectivity that seems to plague our culture. One critic recently claimed to be cured from the existentialist focus on subjective life by turning to the more analytic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. An Austrian philosopher who rejected the idea of a private language, Wittgenstein argued that we have no privileged access to our own minds, if that means thought that would be unmediated by language or the presence of others. Wittgenstein thus presumably held any talk of the inner life to be nonsense.

But so, too, did one of the most famous existential philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre. He held in suspicion the idea that the self was some interior realm of a soul or an "ego" or some essential core of who we are. Like other phenomenological philosophers before him, who studied how the world appears to us as phenomena, Sartre viewed consciousness as always "outside" itself, out there in the world, directed toward the objects of perception and action. We can reflect on our own consciousness, of course, but never in isolation from the world—for consciousness is always conscious of something besides itself.

Even Kierkegaard, who proposed "inwardness" as a philosophical category, did not think that brooding over the self was the goal of contemplation—though some of the pseudonymous "authors" of his books spilled an awful lot of ink in the agonies of self-reflection. Kierkegaard responded to the acute consciousness human beings can have of themselves as the site of our experience. But for Kierkegaard, authentic inwardness requires individual passion, commitment, and decision—all of these directed toward something outside and higher than the self. Only by recognizing that the self is grounded in something higher than itself can one avoid despair. Wittgenstein, by the way, thought Kierkegaard the most profound thinker of his century.

Existential philosophy does not only indulge the self but reveals the world from the point of view of the individual. It dignifies our vulnerabilities by relating them to those shared by all other human subjects. It is true that the themes of existentialism can feel stunningly personal, but they relate the individual experience to universal structures of human existence. Many existentialist thinkers—Sartre, Marcel,

Simone Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Kierkegaard, too—insisted that recognizing the conditions of your own "subjectivity" ought to imply recognizing that of others. Consideration of your own suffering in existential terms involves recognizing others' potential for suffering. Awareness of your own becoming, your capacity to evolve in the light of possibilities, entails recognizing the potentiality of other existential subjects. Recognition of your own freedom entails recognizing the freedom of others. Existentialism is personal, but it does not promote selfishness, for it attends to what is personal for all human beings capable of reflecting on their existence.

In a time of cultural fragmentation and often fraught identity politics, it may be salutary to consider what from an existentialist perspective we all share in common. Focusing on commonalities does not preclude recognition of difference or of inequality, for existentialism recognizes above all the particularity of each individual and of what they call "facticity" or the "factical" situation into which they've been thrown. In fact, existentialist thinkers—particularly Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus, along with African American thinkers related to existentialism such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, and Richard Wright, and the critic of colonial oppression Frantz Fanon—analyzed oppression as an existential problem. Existentialist philosophers regarded the fight against oppression as the ultimate task of any existentially oriented ethics. There is a great deal we share in common from an existentialist perspective, and it is understanding this that underlies any defense, against oppression, of our common humanity.

What are these existentially relevant traits shared in common? We are all mortal and live life once and in one direction. None of us can foretell the future or retrace time to undo our mistakes. While existentialist thinkers are diverse in their approaches to human life—a fact that will be emphasized in this book—they all, in one way or another, advocate human freedom and recognize the responsibility this entails. Above all, they describe the human being as having no predetermined path, but one which, if it is to be freely chosen, must be creatively and courageously forged. We are beings who are ever becoming, transcending our present moment in light of possibility. While existentialism regards as philosophically significant the uncertainty and even despair that all of us at one time or other can experience, they also affirm action, creativity, self-determination—or, in a word, becoming. <>

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF BODY AND EMBODIMENT edited by Natalie Boero and Katherine Mason [Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press. 9780190842475]

In popular debates over the influences of nature versus culture on human lives, bodies are often assigned to the category of "nature": biological, essential, and pre-social. **THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF BODY AND EMBODIMENT** challenges that view, arguing that bodies both shape and get shaped by human societies. As such, the body is an appropriate and necessary area of study for sociologists. The Handbook works to clarify the scope of this topic and display the innovations of research within the field.

The volume is divided into three main parts: Bodies and Methodology; Marginalized Bodies; and

Embodied Sociology. Sociologists contributing to the first two parts focus on the body and the ways it is given meaning, regulated, and subjected to legal and medical oversight in a variety of social contexts (particularly when the body in question violates norms for how a culture believes bodies "ought" to behave or appear). Sociologists contributing to the last part use the bodily as a lens through which to study social institutions and experiences. These social settings range from personal decisions about medical treatment to programs for teaching police recruits how to use physical force, from social movement tactics to countries' understandings of race and national identity.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF BODY AND EMBODIMENT also prioritizes empirical evidence and methodological rigor, attending to the ways particular lives are lived in particular physical bodies located within particular cultural and institutional contexts. Many chapters offer extended methodological reflections, providing guidance on how to conduct sociological research on the body and, at times, acknowledging the role the authors' own bodies play in developing their knowledge of the research subject.

THE AESTHETIC LABOR OF ETHNOGRAPHERS by Kjerstin Gruys and David J. Hutson

Since the sociological turn toward embodiment (Turner 1984), scholars have increasingly noted how their own bodies impact (and are impacted by) the research process. Such considerations highlight how appearance, gender presentation, and perceived race or social class can influence interactions while conducting ethnography. For instance, in his study of Chicago housing developments, Venkatesh (2002) acknowledges that his clothing signaled a poverty level similar to those he was studying. As one of his participants explains: " 'If you struggling, you struggling. And, look at you, hair all messed up,

you ain't had no new clothes since I known you. You poor, just like us' " (100). This example illustrates the ways that ethnographers become conscious of their appearance, particularly if it advantages or disadvantages them as researchers. However, turning a critical eye on such moments of ethnographers' bodies suggests that these are not only methodological considerations of access and rapport, but embodied strategies that may be conceptualized as "aesthetic labor."

The concept of aesthetic labor (Warhurst et al. 2000) describes how workers' appearances and mannerisms are commodified in the labor market—styles of dress and pres en ta tion that become incorporated as a condition of employment in hiring, retention, or promotion. As Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson explain, "distinct modes of worker embodiment are corporately produced as aesthetic labourers are 'made up' [. . .] to embody the aesthetics of service organization" (37). Although aesthetic labor has traditionally been studied through employer–employee relations in the interactive service sector, this description also applies to the labor of scholars conducting research— particularly in-person methods, such as during ethnography. Indeed, because research is an expected aspect of employment for most scholars in academia, alterations to appearance or style when collecting ethnographic data constitute forms of aesthetic labor. Yet few methodological discussions acknowledge how academic research specifically involves aesthetic labor.

In this chapter, we suggest that the concept of aesthetic labor captures the embodied practices of ethnographers, in particular, and highlights the multifaceted forms of labor involved in this method of research. To explore how ethnographers perform aesthetic labor, we utilize a comparative case method

of autoethnographic accounts to analyze two research sites: a women's plus-size clothing store and a coed retail gym. In the clothing store, Kjerstin took on the role of an employee and interacted with customers on the sales floor, while in the gym, David became a client by working out one on one with a personal trainer. These differing, but complementary, perspectives provide insight into aesthetic labor on both sides of the interactive service relationship. Through our analyses, we observe that both of us engaged in aesthetic labor prior to entering our field sites, and again throughout data collection, as we adapted to the aesthetic expectations of our sites—a process we describe as balancing blending in versus sticking out. We further observe that our successful accomplishment of aesthetic labor depended on our specific social locations and embodiment; at our field sites gender and body size were the most salient elements of our embodiment. We draw on our narratives to consider how embodiment may compound inequalities, and we argue for greater attention to the ways that ethnographic research should be conceptualized through the lens of labor—a lens that makes clearer how academic work is structured by the same intersectional inequalities prevalent in most occupational fields.

Embodiment, Aesthetic Labor, and Inequality

The concept of aesthetic labor developed as an extension of Hochschild's (1983) "emotional labor," where employees must work to exhibit the "right" feelings in themselves and toward customers. As Hochschild's investigation of airline stewardesses illustrates, the women she studied routinely had to "put on a smile" when dealing with passengers in order to manage surface displays of emotions. When emotion management becomes commodified, Hochschild (1979) says that it constitutes a form of emotional labor. Importantly, while everyone does some emotional management in their everyday lives, employers increasingly require this emotional control as a condition of "interactive serv ice work" (Leidner 1993). Such an analysis reveals the inequalities inherent in this work, as some individuals may be unable to accomplish emotional labor due to race, gender, class, or other aspects of identity. For example, Harvey Wingfield (2009) finds that black male nurses report more difficulty accomplishing emotional labor compared to women and white men, largely due to stereotypes surrounding race and masculinity.

More recently, scholars have paid attention to how workers are not only expected to perform emotional labor but also aesthetic labor. Building from Hochschild's insights, Warhurst coin the term "aesthetic labor" to capture the appearance, bodily, and style requirements of employment in the service industry. Aesthetic labor includes all aspects of a worker's embodiment, from their comportment and style to their vocal patterns and general attractiveness—what Williams and Connell call "looking good and sounding right." Thus, accomplishing aesthetic labor requires employees to align both physical appearance and mannerisms with a company's image of how their employees should look and act. In some cases, prospective employees are recruited because they already embody (or are close to embodying) the brand aesthetic. In other cases, new employees are instructed in grooming, attire, and affect to better fit the image, either through direct training or indirect rules governing one's uniform. Employees who cannot successfully embody the brand image may be put to work in less visible positions, such as in the stockroom or after-hours roles, assuming they were hired at all.

Conceptually, aesthetic labor is related to Bourdieu's theory of capital, habitus, and inequality, which suggests that one's habitus (the mannerisms and bodily styles developed in childhood) predisposes some individuals to fare better in the interactive service economy. Because a person's habitus often relies on

their social class of origin, individuals with, for example, a middle-class background may fit more seamlessly into service-oriented positions where brand and image are at the forefront of customer interactions. These demands for aesthetic labor reinforce hierarchies already present in the labor market and exacerbate inequalities around gender, race, ethnicity, age, social class, ability, and body size. As Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson found in their study of hotel employees, managers hired individuals who had the potential to personify the brand, usually involving middle-class markers of education level, body size and fitness, smile and teeth, grooming and hair, and "correct" tone of voice (48). While prescreening employees in such a way amplifies class (and often racial) inequalities, it is unclear if these practices violate any laws. Indeed, scholars note that the courts generally side with employers in their right to regulate employees' appearances, leaving individuals disadvantaged by the requirements of aesthetic labor few legal options.

Aesthetics and Ethnography

Despite a growing body of research on aesthetic labor, gaps remain in the literature, including an examination of aesthetic labor among ethnographers themselves. Several ethnographers have analyzed (or at least noted) the role of their embodiment during fieldwork, but none have done so through the conceptual lens of aesthetic labor. In some cases, ethnographers have acknowledged ways in which their already-existing appear-ance and mannerisms facilitated access to certain field sites or research subjects. In other cases, ethnographers have noted how their aesthetics created challenges to access, often requiring appearance management (or aesthetic labor).

Some researchers do not recount doing any additional "work" to manage their self-presentation, but they do consider how appearance and mannerisms may have facilitated access to data. For example, Mears (2011) was recruited to her field site before even considering it as a potential site of study because she looked like a fashion model (see also Czerniawski's 2015 research as a plus-size model). In another case, Rivera (2015) noted that, because she appears "ethnically ambiguous," her research subjects could believe that she belonged to whatever racial/ethnic group they preferred. Thus, she reports: "Many of the ethnic minorities who I interviewed referenced my last name or heritage in emphasizing a sense of commonality between us," while "many white evaluators pronounced my name 'Riviera' like the posh coastal areas of Europe" (25). In this way, Rivera had insider access with both ethnic minorities and among whites. To note, although the ethnographers described here seem to "naturally" fit into their field sites, we do not suggest that these scholars are not engaging in aesthetic labor. Rather, it is the everyday aesthetic management they are already doing that coincides with the norms at their chosen field site.

In contrast to cases where ethnographers' appearance facilitated access, several scholars experienced the opposite. Pascoe (2011), for example, introduced the concept of "least gendered identity" to describe the logic she employed while managing her appearance and mannerisms in a way that "muted [her] difference," between herself and the young men she was researching. Pascoe strategically avoided wearing makeup or tight clothing, "walking with a swagger," not giggling, and smiling less, among other things. In his study of a poor and predominantly black neighborhood, Stuart (2016) found that residents were wary of him because he looked "cop-like":

> Given my own appearance—specifically my short, military-style haircut, muscular build, and phenotypical attributes—residents routinely assumed that I was a plainclothes officer. As a

> mixed-race man—my father is black and my mother Mexican—my skin tone is noticeably lighter than that of the majority of the population, more closely resembling that of the predominantly white and Latino police force.

Wacquant (2004), in his ethnography of a Chicago boxing gym, also notes how his presence as a white, French, academic required negotiation for access to the predominantly black, working-class space. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) were similarly reflexive regarding their differing access to the undergraduate women they studied. After noting that Armstrong was presumed by their research subjects to be one of the "real adults" and therefore less trustworthy, they found that Hamilton's "youthful appearance, style of dress, and status as a student" made her more relatable. Although, because Hamilton's hair was "very short," this caused some participants to be "suspicious of this departure from the femininity valued on the floor," which motivated her to grow out her hair for a time.

While it is clear from the examples here that researchers do engage in aesthetic labor, it remains an unacknowledged and understudied phenomenon. In this chapter we ask: what aesthetic labor is required of ethnographers, and what are the methodological and social implications of performing aesthetic labor in the field?

Methods

We use a comparative case method (George and Bennett 2005) and autoethnography to analyze the bodily practices of ethnographers across two sites: a coed retail gym and a women's plus-size clothing store. Broadly speaking, both of our projects involved ethnographic data collection at field sites characterized as (1) workplaces in which workers performed interactive service work, and (2) workplaces in which bodies and embodiment were highly salient. In both cases, our previous findings documented the extent to which workers' embodiments—their appearance, style, and mannerisms—were central to doing their jobs successfully. In particular, David found that personal trainers' fit physiques operated as "bodily capital," granting them interactional authority over higher status clients (Hutson 2016), and allowing exercise to be seen as means of treating illness—even when trainers had no formal medical education (Hutson 2013). Similarly, Kjerstin found that, despite store branding that explicitly celebrated larger body size, store employees and customers used "fat talk" to interactively reinforce already-existing unequal power relations based on body size, workplace hierarchies, and race/ethnicity (Gruys 2012). While our prior research focused on the work experiences of other people in these field sites, the present analysis is more autoethnographic in that we analyze our own experiences as academic workers performing the labor of qualitative data collection.

Ethnography in the Gym

The research site where David conducted participant observation was a coed, retail gym in the southeastern Michigan area. This gym, Fitness Central (a pseudonym), was selected because of its varied population in terms of age, gender, race, and social class, largely due to its lower prices that encouraged families, couples, and students to join. Although the pricing structure attracted a diverse clientele, individuals who received personal training spent significantly more money than their membership-only counterparts. Rates for 1 hour of personal training ranged from $45 to $75, depending on various specials that were ongoing at the time of sign-up. This encouraged clients—who were aware of this ebb and flow of package prices—to let their training lapse until a new deal was available. These situations put trainers in the position of being both fitness instructors and salespeople, as they worked to retain a

regular roster of clients. Much of this effort results from how trainers are paid in gyms where they only receive $20–$25 of the session price. And, given that most trainers work part-time, seeing clients for 4–6 hours a few days per week, this suggests that personal training is likely to be one job among many that individuals hold, rather than a career. Such insight is important in understanding the interactions trainers have with clients, as it contextualizes their aesthetic and emotional labor, as well as their performance of professionalism (Maguire 2008).

Conducting participant observation as a client was necessary for integrating into the training culture at Fitness Central. Within the gym space, people were often self-divided into groups based on where they exercised (i.e., the weight machines vs. the free weight area). However, one additional subdivision was whether or not people could be identified as "clients" by personal trainers. Clients were allowed to interact with trainers and staff in ways that ordinary members were not—they could greet trainers (sometimes verbally or with a head nod), and they could speak with them at the front desk or in the offices near the entrance of the gym. Indeed, the casual, interactional opportunities increased dramatically when identified as a client, as this indicated an investment in fitness and the gym.

David's own personal training involved exercising with a trainer 1 hour per week for 14 months (except for 8 weeks when traveling or between packages). David chose his personal trainer, Mark, because he came recommended by mutual acquaintances, and because of positive interactions with him outside of the gym. Mark was a conventionally attractive man in his late 30s, white, tall, thin, and muscular. He had blonde hair that was styled, and he had been involved in the fitness industry for some time. Before becoming a trainer, he had done some modeling and acting, which he said had helped him in making connections with clients. Mark and David worked closely each session, usually in the free weights area of the gym. This allowed for interactions with other trainers and clients, and it was a primary way that people became aware of David's study. To take notes, David would jot down words or snippets of conversations in a small notebook, allowing him to observe relatively uninterrupted, as he worked out with his trainer or on his own.

Ethnography in a Clothing Store

Kjerstin conducted 10 months of participant observation as a paid sales associate at Real Style (a pseudonym), a women's plus-size store in Los Angeles, California. Bordo (2004) has argued that plus-size clothing companies' "flesh-normalizing" campaigns offer a "species of resistance" (xxxi) against oppressive mainstream body ideals. Saguy and Ward (2011) similarly describe the plus-size fashion industry as "the industry most invested in creating positive and glamorous images of larger female bodies." Real Style was an ideal site for observing how brand ideology and body size combined to shape service interactions because it offered the distinctive vantage point of observing the experiences of (mostly) plus-sized women workers and customers interacting within the framework of corporate branding that celebrated larger body sizes.

In Kjerstin's first impressions of Real Style, it appeared to be an oasis of body ac ceptance for plus-sized women. Mannequins in the storefront were larger and more curvaceous than typical mannequins, and the branded concept of "Real Women" appeared throughout the store and company literature. Real Style's corporate website asserted that "Real Style customers shop for style, not just for size." These branding and corporate materials suggested that women ought to be "confident" and "proud" of being

"real" and having "curves." Terms like "sophisticated," "chic," "fashion forward," and "feminine" further painted a picture in which the ideal Real Style "look" was presumably middle-to-upper class and certainly gender conforming.

The clothing offered by Real Style ranged in size from 14 to 28, with three additional sizes (12, 30, and 32) offered online for certain items. Most garments were designed to fit women of an approximate height of 5'6" with additional "petite" sizes for women 5'4" or shorter, and "tall" sizes for women 5'8" or taller. The Real Style corporate website identified its target customer as "plus-size women ages 35–55." No corporate materials spoke to the race/ethnicity or class status of target customers, though in-store, print, and television advertisements typically featured both white women and women of color, often side by side. Customers—almost all plus-sized women—ranged in age from teenagers to seniors, and they were racially diverse. Twenty-three of Real Style's employees were plus-sized women, along with seven standard-sized female employees (including Kjerstin) and four standard-sized male employees.

Working as a paid sales associate at Real Style allowed Kjerstin to spend considerable time observing both the "front stage" of the shop floor, as well as the "back stage" break room and stockroom (Goffman 1959). She spent most of her time assisting customers, keeping the store tidy, setting up store displays, and passing the slower times by chatting with coworkers. When interacting with customers, Kjerstin's tasks ranged from providing very basic help, such as retrieving an article of clothing from the stockroom, to more complex interactions, such as measuring women for bras or providing advice on clothing choices. Kjerstin also spent time with several coworkers outside of Real Style in a variety of contexts, including carpooling, sharing meals at the corner diner, and attending a movie, a baby shower, and a coworker's funeral. She was open with coworkers about her status as a graduate student, and that she was conducting research on body image and the fashion industry.

Kjerstin recorded field notes during her breaks at Real Style using a personal digital assistant and portable keyboard. When she could do so discretely, she scribbled a short "reminder" phrase or two on receipt paper while working. She dictated additional field notes into a digital recorder during her commute home, and then transcribed and elaborated upon these notes with remaining details in the evening or on the following day.

Data Analysis

To structure our comparison, we first inductively analyzed our own data based on broad themes we discussed together, such as site selection, preparing to enter a site, clothing and appearance, and interactions while observing. Next, we shared verbatim field notes from both sites that pertained to our themes, which we combined using memos to or gan ize the analysis as it emerged. This process has been utilized successfully in similar studies where researchers combined data sets collected independently for a more focused comparison (i.e., Davis, Dewey, and Murphy 2016; Rupp, Taylor, and Shapiro 2010). This approach allows for novel analyses to develop from distinct, but related, data sets. In writing our findings we lean heavily on descriptive language written in first-person narrative to faithfully center our observations within the autoethnographic nature of our data. Both studies received institutional review board (IRB) approval from their respective universities, and all names have been assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Findings

One's appearance, style, or body in a field site can act as a means of gaining entry, maintaining access, or building rapport. Accordingly, our bodies facilitated (to varying degrees) all of those things. In the sections that follow, we detail how our attempts to accomplish aesthetic labor as researchers were successful in some cases or more challenging in others. First, we describe our general appearance, as well as how we were read by others in the site. Next, we explore specific instances of performing aesthetic labor, and how this depended significantly on various social interactions. In effect, we suggest that the aesthetic labor of ethnographers is a reciprocal process of navigating site members' expectations, structural limitations, and intersectional inequalities.

Aesthetic Labor in the Gym

When meeting people for in-person interviews, David describes himself as a "stocky white guy in his thirties with a shaved head and a goatee." This gives people enough information to pick him out of a crowded café and introduce themselves. But within that portrayal is the key descriptor of "stocky," as David is indeed stocky. He is neither short nor tall, fat nor thin—just by appearances alone, most people describe David as "solid." While the terms "stocky" and "solid" politely skirt the typical designations of body weight, David is officially categorized at the upper end of "overweight" based on the Body Mass Index (5'10," 200 pounds). Thus, in most clothing, he appears to be a medium-height, stocky, white man with a shaved head and a goatee in his mid-to-late thirties. His embodiment positioned him well for working out with a personal trainer, as he was clearly neither a novice nor an expert. Such considerations of how his appearance marked him as a nonexpert were quite different from the concerns of personal trainers he studied, as they often saw a direct connection between embodiment and authority. Indeed, as one trainer noted to David: "Your body is your business card" (Hutson 2013, 68). Yet for the purposes of blending in, David's build allowed him to take on the role of a client and be trained by an expert with higher levels of bodily capital (Hutson 2016).

Gaining access to the research site did not require significant changes to David's appearance, although he did carefully consider his attire when observing. Because his goal was to blend in—or, at least, not stick out—he attempted to accomplish aesthetic labor by wearing neutral colors typically associated with men's workout clothes: black, blue, and gray. Not only were these the most represented colors in athletic sections of clothing stores, they were the ones worn most often by men in the gym. There were, of course, rare exceptions to this masculine clothing mandate. One younger white man always wore red sneakers and a red hat, and one muscular black man usually sported a pair of bright green headphones. But, for the most part, David adhered to the expected colors for men in the gym so as to fade into the background. He also decided to wear looser fitting black t-shirts when working out. This was a conscious decision because he did not have a muscular or defined torso and knew that black (as a color) was more slimming. This allowed him to appear as a relatively average-looking gym-goer who could be read as "not too fit"—someone who was both trying to gain muscle (in the free weights area) and lose weight (in the cardio area). Performing this aesthetic labor was intended to let him observe uninterrupted on most occasions by constructing a nondescript appearance. Yet he still learned from observations and interactions with his trainer what kinds of appearances blended into the gym, which ones stood out, and where he fell along that spectrum.

Doing research as a client brought a different set of concerns regarding aesthetic labor. While ethnographers working as employees might have to follow a given uniform or dress code, the rules regulating David's appearance were less clear. Because working out with a personal trainer involved more intimate contact than David had previously experienced at the gym, he attended to his appearance on two levels: (1) grooming and clothing (to be presentable) and (2) bodily performance (to be seen as "serious" about fitness). Primarily, this was because he knew that exercising with his trainer might lead to interactions with other trainers that could yield data. For example, he noticed that his preparation for the gym on days when he was being trained was much more extensive than usual:

> Since starting training, I always shower and shave because of working out with Mark. Mark often comments on this and notes that my goatee is meticulously trimmed. During today's session, he said in a seemingly impressed tone, "How much time do you spend on your goatee!?" I told him that it only takes about a minute to trim it up using a razor in the mirror. I jokingly replied: "Well, I have to make sure it looks good from every angle because I have no idea what you'll be making me do." Later, Mark commented on my cologne and joked about how I'll just sweat it off: "Wow, you smell . . . good? [laughs] You know you'll just sweat off the cologne, right? At least you'll smell nice for a while." I laughed along with him, but will not be wearing cologne again. (August 25)

These interactions alerted David to where he fell along a spectrum of acceptable and unacceptable styles. On the one hand, Mark marveled at the precision in David's goatee, and he mused that it was for his benefit since he'd be seeing David at odd angles. But it also revealed that this level of detail was appreciated by trainers who come into close contact with clients. His comment about David's cologne, however, suggested that some bodily efforts were less important and, in this case, ran the risk of ridicule. Because David's purpose in the gym was data collection and making connections with trainers, this insight into what might mark him as "not serious" was important for accomplishing aesthetic labor.

Mark's comment was reminiscent of trainers David interviewed when commenting on a woman's make-up in the gym. As one trainer said, "Well, I can certainly tell if somebody's putting on makeup before going into the gym. I think it's pretty funny. I'm not a fan of it [laughs]" (as quoted in Hutson 2016, 61). These remarks revealed the gendered rules of the gym for women, and many noted how they had to negotiate expectations of "hegemonic femininity" (Schippers 2007). Often, this involved giving up some aspects of hegemonic femininity (i.e., hair, cosmetics) in order to embrace others (i.e., thinness, muscle tone). Male clients, by and large, did not need to navigate competing demands, as their expected presentations of masculinity aligned with a hegemonic masculinity that privileges a more rough, relaxed, no frills aesthetic (Hutson 2016). Personal trainers, on the other hand, saw their appearance as directly connected to their status and authority, and both men and women spent significant time performing aesthetic labor (Hutson 2013).

As an ethnographer, aesthetic labor was paramount for maintaining access to the community of trainers that David had begun interacting with as a client. One conversation with Mark illustrated that David was successfully accomplishing aesthetic labor. A recurring joke while working out involved appropriate versus inappropriate attire, specifically spandex. Mark would repeat an often-heard phrase: "Spandex is a privilege, not a right." This conveyed the idea that the skin-tight material should only be worn by some people—those men or women who were lean and well-muscled. A similar trend of wearing revealing clothing occurred among men who worked out in the free weights area. Notably, many muscular men

would wear a t-shirt with cut-off sleeves and the sides removed to give more freedom of movement when exercising. While this did give them more range of motion, it also made their torsos, abs, and pectorals highly visible whenever they moved. In one interaction while working out, Mark jokingly noted this similarity while clearly indicating what was appropriate for David's body:

> Mark and I are doing a combination standing shoulder press with dumbbells that continue into bicep curls. I'm performing the movements, but am hesitating mid-way through the exercise to wiggle my shoulders and adjust my shirt, since it requires a full range of arm movement. Mark notices this and says, "Why are you stopping in the middle?" I reply, "My shirt keeps bunching up at the shoulders. It's annoying." He says, "Well stop it [laughs], you're aiming for a smoother movement from start to finish." I exclaim, "It's not me, it's the shirt! That's it, next time I'm just going to cut the sides out of my shirt like those muscle guys." Laughing in shock, Mark says: "Oh god no! You don't want to be like the 'spandex guy!' " We both laugh. (November 19)

Although offered in a friendly and jovial manner, Mark's comment clearly touched on the limits of David's body for public display, setting the parameters for how much he could show off without opening himself up to embarrassment and possibly closing off future interactions with trainers. Mark's response was not unlike clients' reactions when commenting on the bodily limits of personal trainers. For most clients, they believed that trainers should be in excellent physical shape. As Holly says: "I'm gonna be honest. No disrespect, but I just would not want a fat slob training me. It's just you look at them and wonder 'Is her diet good?' " (as quoted in Hutson 2013, 69). For trainers to accomplish aesthetic labor and gain a client's trust, they needed to maintain high levels of bodily capital.

Given the description of David's body as stocky, he discovered that within the context of the gym he was considered to be both overweight and unfit. However, these two things did not necessarily always go hand in hand. While David's weight may have stood in for a degree of unfitness, weight alone was not the sole determinant, as even thin people could be unfit if they were unable to do the exercises prescribed by the trainer. During one trainer–client interaction David observed, a trainer explains this to his client:

> A young, white, male trainer is working out with a middle-aged, white, male client and having him do step lunges with weights. The client says, "I don't feel like I'm making progress—I can't do any more than I did last week. Do you think it's because of my weight?" I notice the client is not slim, but not overly large either. The trainer responds, "No—that's not it. I have a client who's thin, but he's not strong at all. You'd look at him and think he was in shape, but he's not. And, he doesn't really try—he doesn't push himself. It just takes time to develop muscles." The client, seeming to accept the explanation, begins another set of lunges. (February 18)

This interaction reinforces one of the unspoken rules of the gym and one of the most important currencies for gaining respect: effort. Beyond the appearance and display of David's body, another important aspect of accomplishing aesthetic labor involved displaying effort when exercising—both with his trainer and when working out on his own. In this sense, David became a representative of his trainer's ability. That is, David's progress of gaining muscle or losing weight signified Mark's skill and David's effort, and he found himself exercising more vigorously when another trainer was nearby. For example, while he was working out on his own, a trainer who sometimes interacted with Mark during their sessions came over and (unrequested) spotted David for a few repetitions of a bench press. He encouraged David to push through the last two or three reps with a generic "Come on, you got it!"

while hovering his hands just under the bar. After finishing the set, he told David: "Just making sure you got those last two in. You keep working out this hard with Mark and you'll really start to see some results." David thanked him and said he hoped so, and he returned to his work. About 2 weeks later that trainer approached David about being interviewed for the study after hearing about it from a colleague. While fleeting, even momentary interactions are examples of how accomplishing aesthetic labor through appearance and effort allowed for additional opportunities at data collection.

Although much of David's time was spent in the gym doing participant observation with his trainer, he also conducted observations when working out alone. While taking this position in the field required aesthetic labor in the more general sense of blending in and not sticking out, it also involved a gendered component. To observe trainer–client interactions, David had to enter the free weights area of the gym where most training took place. "Free weights," in contrast to weight machines, are often seen as superior for bodily conditioning because they do not isolate muscles like weight machines. The free weights area is also notoriously a "men's space"—one of the highly gendered areas of the gym. To gain access to the free weights area, David started wearing a backwards baseball cap to appear more masculine. Although David does identify openly as a gay man, that identity is not always visible because he typically presents (and is read as) masculine, which allows him to "pass" given the stereotypical association of femininity with gay men. Additionally, he usually only entered the free weights space when training with Mark. Thus, to better blend into the free weights area by himself, David used the strategy of wearing a baseball cap to increase his masculine "gender capital" (Bridges 2009). Similar to other researchers who have noted gender dynamics in gyms (Crossley 2006; Paradis 2012; Spencer 2012), doing so allowed him to exercise in a hypermasculine space and to take field notes without notice, signaling that he was successfully accomplishing aesthetic labor.

Aesthetic Labor in the Clothing Store

At the time that Kjerstin conducted her research at Real Style, she was of similar height to most Real Style customers and shoppers (5'5"), but she was noticeably smaller in girth to almost all, generally wearing a standard-sized "10" in pants, while Real Style sizing started at size 14. Although she would not typically describe her body using the term "skinny," in the context of a women's plus-size clothing store she clearly belonged to the class of people that Ellsworth (1989, 308) refers to as having "white-skin, middle-class, able-bodied, and thin privilege." Much as David described in the section earlier, Kjerstin's body is neither thin nor fat. However, unlike David's embodiment at Fitness Central, which positioned him well to blend in with other clients being trained, Kjerstin's thinner-than-plus-sized body frequently stood out. As she has written before, "I antici-pated that my being a standard-sized employee might naturally disrupt some of the unspoken assumptions that women held about working or shopping at a 'plus-size' store" (2012). Because of this, and despite her efforts to "blend in" as much as possible, her embodiment had an impact on the site that somewhat resembled Garfinkel's (1967) use of breaching experiments to tease out the unwritten rules of social interaction. However, as will be described later, having a body that was sometimes disruptive to the site was not her intention, but instead something she had to realize and then navigate.

To this day, years after Kjerstin first set foot in Real Style, she vividly remembers her experience of attempting to blend in, in terms of her appearance when she applied in person to be a salesperson. Reflecting on this in her field notes, she wrote:

> For possibly the first time in my life, I was consciously trying to avoid looking "too thin." Although I want my clothes to be flattering, fashionable, and interview/work appropriate, I intentionally avoided articles of clothing that would have highlighted the "smaller" areas of my body, such as my torso (area above hips and below bust). I also wore flat shoes instead of heels. Heels would have lengthened my body. The outfit I chose was: dark blue jeans, kitten-heeled shoes (less than 1" high), boatneck white 3/4 sleeve t-shirt, a leopard print cardigan. [. . .] I decided at the last minute to wear my glasses. I debated this for a while, because glasses could make me seem a bit elitist/brainy, which could be bad, but they also make me look a little nerdy or quirky, which could be good because I didn't want to come off as being totally main-stream (i.e., so "normal middle-class thin blonde white woman" that I couldn't relate to women who weren't white or who were fatter). (January 28)

Because body size was of such salience at Real Style, Kjerstin was most concerned with not seeming too slender, but these field notes also illustrate her intention to avoid styling that might have been read as upper class or elitist, as she correctly anticipated that she had a more privileged race, class, and educational status compared to the typical retail worker.

Despite Kjerstin's efforts to blend in—or at least not stand out—to the extent possible, her interactions with the hiring managers at Real Style indicated that her efforts did not actually accomplish this goal. Still, it appears that her aesthetic was at least adequate because her job application to be a salesperson was accepted. The first question she asked the manager, Joe, was whether or not there was a dress code. She learned that blue jeans and flip-flops were forbidden because they were too casual and employees "were taking it too far." Kjerstin had plenty of shoes that weren't flip-flops, but she had to buy a new pair of pants to follow the "no blue jeans" rule. Other than these two prohibited items, employees were expected to dress in the style of clothing sold in the store, but not necessarily in clothing from the store. Specifically, Joe told Kjerstin to "accessorize, layer, and try to look like the mannequins." She must have looked concerned, because he then added "you shouldn't have anything to worry about," suggesting that her outfit had at least landed her near Real Style's aesthetic.

Although Kjerstin was not required to wear Real Style clothes to work, the fact that her body was too small to fit into the smallest sizes was problematic in other ways. For example, one night all of the sales staff were required to attend formal training on how to measure customers for bras. The training required employees to practice bra fits on each other. Kjerstin was paired with a woman named Krystol, another salesperson who was white and plus-sized. After Kjerstin measured Krystol, she turned around to measure her. Although the training suggested that employees should avoid touching clients' bodies as much as possible, as Krystol wrapped the measuring tape around Kjerstin's body, she cupped her hands around each side of her torso and loudly proclaimed, "God you're bony!" Although being physically groped was unexpected and unpleasant, the experience of having her body assessed so publicly—and in a way that marked her as "different" compared to the group—was more upsetting to Kjerstin. She felt her face flush and didn't know what to say. It wasn't until later that evening that Kjerstin was able to view Krystol's comment from her perspective, realizing that Kjerstin's mere presence at Real Style was understandably upsetting to many of the women who worked and shopped there, who viewed the space as "safe" compared to the fat phobia they frequently experienced in other contexts. Thus, Kjerstin's thinner body "helped" her learn this unspoken rule, but it also caused some emotional harm to the women at the field site.

Some Real Style clients had similarly negative reactions to encountering Kjerstin's body while shopping. Because the job required her to engage in "fat talk" as an aspect of performing emotional labor, Kjerstin initially had some difficulty connecting with customers. As detailed previously (Gruys 2012), when describing a pair of pants to a customer, Kjerstin once jokingly said that the pants were "great for women like me who always get 'muffin top'!" The customer then replied, "I don't think you have any place to be complaining about muffin top." Once again Kjerstin had broken the rules, not only through her body but also through her body-talk; as a thinner woman, joking about having "muffin top" to a plus-size customer was both inappropriate and insulting. This surprised Kjerstin because she'd assumed that only extremely thin women could be seen as obnoxious for making such a statement. Through these occasions of "talking out of size" (Gruys 2012), Kjerstin realized that the social terrain of gender and body size wasn't as simple as "supermodels versus the rest of us"; rather, the boundary between women who could shop at "regular" stores and those who "had to" shop at plus-size stores was extremely meaningful.

These occasions also allowed Kjerstin to see other forms of boundary work oriented around fat phobia. One of her coworkers tried to explain customers' occasional "rude" behavior. After a customer had been impatient with Kjerstin, Laura, a middle-aged Latina coworker, tried to comfort her by explaining:

> "You can't take it personally that she was rude. She's fat. . . " Laura paused, and I asked her to go on. "Well . . . not that I'm . . . (gesturing to herself, indicating that she isn't skinny) . . . but these women are fat. They have low self-esteem, and they're rude! But, you know, they bring it upon themselves! And they're gonna be twice as rude to you . . . but don't feel bad. They bring it on themselves. They're fat and it's their own fault." (February 14)

Later that afternoon, Laura continued the conversation as follows:

> l: "Yes, you are definitely the smallest person who works here . . . , 'cept Joe, but he doesn't count."
> k: "Why doesn't Joe count?"
> l: "Since he's a guy, and so the women don't care, but they care about you."
> k: "What do you mean?"
> l: "Well, all the customers hate you, because you're skinny."
> k: "Really? Oh, I don't believe that. I get that some of them might prefer to be only around other plus-sized women when they're here, but I don't think they hate me. And I definitely don't think that all of them hate me!"
> l: "Oh, they do. I've worked here for 3 years, and it's all of them. They all hate skinny women, and I know it's messed up, but can you blame them? I mean, don't feel bad, they're . . . (spiraling her finger next to her head to indicate 'crazy') . . . and bitter."
> k: "What do you mean?" (mimicking her hand motion)
> l: "Well, you know, I mean, I know it's hard to lose weight, gosh, I mean I'm fat, you know? But there's something wrong with them, like, in their heads, that lets them get so big and not do anything about it . . . eating junk food all the time, and being lazy."

Hearing Laura describe fat women using such derogatory terms and stereotypes while simultaneously acknowledging her own fat body (which she then distanced from such stereotypes) was a poignant illustration of the identity work that individuals do when they are members of a stigmatized group and also buy into the very logics that justify the stigma. Schwalbe et al. (2000) refer to this as "defensive othering"—a strategy allowing individuals to distance themselves from stigma without challenging the

structural arrangements creating it. Here, Kjerstin's body had been the first step in a chain reaction of multiple women doing boundary work around gender and body size.

As shown earlier, and despite performing aesthetic labor, Kjerstin's thinner body kept her from blending in at her site. Kjerstin could not be the "fly on the wall" she'd hoped to be, but she nevertheless had access to particular types of data. As she described in previous work (Gruys 2012), her body unintentionally became its own ethnomethodological breaching experiment, forcing some of the unspoken rules at her site to become more visible. Similar experiences have been noted by other ethnographers, including Hoang (2014), who was viewed as fatter, older, and less attractive compared to the sex workers she worked alongside. In Hoang's case, she argued that her embodiment facilitated rapport. Despite these advantages of having a body that didn't fit in, there are ethical considerations to keep in mind, particularly as they relate to how stigmatized research subjects might experience emotional or psychological harm by encountering an embodied "intrusion" into spaces previously viewed as "safe."

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have noted how aesthetic labor is not only studied by ethnogra-phers, but a practice they engage in as well. By comparing two distinct sites and utiliz-ing autoethnographic accounts, we illustrate that the aesthetic labor of ethnographers requires a negotiation of blending in and/or sticking out. In Hutson's (2013, 2016) study of personal trainers, his ability to accomplish aesthetic labor relied on crafting a "not too fit" and masculine self-presentation to blend into the male-dominated free weights area. For Gruys (2012), her relative thinness as an employee in the women's plus-size clothing store made her stick out in ways that—although useful for some aspects of data collection—required alterations to self-presentation. Thus, in both cases the intersections of gender and body size/shape were especially salient to the accomplishment of aesthetic labor.

Although our analyses here have focused on gender and body size/shape, future work examining ethnographers' aesthetic labor should expand the analytical lens to consider the influence of other intersecting categories. Intersectional analyses of ethnographers' aesthetic labor are especially important for understanding the power dynamics and ethical implications of "studying up" versus "studying down" (Wolf 1993). For example, how might Kjerstin have been treated by coworkers had she actually been another retail worker trying to scrape together a living through low-wage labor, rather than as an upper-middle-class PhD candidate? How did her relative thinness intersect with these privileges? Similarly, to what extent did David's racial privilege impact the way his "stocky" body was perceived? Might a stocky black man have been viewed as threatening by virtue of his gender, race, and larger body? Also, how did David's masculine appearance mark him as tacitly "straight," and would more visibly effeminate or queer-appearing researchers have had the same access to such spaces? Clearly, as has been found in research on nonacademic workers, an ethnographer's ability to accomplish aesthetic labor is not simply a question of effort or intention, but relies on structural positioning. However, unlike research subjects, whose aesthetic labor is primarily oriented around their individual success in a job, ethnographers must also consider the extent to which their ability to blend in or stick out reinforces already existing inequalities.

Our findings also highlight the multiple forms of labor involved in research. Often, data collection, analysis, and writing are thought of as primarily intellectual endeavors. Yet ethnography requires the additional aspects of physical, emotional, and—as we have argued—aesthetic labor. While in the field, with participants through emotional labor, retain access to the site by blending in or sticking out through aesthetic labor, and manage hours of observation through physical labor. Further, ethnographic work involves bodily demands beyond the field site in the form of writing up field notes, which can take its own toll on the body or be hindered by an already-fatigued body. For example, in the course of Kjerstin's (Gruys 2012) study, she developed cubital tunnel syndrome in both arms, while David (Hutson 2013, 2016) often could not immediately write field notes after personal training sessions due to bodily pain and, occasionally, nausea. These experiences suggest that researchers with physical limitations or (dis)abilities may be additionally restricted in what field sites they can enter, the extent to which they can participate, and how long they can sustain the physical labor of note taking. Thus, we call for future explorations of ethnographers' labor that more explicitly problematize embodied dimensions of intersectional inequalities involving gender, body size/shape, race/ethnicity, class, sexualities, and (dis)abilities. <>

READING DAVID HUME'S "OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE" edited by Babette Babich [De Gruyter, 9783110585346]

This collection of reading and essays on the *Standard of Taste* offers a much needed resource for students and scholars of philosophical aesthetics, political reflection, value and judgments, economics, and art. The authors include experts in the philosophy of art, aesthetics, history of philosophy as well as the history of science. This much needed volume on David Hume will enrich scholars across all levels of university study and research.

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Signatures and Taste: Hume's Mortal Leavings and Lucian by Babette Babich

[Stay sober and remember not to believe.] — Epicharmus / David Hume'

Of Books and Signatures

In his introduction to his collection of David Hume's essays, Alasdair MacIntyre writes what surely wins the palm for an introductory first sentence to a book collection: "An introduction should introduce."' The point is elegant and MacIntyre is compelled to explain: "It should not be an attempt at a substitute for the book it is introducing."

In the essayistic case of David Hume's essays, and collections of the same, of which there are a number, Hume's essays speak for themselves, that is to say, apart from an 'advertisement,' without an editor's introduction. Additionally, there is a tradition of scholarly reflection on Hume's essays as such. The current collection adds to this and hopes to inspire reflection on what is arguably the most exceptional of Hume's essays.

"Of the Standard of Taste" was written to avoid damages threatened in response to the planned publication of Hume's *Five Dissertations* (a book including: "The Natural History of Religion," "Of the Passions," "Of Tragedy," "Of Suicide," and "Of the Immortality of the Soul"). The threats were promised by William Warburton (1698 —1779), the influential theologian who subsequently went on to become Bishop of Gloucester (and dedicated Shakespeare aficionado), who guaranteed a suit for excommunication of Hume *and* his cousin (the clergyman and playwright, John Home, author of *Douglas), as well as* Hume's publisher Andrew Millar (1706 —1768) were Hume's *Five Dissertations* to be published as originally designed. Millar duly urged Hume to revise the first essay and cut "Of Suicide" and "Of the Immortality of the Soul," literally slicing the final two sections from the already printed book. The three remaining essays were insufficient to make the book a book and Hume quickly composed "Of the Standard of Taste" to fill out the missing signatures, permitting the book to be published, with a new title, *Four Dissertations.*

The version of "Of the Standard of Taste" included here follows that same first publication, including punctuation, and spelling, if not to the letter — f s and all —indicating in brackets the pagination of the original printing.' But if today's extant facsimile edition claims that it brings together, in the words of lames Fieser: "the long-separated essays ... united as Hume intended," this would not be entirely precise. To such an end, one would need the original live essays, in accord with Flume's original design, *less* "Of

the Standard of Taste" subst it tiled in place of the elided essays. The socio-political and theological (and legal) reasons that compelled Hume to revise "The Natural History of Religion," i. e., the first offending essay, and to exclude his final two essays were thus quite different from his reasons for including "Of the Standard of Taste," although one might well read the essay itself as a commentary on the judgment, such as it was, that necessitated the exclusions.

Why that should be so requires something of the contextual sensibility Hume tended to foreground in his own discussion of taste: a matter of delicacy, refined but not less scientific,' and not less dependent on the culture of polite society but also technical precision and convention, as the "standards" for the same. "Of the Standard of Taste" would prove to be Hume's very last philosophical essay." And a relation to final things, including a philosopher's reflection on his philosophical legacy, including his contemporary reception, requires both convention and the optic of distance.

The Volume

The essays in the present volume accompanying "Of the Standard of Taste" offer a varying range of interpretations of this one text and reading between these different assessments can enhance an understanding of the breadth and complexity of Hume's essay.

Regarded more comprehensively — and beyond the specific theme of "Of the Standard of Taste," — there has been sustained scholarly engagement with Hume's essays, complex as this history is, including a tumultuous focus, beginning in Hume's own lifetime of the falling out, on the one hand, between Hume and Rousseau. Added to this is a complicated aesthetic "contest," at least as art historians assess these contests as "philosophical" disputes — this point being not rendered more perspicuous by considering the analytic-continental divide (and vigorous analytic denial of the very idea of any such distinction) that today haunts professional, disciplinary discussion' apart from the historical complications added by the 18th century articulation of what can seem to have been a parallel divide. To this must be added a more Brexit-minded focus on Hume and Smith (and the Scottish Enlightenment beginning by foregrounding the routinely not often-noted James Dunbar), but more recently still focussing on the same Adam Smith already discussed above with reference to Lucian (and Hume's deathbed reading).

Where the lion's share of Hume scholarship continues to look to his political and moral theory, or to his work as a historian, or indeed and at the heart of philosophy proper, at his epistemology, specifically on the nature of causation (here represented in Shiner and, in connection with continental philosophy of science, Babich), Hume's reflections on taste, are as central to aesthetics as to the philosophy of art and beauty (Scruton), including delicacy (Costelloe) — and not coincidentally juridical and critical reflection (Caygill), but also to art and as much to speculative or economic investment, as to 'standards,' (Kivy, MacLachlan, Costelloe, Townsend, Demuth/Demuthova), these including historical philosophical reflections (Caygill, Mazza), involving antiquity with Plato (Freydberg) as well as moving forward to Nietzsche (Babich), while also including questions of gender (Korsmeyer, but also referenced in Townsend, Demuth/Demuthova, and Mazza).

Significantly, as this is a volume dedicated to an essay written to take the place of excluded essays, this volume also and alas has its own excluded essays — chapters the editor had originally hoped to include but which could not be included owing to prohibitive publisher's fees.' The one comfort to be taken

here is that these particular texts are published, if not as easily accessible as one might wish for fruitful scholarship in the best sense of Nietzsche's "*la gaya* scienza" — *Die frohliche Wissenschaft.*

By contrast, Hume's essays, at least initially, were suppressed: excluded from his *Five Dissertations* as already seen and quite for reasons of literary style or judgment (and parallels on such judgments of taste corresponding to Warburton on Shakespeare, versus Hume on John Home).' To this extent, one might sidestep the kind of exaggerated claim sometimes made in writing about the virtues of a monograph or collective volume. It is not that Hume's essay "Of the Standard of Taste" has been neglected as it has been read in the extensive literature with respect to classical and aesthetic judgment, as well as with respect to calculative evaluation or estimation. But Hume's essay on taste and the standard by which one might evaulate claims of the same all too often functions as a mere mention and there are no *collective* studies that have made this essay and its related concerns a central theme. The current collection offers a range of reflections for scholars of aesthetics, art and beauty, together with questions of disputations, addressed to students and to philosophers, both analytic and continental, not to mention the occasional oenophile, in addition to issues of diet, physiology, and anatomy, slightly contra Hume's own ambitions to establish a standard but for the sake of further thinking. Hume's essay is key to this undertaking and thus we begin with it below. <>

Inerview with Babette Babich by Alexandre Gilbert, September 30th, 2017

Babette Babich is an American philosopher and a founder of the New Nietzsche Studies.

Could you tell us the meaning of what David Allison calls the New Nietzsche ?

David Allison coined the title term, the 'new Nietzsche' to express a distinctively European, specifically: 'continental' Nietzsche. This reflected Martin Heidegger's Nietzsche as this influenced a wide range of French interpreters. This range or profusion was the most remarkable thing about Allison's book collection translating these French voices, foremost among whom for Allison and myself was Jean Granier, author of a massive book on Nietzsche and truth (still as yet unavailable in English) in David's pathbreaking collection. Thus, this slim volume — and David loved 'slim volumes' — altered the landscape of Nietzsche interpretation. David's book also featured Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Pierre Klossowski, Michel Haar and Paul Valadier, Maurice Blanchot, and Sarah Kofman, in addition to David's personal favorite —mysterious to me as David was a dedicated atheist — Henri Birault. For Anglophone readers who had been brought up on the mind-numbing limitations of analytic accounts of Nietzsche, The New Nietzsche was everything something dubbed 'new' really ought to be: it was really new, this was not just publisher's hype. What is interesting is that this book appeared forty years ago, ushering in a bunch of imitators, the new this and the new that. To this day, just because analytic philosophy has only tightened its death grip on the field, the new Nietzsche remains fruitful for scholars. Indeed, it was so valuable that when David wrote his own book he highlighted the same orientation: Reading the New Nietzsche. The journal New Nietzsche Studies was founded in 1996 to express an explicit openness to non-analytic readings and it remains a unique voice in a sea of 'grey' scholarship as Nietzsche would speak of it.

Would you say Simone de Beauvoir's feminism was a Nietzscheism ?

Certainly! But at the same time, de Beauvoir was very wide ranging and she, like Sartre and like Merleau-Ponty, was influenced by Husserl and especially Heidegger. Yet Nietzsche's gift for seeing through overlayers of culture suffuses de Beauvoir — as a scholar with a breadth of reading and focus to match Nietzsche's own, de Beauvoir draws on antiquity, anthropology, history, literature, political economy in addition to psychology and sociology. And she almost echoes Nietzsche's trenchant observation: "It is men who need to be educated better." In that spirit, de Beauvoir although her focus was on women never did lose sight of a kind of non-Hegelian but Nietzschean dialectic attunement, looking not only at women but at the dynamic with the 'other.' This was Nietzsche's variation on the master-slave dialectic and it foregrounded what de Beauvoir called women's complicity and the very grave dangers to woman's being in the world, existentially expressed to be sure, as de Beauvoir, before Hannah Arendt already paid attention to the dynamic of lived life in all the dimensionalities of a human lifetime, from birth to death. The American de Beauvoir scholar, Debra Bergoffen captures one aspect of the Nietzschean focus on educating men better, as she remarked on The Hallelujah Effect where I speak of the great Leonard Cohen regarding his often-observed womanizing, to point out that women were not what his focus was about: it was for Cohen as she noted the point I made about self-absorption, not ultimately misogynistic because Cohen's focus was always Cohen.

Lana del Rey, who studied Metaphysics at Fordham University attends an hommage concert to Leonard Cohen in november, in Quebec. What is the Hallelujah Effect you compared to the Empedocles Effect (Gaston Bachelard's concept in Psychoanalysis of Fire)?

I wish this concert were in NY! Today, on the sabbath after Yom Kippur in the subsiding days of awe as you frame your question, I am as astonished as ever by the wonder of Cohen who, as the Germans say, trägt seinen Namen zu recht: a priest for all of us. Anyone in doubt of this might listen to his song written at the end of his life, You Want it Darker. Stephen Freedman, Provost of Fordham University — and a native of Montreal — told me that Cohen's own congregation spent some time with that very song, even before Cohen's own death. But that song, such reflections, do not constitute the 'Hallelujah Effect.'

The 'Hallelujah Effect' is the power of song as a song deliberately composed, orchestrated, calculated to work on us — what Rolling Stone and many others call a mix of sex and religion. The focus is on erotic power, obscurity and desire, including and not less the very same male-female dynamic of sex and love, affirmation and shattering, that is also the reason I pay attention to k.d lang, even when everyone tells me, sometimes unbidden, that they prefer not even Cohen's own version or John Cale's orchestration, say, but Jeff Buckley, an almost universal favorite or Rufus Wainwright. Thus any talk of k.d. lang is a ringer and most of us, quite in spite of the over-suffusion of Hallelujah covers in our culture, return again and again, to a certain favorite, which favouring or 'liking' is a direct result of programming. The 'Hallelujah Effect' is effected, deliberate, this is where Adorno matters even more than Nietzsche, although Adorno also learns from Nietzsche, via the constant repetition and plugging of specific songs what H. Stith Bennett the sociologist of rock music calls 'recording consciousness,' where what our minds know more than the song is the very precise or exact sound of a specific track: this, the effect of market branding or priming, is your brain on Hallelujah.

I love your allusion to Gaston Bachelard's 'Psychology of Fire'! Yet I would also say that Hölderlin's poem Empedokles captures the allure and heroic danger of the 'Empedocles effect. Perhaps as one can imagine this might have struck Cohen himself, as Empedocles chronicles the succession of love and strife, of lover's quarrels as these echo the raging and waning of desire, to use Cohen's final word, like Sophocles, on desire: the wretched beast is tame.

A poet like Cohen, Hölderlin wrote of Empedocles:

> Life you sought, seeking, and welling up and gleaming
> from the depths of earth, for you a divine fire,
> And you, aquiver with desire,
> Hurl yourself down into Aetna's flames.

Thus what Cohen calls 'the holy and the broken Hallelujah' echoes one of the oldest poetic dreams of ancient Greece. This is the lover's idea of dancing on the volcano, dancing, for Cohen, 'to the end of love,' including the naked consequences of what it is to be, like Hölderlin, like Cohen, 'head-drenched in fire.'

I read it that way but media moguls have other ideas and from the beginning of the book Adorno called the 'current of music,' the 'radio effect' — i.e., your brain on YouTube — hijacks your consciousness, brands you with one song, and sends you in a spin of both attention and disinterest. That branding, that mind-hack, is the 'Hallelujah Effect,' and it's all around us, no need to read Hölderlin's poetry or Cohen's poetry or any other kind of poetry.

I asked Peter Trawny about the collusion between German academy and the ideology of AFD extreme right members that recently joined the Bundestag. What could you add on this subject?

Peter's insights are always excellent, if disturbing. To my mind, the current constellation is a frightening one, especially as I write from the United States where the extreme right has arguably never had more influence. Indeed and this is perhaps the most alarming, the extreme right has become so utterly 'banal' in Hannah Arendt's phrase, that it seems that this is what political danger looks like, for those who live in dark times.

To this, I would add a point that Peter rarely notes for his own part, as most academic philosophers in the US and in Germany rarely note it, but that I myself cannot help but emphasize as the Reiner Schürmann did before me: that is the key detail of the culture of the academy, that is: the dominion of 'analytic' philosophy (I use this as a generic term), as a political fact, of academic, university life.

The turn to analytic philosophy, complete with university level instruction in English, has watered down the German academy — and this affects funding for research and university appointments — just to the extent that this is the kind of philosophy currently taught in Germany and not Adorno, not Heidegger, certainly not Nietzsche. When these thinkers are taught they are taught in analytic ways….

In Germany, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s when I was there, analytic philosophy was deliberately, even conscientiously brought in or 'imported' in order to distance the German academy from the likes of Heidegger and not less from Nietzsche, thanks to Lukàcs and again via Habermas. For this reason, for one example, Nietzsche scholarship in Germany is dominated by literary scholars and features an

overweening focus on his sources but not the implications of his thinking, especially not his critiques of epistemology, of science, of morality (unless via analyticized Foucault), judgment, etc.

This perhaps would simply be a matter of the internecine woes always endemic to the academy but as it turns out, analytic modalities in philosophy seem to be singularly inept at 'thinking,' to use Heidegger's terminology (although this is also the way Adorno speaks, as it is also Arendt's terminology). For its part, analytic philosophy seeks to be like the natural sciences. As a result, an unquestioning scientism seems to be the legacy of analytic philosophy but this same scientism is not without its problems for the academy as natural scientists repay this admiration by dismissing philosophy as 'dead' or else as having nothing to offer. (Note just to be clear, that scientists are not dissing Heidegger — he's not at the center of philosophy — but their university colleagues in analytic philosophy who write on physics thought experiments and neuroscience and so on, just where analytic philosophy, especially analytic philosophy of science, aspires to tell science what to do).

Nietzsche has long been unread in philosophy departments in both Germany and in the United States, just as the Frankfurt School under the leadership of Habermas and Honneth turned away from the original founders of Critical Theory, Adorno and Horkheimer. Today, the kind of philosophy we do at university is 'analytic' in Germany as in France and the UK, as in the US and Canada, etc., a way of doing philosophy which — quite apart from the Heideggerian question of whether it can or cannot think — seems demonstrably incapable of raising a challenge to the far right. Thus the challenge Peter raises is exacerbated by the nature of philosophy, as it increasingly defines itself in the academy. <>

AFTER HEIDEGGER? edited by Richard Polt and Greg Fried [New Heidegger Research, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 9781786604859]

This unique volume collects more than 30 new essays by prominent scholars on what remains philosophically provocative in Heidegger's thought. His writings continue to invite analysis and application — and, particularly in the light of his political affiliations, they must also be critiqued. Philosophy today takes place after Heidegger in that his views should not be accepted naively, and there are new issues that he did not address — but also in that we continue to think in the wake of important questions that he raised.

The contributors to this volume ask questions such as:

- What does it mean to think "after" Heidegger?
- What is valuable in his early work on finite existence, and in his early and late phenomenology?
- What is the root of his political errors? Are there still elements in his thought that can yield helpful political insights?
- Should we emulate his turn toward "releasement"?
- Can he help us understand the postmodern condition?

Readers will find thought-provoking echoes and points of contention among these engaging and lively essays.

Review

This extremely rich volume gathers more than thirty brand-new essays by leading scholars to explore the many meanings of "**AFTER HEIDEGGER?** ." Is his philosophy a thing of the past? Is our way of thinking influenced by Heidegger like Francis Bacon's "Study after Velázquez" is indebted to the Spanish painter? Do we go 'after' Heidegger like spurned lovers or dogged investigators? (Dieter Thomä, Professor of Philosophy at the University of St Gallen, and editor of the Heidegger Handbuch)

After a careful reading, the most striking traits of this volume are the diversity and the originality of the ways of thinking opened by dealing with Heidegger's legacy […]. The substantial mix of the topics, which range from Heidegger's fundamental questions […], concepts and ideas […], critiques […], his accounts on life, phenomenology, hermeneutics, ontology, art, poetry, history, to matters concerning his historical situation […], makes this volume relevant for a wide range of researchers. […] Overall, with its rich and original content, renowned international authors and thematic diversity, "*After Heidegger?*" has all the ingredients to be a sought-after milestone when one genuinely embarks on the adventure of thinking after Heidegger. (*Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy, Vol. X, no. 1, June 2018*)

AFTER HEIDEGGER? has the larger scope, in that it attempts to engage with pretty much every major phase and dimension of Heidegger's intellectual career from his earliest teaching on life and existence to his late thoughts on East–West dialogue, with a view to distinguishing what remains fruitful from what should be discarded. (*European Journal of Philosophy*)

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« **AFTER HEIDEGGER?** » ou Le grand marécage américain

Gregory Fried et Richard Polt ont réussi l'exploit de rendre leurs collègues américains englués jusqu'au cou dans un marécage interprétatif Outre Atlantique. C'est à se demander même si certains ont encore la tête hors de l'eau. Quand on a terminé la lecture de ce spectre d'interprétations on se demande s'il existe encore une intelligence américaine. Du « crazy horse » anti Faye de thomas Sheehan monté par Lawrence J. Hatab au « robot girl » de Trish Glazebrook tout respire la santé de l'hôpital psychiatrique. Comment un tel aveuglement concernant la réception de l'œuvre de Heidegger est-il encore possible ?

Assurément les « penseurs » américains et leurs associés ont encore beaucoup de travail à faire pour comprendre le « non-dit » heideggérien et s'élever à la hauteur de la philosophie. En lisant les « contributions » de tous ces spécialistes de l'« Œuvre heideggérien » je me demande s'il existe encore un esprit critique sur terre. Vers quel point de l'horizon regardent-ils pour être victimes d'un tel aveuglement ? Assurément ils doivent regarder le soleil en face et celui-ci au lieu de leur donner la lumière nécessaire à l'éclairage de la voie à suivre les éblouit au point de leur rendre tout chemin imperceptible.

Les sept sections du marécage délimitées par les initiateurs de l'entreprise de « spectrographie » n'en sont finalement qu'une : tous les regards sont orientés dans la même direction et les auteurs qui auraient pu apporter un peu de clarté au débat ont été écartés et priés de rester hors du ranch. Ce

serait à mourir de rire si l'affaire n'était pas aussi grave. Car enfin, de quoi s'agit-il ? De faire oublier que Heidegger est le commandant suprême de l'extermination nazie et de conduire les lecteurs à penser qu'il est un homme respectable car il traite de sujets qui donnent à penser à tous les habitants de la planète.

Bien sûr que les cours et les écrits de Heidegger traitent de sujets qui intéressent tous les hommes de la Terre. Reste à savoir comment il les traite. Et c'est ici que le bât blesse. Car Heidegger est plus subtil que ses lecteurs. Pour arriver à ses fins sans se faire prendre au piège des paroles émises il a tâché de se rendre incognito le plus longtemps possible. Il s'est efforcé de sauver les apparences et de garder le secret de son entreprise criminelle jusqu'au terme de sa vie terrestre. Mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de commettre deux « erreurs » tactiques qui ont trahi sa stratégie d'extermination à finalité prophylactique pourtant bien calculée : celle de la période rectorale et celle de la publication des cahiers noirs.

Ces derniers faisaient suite, de manière explicite, à la volonté de relance du mouvement nazi lorsqu'il s'était risqué en 1953 à publier son cours sur l'Introduction à la métaphysique, cours qu'il avait professé en 1935 et dans lequel après sa démission des fonctions rectorales il affirmait sa pleine et entière adhésion à « l'essence » du nazisme et à la « grandeur » de ce mouvement. Le Malin n'avait pas réussi à cacher entièrement les ruses de la stratégie perverse qu'il avait élaborée pour parvenir au but qu'il s'était fixé et dont il avait révélé la teneur en 1930 : « dresser constamment le bûcher avec du bois approprié et choisi jusqu'à ce qu'il prenne feu enfin ». Telle était, disait-il ouvertement dans son cours sur la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel « l'œuvre que nous voulons aujourd'hui porter à son efficace » avec la « patience » nécessaire pour éviter que « l'impatience de la masse de tous ceux qui veulent en avoir fini avant de commencer » ne fasse échouer notre démarche.

Après qu'il eut prêché l'extermination de « l'ennemi intérieur » en 1933 dans son cours intitulé De l'essence de la vérité (Vom Wesen der Wahrheit) et donné l'ordre de la « mise à feu », au semestre d'été 1942, dans son pseudo commentaire de l'hymne de Hölderlin Der Ister : « Jezt komme, Feuer ! » (« Viens maintenant, feu ! »), ordre qui fut exécuté sur le champ une fois transmis, comme il se devait alors, par le Chancelier-Führer à ses Einsatzgruppen, on sut à quelle fin le bûcher avait été préparé. Il ne s'agissait pas seulement de brûler des livres, c'est-à-dire des idées, mais de brûler le peuple qui les avait émises et qui les émettrait encore si on le laissait en vie car les idées étaient censé être un produit de la race (condition nécessaire, selon Heidegger, « roi secret » dixit, 1933). Après quoi il fallait faire croire comme l'avait déclaré Dietrich Eckart, premier mentor d'Hitler dans son écrit sur « Le bolchevisme de Moïse à Lénine », que ce peuple qui avait une propension à s'autodétruire s'était éliminé de lui-même.

Voilà quels sont les enseignements qu'il faut tirer à n'en pas douter de l'œuvre de ce « grand philosophe » si l'on écoute les boniments flatteurs des membres de l'aréopage réunis par Gregory Fried et Richard Polt. Naturellement cette réalité odieuse a été passée sous silence et ces docteurs du « savoir absolu » heideggérien n'ont présenté que les « éclats de lumière du serpent vita », pour reprendre une expression de Nietzsche, en oubliant de parler du venin stocké dans les glandes du saurien et qui ne manquerait pas de réitérer sa morsure létale si l'appel à l'anéantissement se faisait plus pressant puisque le travail n'avait pas été terminé. Car le maître, le « vénérable » de la « Hütte » aryenne, après l'échec de son entreprise de purification terrestre, de 1946 jusqu'à sa mort, et au delà, grâce à ses publications

post mortem rassemblées dans sa Gesamtausgabe, n'avait cessé de rappeler ses « ouvriers » à l'obligation de « la tâche » qu'il leur avait prescrite dès 1927, ou, autre formulation du Maître, à la « mission » qui était censé leur incomber, selon la révélation de son pouvoir de voyance (Offenbarkeit), Allégorie, 1930, Hymnes, 1934-1935.

Maintenant si des docteurs en philosophie réunis autour de l'appel au « combat » heideggérien veulent continuer à brandir l'étendard de la « gigantomachie » heideggérienne « Dionysos contre le crucifié », étendard levé par le phénoménologue renégat dès 1929, tout en sachant, par un regard objectif porté sur l'histoire quelle a été la nature réelle du combat qui visait à instaurer le règne du nouveau dieu, libre à eux. J'ose espérer tout de même que certains d'entre eux, mieux informés par une approche plus fine de la Gesamtausgabe, finiront par ouvrir les yeux avant que ce nouvel anti-Christ qui s'est autoproclamé Dieu dans ses Contributions à la philosophie (Beiträge) et dans ses commentaires des Hymnes tardifs de Hölderlin (la Germanie et le Rhin) ne les conduise, par delà les portes du Mal transfiguré en Bien, dans l'enfer d'un nouvel Auschwitz. Ces portes ont été ouvertes lors de son cours sur Schelling, en 1936. Ce second Auschwitz inscrit dans la temporalité apocalyptique heideggérienne serait cette fois d'envergure planétaire compte tenu du stock d'armes nucléaires produites par toutes les grandes puissances mondiales depuis la tentative avortée du projet exterminateur des V2.

„After Heidegger": Auschwitz replay, donc. Entendons bien : „Heidegger befiehl, wir folgen dir". Voilà ce que nous disent les membres de ce prestigieux aréopage d'herméneutes « métasophiques » prétendument très compétents. A bon entendeur, salut ! proclament-ils. J'en appelle, pour ma part, à tous ceux qui ont encore des oreilles pour entendre et des yeux assez ouverts pour voir.

"AFTER HEIDEGGER? " or The Great American Swamp [translation]

Gregory Fried and Richard Polt have achieved the feat of making their American colleagues stuck up to their necks in an interpretive swamp across the Atlantic. One wonders even if some still have their heads above water. When one has finished reading this spectrum of interpretations one wonders if there is still an American intelligence. From the "crazy horse" anti Faye by Thomas Sheehan ridden by Lawrence J. Hatab to the "robot girl" of Trish Glazebrook all breathes the health of the psychiatric hospital. How is such blindness regarding the reception of Heidegger's work still possible? Certainly, the American "thinkers" and their associates still have a lot of work to do to understand the "unspoken" Heideggerian and to rise to the height of philosophy. Reading the "contributions" of all these specialists of the "Heideggerian Work" I wonder if there is still a critical mind on earth. To what point on the horizon do they look to be victims of such blindness? Surely, they must look at the sun in front and this one instead of giving them the light needed to light the way to follow dazzles them to the point of making them any path imperceptible. The seven sections of the swamp delineated by the initiators of the "spectrography" enterprise are finally one: all eyes are oriented in the same direction and the authors who could have brought some clarity to the debate have been dismissed and asked to stay off the ranch. It would be to laugh if the matter were not so serious. Because finally, what is it about? To make forget that Heidegger is the supreme commander of the Nazi extermination and to lead readers to think that he is a respectable man because he deals with subjects that give thought to all the inhabitants of the planet. Of course, Heidegger's courses and writings deal with subjects of interest to all men on Earth. It remains to be seen how he treats them. And this is where the problem lies. Because Heidegger is more

subtle than his readers. To achieve his ends without being trapped by the words spoken he tried to go incognito as long as possible. He tried to save appearances and keep his criminal enterprise secret until the end of his earthly life. But he could not help but make two tactical "mistakes" that betrayed his strategy of extermination with a prophylactic purpose, however well calculated: that of the rectoral period and that of the publication of black notebooks. The latter explicitly followed the desire to revive the Nazi movement when he had ventured in 1953 to publish his course on the Introduction to Metaphysics, a course he had professed in 1935 and in which, after his resignation from the rectoral office, he affirmed his full adherence to the "essence" of Nazism and the "greatness" of that movement. The Evil One had failed to fully conceal the tricks of the perverse strategy he had developed to achieve the goal he had set for himself and whose content he had revealed in 1930: "constantly erect the pyre with appropriate wood and chosen until it finally catches fire." This, he said openly in his course on the Phenomenology of Hegel's spirit, was "the work we now want to bring to its effectiveness" with the "patience" necessary to prevent "the impatience of the mass of all those who want to be finished before we begin" from derailing our approach. After he preached the extermination of the "inner enemy" in 1933 in his course entitled From the Essence of Truth (Vom Wesen der Wahrheit) and gave the order of "firing" in the summer semester of 1942, in his pseudo-commentary on the anthem of H-lderlin Der Ister: "Jezt komme, Feuer!" ("Come now, fire!"), an order that was executed on the spot once transmitted, as it was then, by the Chancellor-Fuhrer to his Einsatzgruppen, it was known to what end the pyre had been prepared. It was not only a matter of burning books, that is, ideas, but of burning the people who had issued them and who would still issue them if left alive because ideas were supposed to be a product of race (a necessary condition, according to Heidegger, "secret king" says, 1933). After that, Dietrich Eckart, Hitler's first mentor, had said in his writing on "Moses' Bolshevism to Lenin," that this people, who had a propensity to self-destruct, had eliminated themselves. These are the lessons to be learned from the work of this "great philosopher" if we listen to the flattering bonuses of the members of the areopage gathered by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. Naturally this odious reality was ignored and these heideggerian "absolute knowledge" doctors presented only the "bursts of light of the serpent vita", to use a nietzsche phrase, forgetting to talk about the venom stored in the saurian glands and who would not fail to repeat his lethal bite if the call for annihilation was more urgent since the work had not been completed. For the master, the "venerable" of the Aryan "Hette", after the failure of his earthly purification enterprise, from 1946 until his death, and beyond, through his post-mortem publications gathered in his Gesamtausgabe, had constantly reminded his "workers" of the obligation of the "task" he had prescribed to them as early as 1927, or, or, another formulation of the Master, to the "mission" that was supposed to be theirs, according to the revelation of his power of vision (Offenbarkeit), Allegory, 1930, Hymns, 1934-1935.Now if doctors of philosophy gathered around the call to the Heideggerian "fight" want to continue to brandish the banner of the Heideggerian "gigantomachia" "Dionggerian" 1929, with an objective look at history, the standard raised by the renegade phenomenologist as early as 1929, knowing by an objective look at history what was the true nature of the struggle to establish the reign of the new god. , free to them. I would still hope that some of them, better informed by a finer approach to the Gesamtausgabe, will eventually open their eyes before this new anti-Christ who has proclaimed himself God in his Contributions to Philosophy (Beitr-ge) and in his comments of the Late Anthems of Hulderlin (Germania and the Rhine) will lead them, beyond the gates of the Malfigured into Good, in the hell of a new Auschwitz. These doors were opened during his course on Schelling in 1936. This second Auschwitz, enshrined in heideggerian

apocalyptic temporality, would be of global scale, given the stockpile of nuclear weapons produced by all the world's great powers since the failed attempt of the V2 exterminator project.

"After Heidegger": Auschwitz replay, so. Let's hear: "Heidegger befiehl, wir folgen dir". This is what the members of this prestigious areopage of "metasophical" hermeneutes supposedly very competent tell us. A good listener, hi! they proclaim. I appeal, for my part, to all those who still have ears to hear and eyes open enough to see. <>

Essay: **AFTER HEIDEGGER?** Aftermath by Babette Babich pp. 87-97.

The question after any disaster is the question of what remains and that, to the extent that there is still something that remains, is the question of life. It is life that is the question after Auschwitz—how go on, how write poetry, how philosophize? What is called thinking after Heidegger? Are we still inclined to thinking, after Heidegger? And what of logic? What of history? And what of science? In addition, we may ask after ethical implications, including questions bearing on anti-Semitism, but also issues of misogyny, as well as Heidegger's critical questions concerning technology and concerning animal life and death.

Philosophizing in the Wake of Heidegger

We modern, postmodern, ideally even transhuman human beings want to go further. Not only with Heidegger but generally. And we want to overcome, if not exactly ourselves (as Nietzsche's Zarathustra had recommended), at least those restrictions we find constraining, traditions that seem obscure or outdated. As an aid to getting all of this behind us, we academics find ourselves seeking to define a center that will not hold: writing handbooks and encyclopedias as if their entries alone could make their contents certainties. We are especially minded to do this in these days of truths contested, "alt-facts," "post-truth." Certainty seems essential, yet where shall we find it? And what to do about Heidegger? Indeed, what to do after Heidegger?—a question to be asked given all the things we have learned of his person. Nor can we but imagine that new publications will bring ever more detail, ever more dirt, to light.

But even apart from the moraline cottage industry whose self-appointed role it is and has been to denounce Heidegger, there is another problem. There is the analytic-continental divide which we are anxious to dispense with: analytic philosophers do not like to be called analytic philosophers and viciously resist the idea that there might be any kind of divide. Things are compounded in various departments of philosophy by the triumph of analytic philosophy, pushing out philosophers who had been named continental, dominating appointments made, and changing the curriculum in the process just to secure the change. Thus these days we no longer teach traditional texts, having dusted them from the philosophical canon as all so very much "history of philosophy," "old philosophy" by contrast with new. Thus analytic philosophy maintains its death grip on the field.

After denying the divide, we are encouraged to do "good work," as opposed to the "bad work" we might otherwise do. (What is "good work"? What does it look like? Who decides?) Those of us interested in thinkers like Heidegger or Nietzsche or Empedocles morph into so many historians of philosophy, as the analytic philosophers describe scholars with such interests. But are we historians? Did we study history? Or is specializing in some figure from an era not the contemporary sufficient to make us historians?

What is certain is that the publishing world has never seen so many introductions, all written as if leagues of new philosophers stood in need of these. In addition to encyclopedias and handbooks, one can find a range of "companion" type volumes. One can almost imagine a volume on "the compleat" phenomenologist, perhaps as part of a matching set, with another on hermeneutics, encased in a steampunk cassette, just to lock in all the bells and whistles. And there are such volumes (less the slipcase), together with histories of analytic philosophy and classifications of philosophical kinds—one analytic historian of philosophy counts six of these.

Philosophy and Philology

Assemblages of this kind, as Borges noted, as Foucault notes in another spirit, as Nietzsche also writes for his own part, are signs of decay. The point is also one Nietzsche spent some time reflecting upon: for what, for whom do we collate such handbooks? Nietzsche might have been an even more central part of this culture of decay than he already is. For Nietzsche was slated to prepare, with Hermann Diels, what would become Die Fragmente der Vor-sokratiker.3 And had he done so, as he factually did not, we scholars might be invoking not DK—Diels-Kranz—when we cite the pre-Socratic fragments but ND—Nietzsche-Diels. Diels, some four years Nietzsche's junior, and privileging Aristotle and the doxographic tradition (where Nietzsche, by contrast, specialized in Diogenes Laertius), would not publish Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker: Griechisch und Deutsch until 1903. The resultant standard work in classical or ancient philology and ancient philosophy makes modern scholarship possible, distinguishing it from the nineteenth-century disciplines of philology and philosophy. Indeed: Diels's edition meant that, as of the first years of the twentieth century, scholars could read the ancient Greeks without being able to read ancient Greek.

Heidegger, who invokes Anaximander's fragment in 1946, cites it following not Diogenes Laertius but Simplicius, but he proceeds to cite Nietzsche's rendering from his Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks. Here Heidegger also refers to Nietzsche's Basel lecture courses, on the Preplatonic Philosophers. And:

> In the same year, 1903, that Nietzsche's essay on the Preplatonic philosophers first became known, Hermann Diels' Fragments of the Presocratics appeared. It contained texts critically selected according to the methods of modern classical philology, along with a translation. (EGT 13)

Adding that the work is dedicated to Wilhelm Dilthey, Heidegger then quotes Diels's translation. Some seventy years on, Heidegger seems to have had a point: Anaximander's terms are difficult to translate to everyone's satisfaction.

On the matter of translation, Heidegger's 1942 lecture course on Hölderlin's "Ister" reflected on the meaning of deinon (GA 53: 74/61). Here we read (in translation) an explicit reflection on translation as such, just because Heidegger's translation, following on Hölderlin's own rendering of Sophocles, had been criticized: Was it accurate? Heidegger reflects on the inevitable conventionality and thus the very circularity of reproof, both in his own respect and with regard to the poet:

> who decides and how does one decide, concerning the correctness of a "translation"? We "get" our knowledge from a dictionary or "wordbook" [Wörterbuch]. Yet we too readily forget that the information in a dictionary must be based upon a preceding interpretation of linguistic

> contents from which particular words and word usages are taken. In most cases a dictionary provides the correct information about the meaning of a word, yet this correctness does not guarantee us any insights into the truth of what the word means and can mean given that we are talking about the essential realm named in the word. (GA 53: 74–75/61–62)

Heidegger's own reading/rendering of aletheia had similarly been called into question. But, as Heidegger goes on to say, the precision of le mot juste, the ideal of an accurate lexical definition, a one-to-one correspondence, word to word, as it were, drawn from a given "wordbook," attests to what Nietzsche for his own part would name a "lack of philology." For Heidegger:

> every translation must necessarily accomplish the transition from the spirit of one language into that of another. There is no such thing as translation if we mean that a word from one language could or even should be made to substitute as the equivalent of a word from another language. (GA 53: 75/62)

There have been many reflections on the challenge this poses for us, even as we continue to stipulate Heidegger's translations as idiosyncratic (at best) and perhaps misleading (at worst).

Nietzsche's philological reflection on philology goes beyond the question of veridicality to consider just who we might be thinking of when it comes to the readers of our compendia, our handbooks, our critical editions—including, as just this is a contested matter today, a critical edition of Heidegger. Many scholars find employment in the production of such editorial ventures—think only of the production of Heidegger's own Gesamtausgabe, or the varied commentaries produced, again and again, on Nietzsche's own texts, or think of Kant or Hegel or Hölderlin and so on. Here it is useful to recall Nietzsche's meditation on his own discipline in The Gay Science (§109):

> A remark for philologists. That some books are so valuable and so royal that whole generations are well employed in their labors to produce these books in a state that is pure and intelligible—philology exists in order to fortify this faith again and again. It presupposes that there is no lack of those rare human beings (even if one does not see them) who really know how to use such valuable books—presumably those who write or could write, books of the same type.

There is a lot to unpack here, and Nietzsche offers as much challenge as clue to the "few and rare," as Heidegger describes those for whom he writes, borrowing this designation from Nietzsche. Nietzsche, a little less loftily in this locus, characterizes such "rare human beings" as effectively invisible readers ("even if one does not see them"), "who always 'will come' but are never there."

Who are the readers for our current reflections after Heidegger?

We know at least this: the revelations of Heidegger's Nazism, Heidegger's anti-Semitism, tell us unpleasant truths about a man whose work we might otherwise admire, once we are done truth-checking his translations and his reflections on ancient words for truth. Indeed, Heidegger has always been "a bit 'post truth,' " and we are gaining, thanks to the current US political regime under Trump, vastly more insight than we had perhaps wished to gain into the fluidity of truth and metaphor. And yet—and I remark on current politics for this reason—it turns out that one can do terrible things, from swindling—as this is the essence of the "art" of the (real estate) deal—and calumniating others, including misogynistic attacks (quite patently serial ones, as most misogynists are systematically repetitive about it), and still be elected to office. We do not mind misogyny in politics—heck, we practice it in

philosophy, we denounce it and talk about it, and go on practicing it. Ditto racism. Ditto anti-Semitism. But for me it matters that we are prepared to tolerate Heidegger's misogyny (he gets a free pass: think of Arendt, not that we actually do) but not his anti-Semitism.

And when we are done, given that Aristotle was a massive misogynist— Aristotle wrote the book, as it were—we may come to understand why Heidegger thought that we could say of Nietzsche, another massive misogynist, as it was thought appropriate to say of Aristotle, that he was born, he worked, he died (GA 18: 5/4). Still: the "new" Nietzsche introduced for Anglophone readers in the 1970s, making them "continental" in the process, was ushered in under a specifically Heideggerian flag, because without Heidegger, no French Nietzsche.8 Still we have learned to do philosophy hermeneutically, hermeneutico-phenomenologically.

And Heidegger is hoist on his own petard.

To quote the title of Thomas Sheehan's 1981 book collection, Heidegger:

> The Man and The Thinker, Heidegger is henceforth not to be read apart from his Nazism, his anti-Semitism. But that said, how is one to read Being and Time? Are we to read it as a Nazi volume, unterwegs, avant la lettre? Oh, yes: Richard Wolin and Emmanuel Faye tell us, Tom Rockmore tells us, and another generation likewise. But are those readings useful? Surely. It is another question to ask whether those readings translate the work of 1927 into our times. Do they, to use Heidegger's query with respect to translation, "accomplish the transition from the spirit of one language into that of another?" I have argued that to do so would require a Heidegger philology we have yet to develop. Hence, I am not sure that knowing Heidegger's misogyny, however smarmily egregious it happened to have been, helps. So: should we just bracket it? Heidegger, like Aristotle, lived, worked, died, "and there's an end on't"? Surely it matters that Heidegger, anti-Semitic in a world-historical sense and convinced Nazi devotee (avant la lettre to be sure), wrote Being and Time. Here the question might be, did he also happen to write Being and Time, or was being a world-historical anti-Semite/Nazi-devotee-to-be/inveterate misogynist or any part of the preceding a necessary or even contributing condition? Most scholars will take the lesser charge, so Heidegger gets a plea bargain. We add this to our thinking about Being and Time as about his other works. And many of us, troubled as we should be, wonder if we might save ourselves some trouble (and some reading) by fixing on the later Heidegger (or as the move is a similar one, the early Heidegger). It goes without saying that this is a surface remedy at best; convicted Nazis remain so, and so too anti-Semites, and so too ladies'-man-style misogynists.

The "decadence," to use Nietzsche's language and to which decadence I began by referring—pointing to our obsession with companion volumes, dictionaries, encyclopedias, introductions—comes with a death certificate issued by the famous, public-intellectual-type scientist Stephen Hawking, who some years ago made the pronouncement: "philosophy is dead." Hawking's declaration was tailor-made for the trans-generation, the humanity 2.0 scholars, the transhumanists, surfing the cutting edge. And yet, as with Nietzsche's reflections on decadence, Hawking's certification of philosophy's death is not new, and an appeal to the crowd, the popular voice that is the voice of the public intellectual, has been with us since antiquity. How else was Socrates able to corrupt the youth in his old age? Or why would acolytes flock to sit at the feet of various Stoics, or Plotinus have his own cult following? Make no mistake: we academics, we scholars, are keen on recognition. Hegel made it the cornerstone of his dialectic of

consciousness, Kojève enshrined it for all of Paris: the locked key to Lacan's master's discourse. And we want to be up on the latest thing, which latest thing, we are convinced, simply must be better than anything past. And that is understandable, as scholars tend to have a reputation for being fuddy-duddy types, nose-in-a-book types. Writing on the "new" Heidegger, post the devastating publication of the Black Notebooks and the pronouncement of Heidegger's anti-Semitism to match his well-known Nazism, we write "after" Heidegger.

It's a wake, forty years late.

And we will not be distracted by efforts to take the question too much back to Heidegger himself, reflecting, as we do, that perhaps this language, given the current constellation that impels us to raise questions once again, might yet shed light on Heidegger's thinking on questioning, on raising or posing the question concerning technology, not to mention "Being."

Heidegger is hardly alone in being subject to this, if his circumstances do outclass other scholarly scandals. Philosophy is thus just what every textbook about philosophy suggests: a list of names for popular consumption. The great philosopher is identifiable by a Google or Twitter ranking. Maybe just, more soberly, by citation frequency. Nietzsche's new Zarathustra might have to be rewritten as "A Book for All and Everybody."

I began by noting our passion for drawing lines, and there seems little that is not post-or anti- or "After-philosophy." Yet this does not seem to be like a vernissage, a celebratory after-party. Indeed, "After-philosophy" bears comparison to "After-philology," and considering the constellation introduces Nietzschean reflections. If the science in question for Nietzsche—ancient philology, ancient linguistics, ancient comparative literature, ancient history—hasn't in the interim managed to pose the question of its own discipline, what does that tell us? Thus, what Classics has not done is to pose the question of its own foundations, as Nietzsche argued that it should, namely to raise the question of its own discipline, which Nietzsche himself called the question of science qua science. Nietzsche claimed he was the first to do this, and, having written on Nietzsche and science for these many years, I am fairly sure that apart from Heidegger and in ways no Heideggerian has taken up, no one has sought to raise this question as a question since—not in the sense that Nietzsche meant by speaking of "the problem of science itself, science considered for the first time as problematic, as questionable" in the second edition of The Birth of Tragedy.

There is a parallel failure to pose the problem of philosophy itself. If this benumbed circumstance does not mean that philosophy is "dead," as Hawking contends, it is spellbound. The becalmed circumstance is not Hawking's doing and has nothing to do with the Black Notebooks scandal: we are adrift, and have been for quite some time.

Still, and as my passing remark on the problem of science suggests, the larger question or unframed theme is the absence of a thinker of the rank of a Nietzsche or a Heidegger today.

That would be the elephant in the room.

Asking after Heidegger, it matters that Heidegger could be utterly misogynistic and still write Being and Time. So too for his anti-Semitism, we must suppose. Perhaps the question should be what just what it is that we expect of philosophy, before, during, or above all, after Heidegger?

Logical Reflections

May we go on reading Heidegger? Is this not a finished endeavor, of a limited term? This question as such takes its cue from Emmanuel Faye and Richard Wolin and already had its best expression in pithiness in Gilbert Ryle's "wasn't a good man" apothegm. But as Richard Rorty pointed out in good American pragmatist fashion in response to Farías, we do read "Gottlob Frege, a vicious anti-Semite and proto-Nazi" without being hindered by his anti-Semitism. Sitting in my office in New York is Michael Beaney's collection The Frege Reader. In my office I also have a book by Andrea Nye, Words of Power: A Feminist Reading of the History of Logic. Nye reads from Parmenides through to Frege with an indispensable chapter, A Thought Like A Hammer.

In the current context, after Heidegger, at stake is the logical point of view as such. Every detail concerning human beings—whether we name them Preplatonic (Nietzsche) or Presocratic (Diels), or whether we read Nietzsche from Heidegger's perspective or from the point of view of the Nazi hegemony in university courses then offered on Nietzsche, or else with respect to our current concern, thinking after Heidegger—from the logical point of view, all these details are distractions, which means that they shift our focus.

Indeed, all of our ethical discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of tossing or not tossing a fat man onto the tracks in the path of a passing trolley, in the so-called trolley problem, depend on this irrelevance. In fact, no one is throwing anyone, regardless of girth, anywhere: it is the conception that counts in ethical thinking.

And yet perhaps philosophy, the doing of, the reading of, is not an inherently edifying enterprise. How many outstanding philosophers are outstanding human beings? And of these exemplary beings, how many are outstanding because they are philosophers? Philosophy may not, as Nietzsche argued, referring to the educational institutions of Basel (and the rest of Europe), make us better citizens. Nietzsche had in mind the Swiss requirement that all citizens have a classical education, meaning an education in ancient philology and ancient philosophy. But what philosophy was for the ancients (and that is why the gods are involved in every case) had to do with preserving one's mind or "soul" in the transition from one life to another, saving one's place in the transition that is part of metempsychosis. If one has abandoned that metaphysical notion of the soul along with the Christian version, it would seem that philosophy's value for life (or life eternal) might also be abandoned.

Science and Critical History

Perhaps, after Heidegger, we might work to be relentlessly critical in our reading of Heidegger, highlighting the negative. This would be scientific, and yet Heidegger emphasized "science" as a question. In the spirit of both Kant and Nietzsche, Heidegger had supposed that we might attend to the prerequisites for putting philosophy on the path of a science. This reflection was still with him, as it might be given the death of Husserl in the Spring of 1938. To this extent, Heidegger offers a sustained reflection on understanding the significance of Nietzsche's meditations on history as a science, invoking

standard references, but also seeking to explore the relevance of Nietzsche's own conjunction of use (calculation) and value for life (GA 46: 106–14/88–94).

Here I note only that few scholars have taken up the issue of "Heidegger and Science" and that those who have done so are inclined not to notice the work done by others in the same field. For my part, I elsewhere argue that philosophers get over their allergies to citing one another, as if noticing the work of others somehow diminished one's own originality. The problem of non-citation (obliviousness) is an endemic one in philosophy; it crosses the analytic-continental divide, Heidegger and Nietzsche studies, and much else besides. And to those meaning to invoke Heidegger's reservations concerning "the literature" to defend their ongoing philosophical autism, I would respond by observing that the topic of Heidegger and Science, like Heidegger and Theology, or Heidegger and Anti-Semitism, is nothing but literature.

We can, as we have seen and as has been done for years now, read Heidegger for the dirt: we can stand around and lament his anti-Semitism, as we might and should. And yet it is instructive (and we should think about this) that we, as philosophers, do not lament his deep and thoroughgoing misogyny. And there is a lot of dirt there, even more than we can guess at, when it comes to the woman question that we could add to the Jewish question, or the American question, or the question of Heidegger's unrelentingly critical take on the same techno-science that we deeply believe will save us (all we need for that is to declare our "belief" in climate change and then, with a little help from science, we will be saved).

On The Death Animals Do Not Die

Elsewhere, I advert to the difficult question of Heidegger in conjunction with the animal question, which is, so I argue, less a matter of the animal's putative world-indigence—though this is part of it, just insofar as this poverty is engendered—a matter of our obliviousness to the lives of animals. This was true for Heidegger too, despite his attention to Karl von Frisch, who was no friend to animals (quite in spite of his observations and as attested by the same). In Heidegger's sense, the same indigence is manufactured by way of the systematic breeding of animals that deprives them of their lives as much as it deprives them of their own deaths. Animals are manufactured, as Heidegger says in the purest of metonymic connections, as so many corpses-to-be, as the standing reserve of industrial agribusiness, and quite as such, they do not die. Specifically, they do not die their own deaths in mass slaughter but are instead challenged forth into technological reserves and by-products, for the production of food and—in addition to clothing and shoes, cosmetics and paint, soap and ink—their organs, destined to be used for the sake of human life extension and preservation.

We might think about that. <>

Aztec Religion and Art of Writing: Investigating Embodied Meaning, Indigenous Semiotics, and the Nahua Sense of Reality by Isabel Laack [Numen Book, Brill, 9789004391451]

In her groundbreaking investigation from the perspective of the aesthetics of religion, Isabel Laack explores the religion and art of writing of the pre-Hispanic Aztecs of Mexico. Inspired by postcolonial approaches, she reveals Eurocentric biases in academic representations of Aztec cosmovision, ontology, epistemology, ritual, aesthetics, and the writing system to provide a powerful interpretation of the Nahua sense of reality.

Laack transcends the concept of "sacred scripture" traditionally employed in religions studies in order to reconstruct the Indigenous semiotic theory and to reveal how Aztec pictography can express complex aspects of embodied meaning. Her study offers an innovative approach to nonphonographic semiotic systems, as created in many world cultures, and expands our understanding of human recorded visual communication.

This book will be essential reading for scholars and readers interested in the history of religions, Mesoamerican studies, and the ancient civilizations of the Americas.

"This excellent book, written with intellectual courage and critical self-awareness, is a brilliant, multilayered thought experiment into the images and stories that made up the Nahua sense of reality as woven into their sensational ritual performances and colorful symbolic writing system." - Davíd Carrasco, *Harvard University*

The people currently known as the 'Aztecs" lived in the Central Mexican Highlands roughly five hundred years ago. As immigrants from the north, they arrived in the Valley of Mexico at the beginning of the fourteenth century CE and intermingled with the local people. They rose to political and cultural heights in the fifteenth century, only to be brutally conquered by Spanish invaders in the third decade of the sixteenth century. The so-called Aztec Empire was a political alliance between three major groups in the Valley of Mexico: the Acolhua living in the town of Texcoco, the Tepanec of Tlacopan, and the Mexica living in the twin cities Tlatelolco and Tenochtitlan. Tlatelolco and the now-legendary Tenochtitlan formed the heart of the "Aztec Empire." These cities were picturesquely located on two islands within Lake Texcoco, which covered a large part of the bottom of the Valley of Mexico during that time. The valley, a high plateau 2,20o meters above sea level, was surrounded by skyscraping mountain peaks, among them the famous volcanoes Popocatepetl (5,624 m) and Iztaccihuatl (5,23o m). When the Spanish conquistadores first saw the city, an estimated 200,000 to 250,000 people lived there (Matos 2001: 198), making Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco one of the largest cities in the world at that time. With the twin pyramids, the ceremonial center, and the marketplace at its heart, the city spread out into the lake with people's living quarters and fertile chinampas raised fields). A large aqueduct from Chapultepec on the close western shore of Lake Texcoco supplied fresh water. In addition to items made by local farmers, craftspeople, and artisans, traders from afar and tribute collectors brought exotic food into the city, along with fine clothing, highly crafted tools, laborsaving devices, beautiful jewelry, and every other imaginable type of article.

The Triple Alliance controlled large parts of Mexico, conquering cities and villages through military campaigns. Politically, it was not so much an *empire* as we think of it—subjected local rulers were typically left in power and local language and culture were largely left unchanged. The local rulers only had to ensure a constant flow of tribute payments to the capital. In this way, the influence of Tenochtitlan reached from the Pacific shores on the west to the Caribbean on the east. Cultural exchange and trading between the different ethnic groups was encouraged; the political fundament, however, was relatively unstable. Many people in the conquered towns harbored negative sentiments toward the Mexica because of the high taxes and tributes. Thus, when the Spaniards arrived, many local armies joined the few Spanish soldiers in their

fight against Tenochtitlan, hoping to free themselves from Tenochtitlan's tight grip without realizing the far greater anguish that the Spaniards would bring. Despite the awe that Europeans feel to this day for Tenochtitlan's magnificence—the dreamlike manifestation of the legendary, glorious island city—images of Aztec culture are typically painted in rather dark colors. We imagine the Aztecs as deeply imbued with superstition, carrying out questionable military campaigns such as the "flower wars," waged mainly to obtain fresh supplies for cruel and bloody heart sacrifices at Tenochtitlan's main temples. These sacrifices were extensive and shocking rituals on which the Aztecs spent an excessive amount of time, energy, and money. Historians imagined life in Tenochtitlan as harsh and joyless, ruled by the pessimism that only a cyclical concept of time could generate as well as by a deeply felt fatalism dominated by the belief in a near end of the world if the gods were not nourished with an endless supply of sacrifices. Terrified by predictions of doom, Tenochtitlan's last ruler, Motecuhzoma II, easily gave in to the Spanish

soldiers commanded by Hernan Cortes, whom Motecuhzoma believed was the god *Quetzalcoatl* returning to reclaim rulership of the Mexica. Thus, when the Spaniards came upon the Aztecs, it was a clash of semiotics, as scholar Tzvetan Todorov (1984) concluded. This clash ultimately led to the Spanish victory because their superior sign system enabled Cortes to think politically, improvise, and act strategically. Motecuhzoma II, on the other hand, was too preoccupied with reading the omens, understanding the will of the gods, and acting according to a tradition that offered no strategy for dealing with the Spaniards. This all-encompassing image of Aztec culture, including the interpretation of their defeat, is strongly shaped by European projections of the Other and by intellectual imperialism rooted in the will to conquer, dominate, and exploit. One of the major objectives of this study is to challenge these images and to attempt to understand—inspired by a postcolonial perspective—how the Aztecs perceived reality. One of the most important steps on this road is to look closely at the sources with a raised level of reflexivity.

Let us begin this endeavor by discussing the use of the term *Aztec.* This name was apparently introduced by Alexander von Humboldt (181o,1997) and made popular by us historian William H. Prescott in his *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Prescott 1843). Since then, it has generally referred to the mainly Nahuatl-speaking ethnic groups that formed the Aztec Empire in the century before the Spanish conquest. It particularly refers to the Nahuas who lived in Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco and controlled the Aztec Empire politically and militarily. Humboldt chose this name because it relates to the migration myth of this Nahua group, which recounts how their ancestors had come from a place called *Aztlan* before they settled on an island in Lake Texcoco at the beginning of the fourteenth century CE. However, people living in pre-Hispanic Mexico never used this name themselves. Postclassic Mexico was ethnically diverse, and identity was bound mainly to the locality where one lived. For example, the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan were the *Tenochca,* the people living in Tlatelolco the *Tlateloka.* Since settling jointly within Lake Texcoco, these two groups collectively identified as the *Mexica.* This denomination was later chosen for the postconquest capital Mexico City and finally for the independent state Mexico itself. When we speak of the Aztecs, it is typically the Mexica as the dominant ethnic group in the Triple Alliance we refer to, and it is the Mexica we have the most knowledge about.

This book, however, will use the name *(ancient) Nahuas* instead' because it includes the larger ethnic group that settled in several towns in the Central Mexican Highlands and which shared the *Nahuatl* language and important cultural and religious traits.[2] Today, more than 1.5 million people speak a variant of Nahuatl, most of them living in Central Mexico, with some major expatriate groups in the United States. Although Nahuatl has changed in the last five hundred years due to internal development and contact with Spanish, contemporary Nahuatl is nevertheless relatively similar to Colonial and Classical Nahuatl. Political officials and notaries used Colonial Nahuatl in early colonial times, whereas Classical Nahuatl is known to us through the writings of the early missionaries and mission-trained Indigenous authors. With the colonial transcription of Classical Nahuatl into the Latin alphabet, regional differences became standardized and a form of orthography established (R. Cortes 2008: go). Most of the sources relevant for this study are written in Classical Nahuatl. With regard to transcription and spelling, throughout this study I use the simplified, modernized Franciscan system for Nahuatl terms to ease the reading for nonlinguist readers (see Bierhorst). The modernized Jesuit system, in comparison, based on the grammar by Jesuit priest Horacio Carochi (Carochi and Lockhart), includes diacritics (especially the marking of long vowels and glottal stops) and thus better serves linguistic needs.

In contrast to the Classic Period Maya, the preconquest Nahuas and their close cultural neighbors, the Mixtecs, used a pictorial writing system instead of a phonographic writing system that notated the sounds of their respective languages. This pictorial writing system uses pictograms that show stylized objects (such as houses) and ideograms that visualize abstract thoughts through combinations of pictograms (such as a temple pierced by an arrow for *conquest)* or conventionalized abstract signs. All signs were arranged on pages in an intricate way, displaying a narrative syntax and complex concepts of time and history (see Leibsohn 1994, Boone 2000). Writing in traditional style on Indigenous paper and linen appears to have prevailed until the seventeenth century, progressively adapted to the changing cultural environment and the changing needs of the Indigenous population in their interaction with the Spanish (Arnold 2002: 227). Mastery of this writing system, however, was gradually lost during colonial times and only a few primary sources from pre-Hispanic Central Mexico written in Indigenous pictorial style have survived the conquest wars, the burning of Indigenous books by frenetic missionaries, and, finally, the corruption of time. What remains is a handful of precolonial manuscripts and several hundred (early) colonial documents (see Cline 1972, 1973,1975a, 1975b), among them tribute records and property plans, histories of ethnic groups and genealogies, calendars and astronomical measurements, and cosmologies and songbooks, along with handbooks for rituals and divination.

Many of the early conquistadores and missionaries acknowledged the Indigenous writing as a proper writing system. Based on its widespread use and its efficiency in communication, they apparently accepted it as equal to their own alphabetical writing. However, some of them classified pictography as a preliminary, evolutionarily primitive stage of writing, thus legitimizing the conquest and subsequent exploitation of the Indigenous people. This opinion came to dominate later European and American views of the Aztecs. It went hand in hand with European philosophies of language that are rooted in the discourse of the ancient Greeks, link rational discourse with phonographic script, and advocate the intellectual supremacy of (modern) Europe. This ideology has even influenced modern theories of literacy that assert that only phonographic writing is capable of intellectual precision and rationality (e.g., Havelock 1986). As a consequence, pictorial writing systems have remained largely neglected by most European literacy theories, which rely on the (exclusive) definition of *writing* as the visualization of language (see Coulmas 2011). In the last two decades, however, some scholars, based on their analyses of Nahua and Mixtec pictorial writing systems (starting with Boone and Mignolo 1994), have questioned this devaluation. It became obvious that these are highly efficient systems of visual communication comparable to musical or mathematical notation or to geouaphical cartography and are no less capable than phonographic writing systems of transporting complex models of the world and people's place in it.

Although we are still far from comprehensively understanding the surviving pictorial manuscripts, the recent analyses have produced major breakthroughs in reading them. In this study, rather than analyzing the contents and visual structure of single sources, I raise far more basic questions: How does this particular form of visual communication work and what type of knowledge does it express? What does it tell us about the Nahua sense of reality? What semiotic theory informs their writing system? How did the Nahuas relate their writing system to other forms of expression and communication and to (their concepts of) truth and reality (as they perceived it)?

Thus, the study combines two perspectives on Nahua culture: one on their writing system and the other on their religion. In the last few decades, not only Central Mexican writing systems but also Mexican

religions have been understudied. Religious aspects of Mesoamerican cultures have not been the prime focus of research among Mesoamericanists for several reasons within the disciplinary history of Mesoamerican studies (see Monaghan z000). Similarly, few scholars of religion—among them David Carrasco and Philip P. Arnold—have specialized in ancient, that is, pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. In this study, I wish to open a new dialogue between Mesoamerican studies and the study of religion by applying recent theoretical, methodological, and epistemological debates within the academic study of religion to the study of Aztec culture. In doing so, I intend to present a fresh view on the relation between pictography and the Nahua sense of reality.

Outlining the Chapters

This book aims at taking its readers on a journey in search of the ancient Nahua sense of reality, with particular regard to their writing system. For this purpose, we move from general aspects of their cosmovision to the specifics of their semiotics while critically reflecting common representations of Nahua culture and uncovering Eurocentric biases in previous academic interpretations.

Before the actual journey begins, I need to address questions of methodology covering postcolonial approaches to historiography, the challenges of studying the aesthetics of religion, and the journey's objectives. This reflection will prepare us to enter the world of the ancient Nahuas. First, we will examine their general ways of living in cultural diversity and central aspects of their cosmovision, which imagines the human being as embedded in a dense net of cosmic relations. Based on this, we will attain a higher level of abstraction by exploring Nahua ontology, including notions of divinity and concepts of reality in a world they perceived as constantly in motion. After discussing Indigenous epistemology, we will move on to how the Nahuas interacted with this world in motion through a code of conduct, rituals, and aesthetic media, including the pendulum of the *teixiptla,* a material or human representative of the deities. The insights gained in these chapters will help us to analyze Nahua semiotics in First, we will interpret Nahua language theory regarding the relationship between the linguistic sign and nonlinguistic reality. After closely inspect-the foundations of the Nahua pictorial writing system, we can (re)constructing Indigenous semiotic theory regarding the writing system. Furthermore, we develop an interpretation of Nahua pictography as an efficient system for unicating complex, nonlinguistic kinds of meaning and knowledge t reality, including embodied metaphors and body knowledge. The final chapters summarize the results of the study, draw methodological and theomencal conclusions, and present an outlook for future studies in this field.

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After reaching a momentary end to our journey, I wish to present a short conclusion regarding the subject of *scripture* as well as a summation of my initial objectives and an outlook for potential future research.

One of the most important arguments of this study was to include non-propositional kinds of knowledge and ways of being and acting in the world in our understanding of *religion.* The human being is not a disembodied mind but a sensory being with a body and multiple kinds of experiential sensations. emotions, and feelings acting in the world in many forms of practices. Above this, we use various types of media and material objects in a wide range of ways, challenging the idea that these serve only as a "medium" for mediating and communicating (propositional) meaning. I started this study with an interest

in *scripture,* which is traditionally defined as a particular type of "sacred' text. In popular discourse, *scriptures* identified with "sacred texts" are predominantly regarded as the central medium for learning about other religions, and even within the academic study of religion, the concept has only recently been criticized.

Analyses of Nahua culture challenge the traditional concept of *scripture* in several ways. First, Nahua written texts were so deeply embedded in oral performances that common distinctions between oral and literate societies do not match. These performative contexts draw our attention to the bodily and material aspects of semantic expressions. Confronted with Nahua ways of reading, we become aware that our contemporary practice of silent reading is by no means the only form for engaging with "texts" (and images). Consequently, engagement with the Nahuas motivates us to reflect and study the history of media usage in Europe more extensively. Second, Nahua texts challenge the idea that thoughts are best expressed linguistically, an idea related to the ideology of alphabetical writing. They do so because Nahua pictography also visually employs other forms of thinking, such as embodied conceptual metaphors. A**s** a consequence, Nahua pictography also challenges ideas of knowledge that exclusively focus on the linguistic expression of propositions. Finally, the generally high significance of practice and aesthetics in Nahua religion draws our attention to the many ways of being religious beyond creedal beliefs and intellectual engagement.

Contemporary academic semiotic theories are deeply rooted in the European history of ideas and in many cases are strongly influenced by the debates within European religions about the proper use of different media. Within Christianity, extensive disputes about the ontological nature and representational function of images led to several schisms. In Plate's judgment, no other religion has spent so much time on these questions and established such a "vast theological corpus of doctrines on images" (2002b: 55). Although the European arts were increasingly secularized after the Renaissance, the evolving new theories of representation were still deeply rooted within this discursive tradition. Similarly, many contemporary academic theories about the relationships between signs or images and reality are firmly located within European ontological and epistemological frameworks. Drawing on the Western tradition of suspecting the image, many scholars within the field of Visual Culture caution against the manipulative power of images. With a background in critical theory, some of these scholars are openly critical of the increasing oculocentrism within contemporary mass media and fear the related loss of alphabetical literacy among the populace, which is equated with the loss of the intellectual achievements of the Western-European civilization. Analyzing and reflecting the discursive roots of European theories about images and writing systems should be the first task of any academic research in this field.

Correspondingly, we need more awareness of the fact that people in non-European cultures often developed different semiotic theories embedded within specific cultural aesthetics and complex epistemologies and ontologies. Annette Hornbacher (2014) convincingly demonstrated this using the example of esoteric script mysticism in Bali. Interestingly, many religious image practices do not consider the image as a passive object made (merely) by human hands but attribute agency to it. For example, in Catholicism, statues of the Virgin Mary weeping tears or blood are popular. In India, deity statues have the capacity for *dargan,* that is, the power of the auspicious sight. In general, religious images are attributed with many different forms of agency; the most prevalent appears to be the power of healing.

Furthermore, there are diverse, sometimes elaborate explanations about how images or statues enter into a state of agency.

In colonial Mexico, the Franciscan image doctrine declined in the second half of the sixteenth century while the belief in the agency of images grew. The worship of the "miraculous image" reached its climax in the seventeenth century, when images were "endowed with their own life, capable of regulation and autoregulation" (Gruzinski 2001: 129). This image concept incorporated many aspects of the pre-Hispanic idea of the *teixiptla,* which attributed agentive power to images and statues. We do not know whether the pre-Hispanic Nahuas also assigned agency to written texts in their materiality, while they did so to paper in its unwritten form. This is different from many material text practices in other traditions, in which efficacy is endowed to paper only through the signs written on it. There are, for example, contemporary practices of ingesting paper inscribed with text from the Qur'an for healing purposes or the practice of wearing amulets enclosing written texts for protective purposes in the Roman Empire.

The belief in the agency of images and the efficacy of texts in their materiality is one important aspect of Indigenous semiotic theories awaiting cross-cultural comparison. Another aspect concerns the assumed relationship between the sign and reality and the question of which part of reality the sign might represent. According to my interpretative theory, Nahua semiotics was based on the idea that the sign presented the underlying structures of the cosmos. This idea resembles a specific interpretation of Chinese calligraphy as a visual medium for expressing the organizing structures of the universe. While the mandalas of Tibetan Buddhism are generally believed to represent intrapsychic sceneries and the cycle of reincarnation, Islamic calligraphy, according to the semiotic theory by Lois Ibsen Al-Faruqi, seeks to "express the non-representableness, the inexpressibility, of the divine" and to "suggest infinity". Thus, Islamic calligraphy is the visual embodiment of the crystallization of the spiritual realities *(al-haqa 1q)* contained in the Islamic revelation. This calligraphy provides the external dress for the Word of God in the visible world but this art remains wedded to the world of the spirit, for according to the traditional Islamic saying, "Calligraphy is the geometry of the Spirit."

These examples only superficially sketch emic semiotic theories; what is needed is a thorough comparison of differences and similarities.

Taking the complexity of emic semiotic theories and the fundamental differences in their related epistemologies and ontologies into account, any academic theory with cross-cultural aspirations may easily fall short. It may turn out that the academic theory is simply one more semiotic theory embedded within its respective culture, in this case within the secular ontology and epistemology of the modern Western sciences. Along these lines, I see some shortcomings in the theory proposed by Meyer. She understands media and materiality in the context of religion as mediations "between the levels of humans and some spiritual, divine, or transcendental force". Correspondingly, she defined *religions* as "the ways in which people link up with; or even feel touched by, a meta-empirical sphere that may be glossed as supernatural, sacred, divine, or transcendental". Taking "the material and sensory dimension" as an intrinsic feature of *religion,* she understands *religion* "as a practice of mediation that organizes the relationship between experiencing subjects and the transcendental via particular sensational forms". Specifically regarding images, Meyer proposed that these make the invisible visible, represent "an absent signified," and "operate as symbolic forms that mediate that signified and in so doing constitute reality".

Although Meyer aimed at disengaging the antisomatist and antimaterialist tendencies in the study of religion, this semiotic theory nevertheless maintains a European ontological dualism that is not necessarily cross-culturally applicable. As I have argued in several places, it does not apply to Nahua monist ontology.

The theory *could* apply to Nahua ontology, however, if we exclude its ontological statement about matter mediating the transcendent and reduce it to state merely that the image or sign presents the "invisible." After doing so, the theory could be related to a more secular academic semiotic theory arguing that signs might be able to represent the ineffable, in the sense of a "quality or state that applies to things that are incapable of being expressed in words". The ineffable, understood in this way, could include mystic experiences of "the sacred," as Rudolf phrased it, or visions gained in altered states of consciousness but also philosophical ideas of "contradiction, paradox, and impossibility". Finally, it could also refer to kinds of nonpropositional knowledge that are difficult to express linguistically. In this way, my interpretative theory of Nahua pictography could be regarded as a more secular variant of a contemporary academic semiotic theory, because it argues that Nahua pictography offers a means to express embodied conceptual metaphors and other kinds of body knowledge.

The theoretical approach discussed in the last paragraph focuses on one aspect of human media usage, the semiotic aspect theorizing the relationship between the sign and reality and defining which aspect of reality the sign is believed to mediate. This idea of semiotics appears to be closely derived from the traditional understanding of material objects as symbols mediating a non-material meaning and also from the traditional understanding of media as a means of communication that transports a message like a parcel from the sender to the recipient. Searching for a more radical shift in perspective, we might turn to approaches theorizing the many other ways in which human beings use, relate to, interpret, and make sense with media and material objects, approaches that understand meaningmaking as an integrated bodily process. One approach along these lines is Schilbrack's recent introduction of the theory of material culture as cognitive prosthetics into the study of religion. After these concluding remarks about the study of semiotics in the context of the aesthetics of religion, it is time to summarize the work done in this study. One of its central academic objectives was to start an interdisciplinary dialogue between Mesoamerican studies and the study of religion. On one hand, I intended to change the perspective on Mesoamerican cultures by seeing it from viewpoints recently developed within the study of religion. On the other hand, I intended to test whether theories from the study of religion hold ground when applied to Mesoamerican cultures. In sum, I followed Mignolo's intention: "In writing this book I was more interested in exploring new ways of thinking about what we know than to accumulate new knowledge under old ways of thinking".

The temporary endpoint of my journey into the world of the pre-Hispanic Nahuas was to propose two interpretations: first, an interpretative (re)construction of Nahua semiotic theory based on their sense of reality and, second, a theory about the modus operandi of Nahua pictography seen from the perspective of contemporary academic theories. In this, I opted for an interdisciplinary approach and, consequently, faced the impossibility of doing justice to the sophistication that some theoretical debates have reached within their home disciplines. I am aware that in many cases I only scratched the surface of these debates and surely missed many ideas that have already been thought_ Furthermore, I surely missed complete discussions that would have matched my objectives, regarding both my interpretation

of Nahua culture and the theoretical scenery I painted in the last chapter. Finally, I more or less deliberately excluded fields of research simply because I needed to establish an end to an already long journey. One of these fields, for example, is formed by Germanspeaking image theories, another by recent German research projects on the materiality of writing (see, e.g., Strafing 2006). Unfortunately, I was unable to include results of the Research Training Group "*Notational Iconicity": On the Materiality, Perceptibility and Operativity of Writing* (German Research Foundation) located at the Freie Universitat Berlin,[1] although it followed a theoretical agenda similar to my own. Similarly, the results of the running collaborate research project on material text cultures at Heidelberg University await further discussion.

Other fields include research on epigrams and seals in ancient history or analyses of the many different writing systems of the world done in several area studies. I have sketched in broad strokes only the European history of philosophies of language, writing, and the arts, and largely excluded extensive details of the philosophical debates based on Kant, Wittgenstein, or Derrida. Furthermore, I touched only briefly on the field of (comparative) semiotics, which might have provided interesting perspectives on my research material, at least in those cases in which it is cross-culturally applicable and translatable for interdisciplinary dialogue. Furthermore, I only quickly mentioned the promising research field of the psychology of art and aesthetics (see, e.g. Tinio and Smith 2014). The main intention of the study was not to cover all those fields comprehensively but to open up interdisciplinary dialogue and to provide a springboard for further discussions.

As a consequence, there is much work left to do in future studies following the theoretical perspective of this study. Specifically, I see a large potential in the transdisciplinary dialogue between the studies of religion, art history, aesthetics, visual studies, perceptual psychology, cognitive science, and many area studies that discuss the ways in which human beings make meaning from and with visual systems of communication and the ways in which they position themselves within the world through the visual sense. More generally, I dream of expanding our academic and scientific knowledge about the sensorial, bodily, emotional, medial, and material ways of being and acting in the world in the context of religious and cultural traditions and their interrelationships with cognitive processes and among one another. This also includes comparative studies between different religious and cultural aesthetics, semiotic theories, and epistemologies.

There is also much work left to do in future studies on the culture and religion of the pre-Hispanic Nahuas as well as on contemporary Nahuas and their colonial and postcolonial history and, more broadly, on Mesoamerican cultures and their histories in general. Specifically with respect to the pre-Hispanic Nahuas, one central objective of this study was to reassess previous academic representations of Nahua religion and semiotic concepts. In this, I put great emphasis on the analysis and reflection of secondary literature on the Nahuas. Future studies are needed to test my interpretations and theories on more and specific primary source material.

All in all, my prime motivation was to understand a little better the pre-Hispanic Nahua sense of reality. Much has already been written about the question whether historical and cross-cultural understanding is possible at all.

Being aware of the limitations of this understanding, I am still interested in listening to the Nahuas rather than giving up on the matter by thinking that I could, in the end, only understand myself. Most certainly,

there are aspects of unconscious Othering in my work and failed attempts to transcend my own concepts and thinking patterns. I hope that my colleagues, contemporary and future, Nahua and non-Nahua, will have a clearer vision to finding these projections and misunderstandings. Furthermore, I reached my interpretative theories through high levels of abstraction from the data given in individual sources. Consequently, my theory homogenizes individual, social, regional, ethnic, and historical variations in a complex culture that was rapidly expanding, diversifying, and transforming. Generalizing these differences to construct underlying characteristics of a shared culture involves high degrees of interpretation and most probably also of projection. Hence, the resulting interpretation that I offered is not only abstract but also probably different from what any individual pre-Hispanic Nahua would have thought. While my intention was to stay close and truthful to the primary sources and not to work *against* their evidence, I also used the interpretations of my scholarly predecessors and sometimes reached highly speculative ground. My intention was to make better sense of Nahua culture based on the available sources than earlier interpretations could. Notwithstanding this, I do not claim to have any better access to Aztec affect, sense, and thought than those earlier interpretations. I simply offered a new attempt to search for cross-cultural historical semiotic understanding.

In all this, I am aware of the intrinsic paradoxy of my understanding of academic knowledge. While the basic drive of my academic research echoes positivist and teleological interests because it searches for approaches and theories fitting and explaining reality better than earlier ones, at the same time it is deeply postcolonial and postmodern because I am quite aware of the limits of human understanding. The only solution to this dilemma appears to be to adopt a ludic attitude, as Sam Gill proposed in his discussion of Jonathan Z. Smith's methods of comparison:

> Play, as demonstrated to us by Smith as a double-face, is holding at once comic and tragic perspectives, the oscillatory and iterative negotiation of fit, the acknowledgment that we must stand somewhere despite knowing that there is ultimately no justifiable place on which to stand to comprehend the world. To embrace this absurdity is particularly suited, one might even say singularly so, as the attitude for the modern academic study of religion. It is the perspective from which we can simultaneously embrace two or more opposing positions without declaring ourselves mad. <>

STRELKA: THE NEW NORMAL edited by Benjamin H. Bratton Nicolay Boyadjiev Nick Axel Project Lead: Olga Tenisheva [Strelka Press, ISBN 978-5-907163-08-9; Park Books, ISBN 9783038602200]

The New Normal (2017-2019) was a post-graduate program and Speculative Urbanism think-tank within Moscow's renowned Strelka Institute of Media, Architecture, and Design. Directed by distinguished American social theorist Benjamin H. Bratton, the The New Normal conducted a collaborative research to investigate the impact of planetary-scale computation on the future of cities both in Russia and around the world.

The New Normal book, edited by Benjamin H. Bratton, Nicolay Boyadjiev, and Nick Axel, features twenty-two interlinked projects that were part of the research. Published alongside are seventeen lavishly illustrated contributions by international researchers and designers that outline the wider scope of The New Normal program's output, held together by concise thematic texts contributed by Benjamin H. Bratton. Contributors include many of the most influential contemporary designers, philosophers, architects, and artists, such as Yuk Hui, Liam Young, Anastassia Smirnova, Lydia Kallipoliti, Lev Manovich, Julieta Aranda, Trevor Paglen, Metahaven, Keller Easterling, Robert Gerard Pietrusko, Molly Wright Steenson, Ben Cerveny, Rival Strategy, Geoff Manaugh, Stephanie Sherman, and Patricia Reed. The fields of research include Speculative Megastructures, Human AI Interaction Design, Protocols and Programs, Synthetic Cinema, Alt-Geographies, Platform Econometrics, and Recursive Simulation.

This highly topical volume, the only comprehensive survey of research and work produced by The New Normal program, will appeal to all readers interested in the future of cities and urban design.

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Excerpt: Strelka was founded as a non-profit institute in Moscow in 2009 with an ambition to promote positive changes and create new ideas through its educational activities. The Institute has been directed since 2013 by Varvara Melnikova. Now in its tenth year, it runs various programs and initiatives ranging from big public events in both Moscow and across the country, to learning programs for professional architects and urbanists in Russia, offline publishing program, communication initiatives and a popular digital media platform Strelka Mag. But at the heart of Strelka has always been our experimental design research postgraduate program.

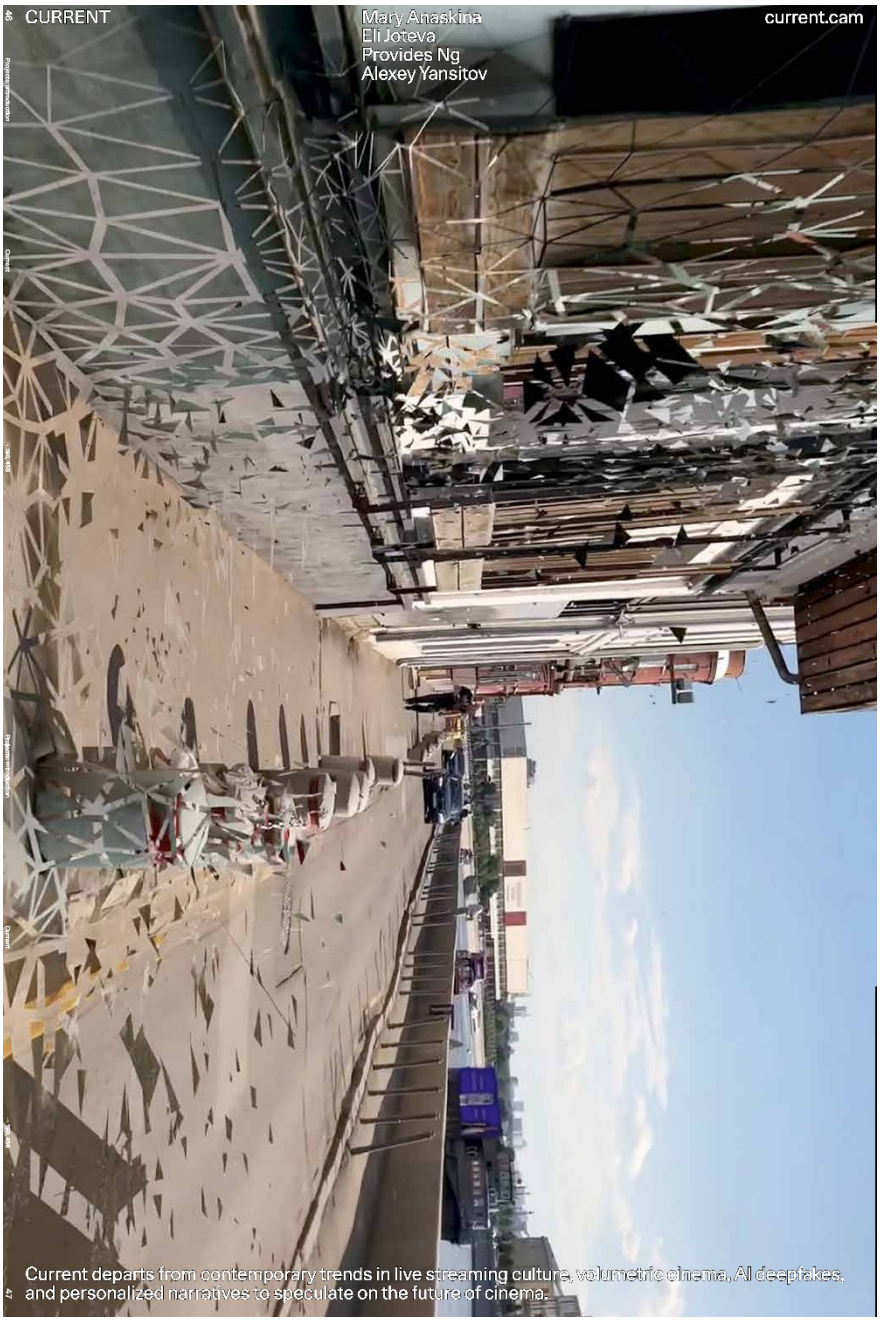
Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design is a non-profit international educational project, founded in 2009 and located in Moscow. Strelka incorporates an education programme on urbanism and urban development aimed at professionals with a higher education, a public summer programme, the Strelka Press publishing house, and KB Strelka, the consulting arm of the Institute. Strelka has been listed among the top-100 best architecture schools in 2014, according to Domus magazine.

Behind Strelka was a strong intent supported by our founder and head of the Board of Trustees—Alexander Mamut—to contribute to the education, culture, and transformation of Russian cities in a

meaningful way. The first years of Strelka, with Rem Koolhaas as the first education program director, were shaped by our research approach and ambition to articulate and reflect on what is at stake in the paradoxes of our contemporary urban condition. Ultimately Strelka has always sought to encourage a way of thinking that can result in the creation of new design practices—interdisciplinary, conceptually rich, emerging-technology-driven, critical, and pragmatic. Over the past years the Institute has been implementing this vision with ongoing support of Strelka KB, an urban consulting company founded in 2013 by an Institute alumni and its CEO Denis Leontiev.

Strelka is not an institution that can be easily described. Our work can be explained through the range of projects better than with a single definition. It is a place driven by curiosity. Rather than claim and disseminate a given expertise, we explore and investigate new territories in dialogue with a network of curated experts, and spread this approach to learning. This is an active state of engagement, allowing for a sense of doubt and ability to listen to others who see things differently.

There are a lot of institutions and think tanks driven by more applied methodologies and problem-solving approaches to design. The impact that we hope to make at Strelka is to contribute with our own way of thinking and expanded definition of design. We want to create propositions other people can engage with and react to— embracing them, drawing inspiration from them, challenging them, and applying them in other fields. Broadcasting is part of Strelka's DNA, which is why we are now enthusiastic about sharing our work and research insights produced during **THE NEW NORMAL**.



Benjamin H. Bratton first came to Strelka to give a lecture within our Summer Public Program in 2014, but our first conversation about what would become **THE NEW NORMAL** was not until two years later. We met in Helsinki in the summer of 2016 and had the most fascinating conversation around a set of questions we were mutually interested in exploring. What was immediately striking and resonated with me was how he positioned himself as another researcher in this yet-to-be determined think tank rather than as the expert coming in. There was a clear alignment in how we wanted to develop this initiative, driven by the spirit of joint exploration. The themes of The New Normal are themes we wanted to spend our time, resources, and efforts on, and it was clear from the start that this new research agenda was going to require a deep dive, which we undertook over the course of three years.

I was incredibly excited to be developing this work in Russia, a context that is full of contradictions—very regulated in many ways, but also with a strong legacy of forward-thinking experimentation. The New Normal engages with both the past and present to propose bold visions for its future, and this regulated context provided us with an opportunity to create something different.

Fundamentally, the value and impact of Strelka is that it is a project for people and about people. Originally we primarily invited architects, but over time the group became much more multidisciplinary.

Our work has always focused on questions of contemporary urbanism and an expanded definition of the "city," but we avoid organizing a conversation around a single discipline. Rather, we combine ways of seeing the world and synthesize ideas from sociology, media studies, political science, architecture, anthropology, economics, and philosophy into an expanded worldview.

Architects have a fantastic skill of understanding and engaging with space, one that should be applied more outside of the traditional boundaries of the profession—to help understand the impact of new technologies on urban landscapes, create new policies and models of organization, and imagine new worlds through cinema and fiction. This kind of spatial thinking is as useful when it comes to thinking about technologies, systems, and networks as it is in shaping physical spaces, cities, and buildings. In the process of working together, I hope researchers from other disciplines find ways to learn and adopt these methods of "seeing the world" and understanding how space works as publics engage with it. Architects, on the other hand, can learn to see themselves in much broader terms—not solely as creators of public spaces, but as designers who can and should have an impact on today's most critical issues, from the consequences of environmental collapse to the impacts of emerging technologies and geopolitical governance.

THINK TANK by Nicolay Boyadjiev

THE NEW NORMAL was conceived as a "speculative urbanism think-tank," mixing tools and approaches from a wide variety of disciplines including architecture, urbanism, film, interaction design, software design, game design, economics, social sciences, and more.

Over the course of the three-cycle project, ninety interdisciplinary researchers from over thirty countries relocated to Moscow to work with over one-hundred international invited experts and a core group of faculty on the invention and articulation of new relevant urban discourses in response to the emerging technologies and processes that have thoroughly infused the fabric of our cities. Among the many outcomes of the think-tank were twenty-two speculative urban design projects that both separately and cumulatively explore a radical contemporary understanding of "urban design practice."

Deployed from 2016 to 2019, the think-tank was itself designed and run as an innovative, experimental, and interdisciplinary model of postgraduate education. Each yearly cycle followed a five-month (twenty-two-week) pedagogical framework linking theoretical seminars, local and international field trips, technical workshops, and design research to teach interpretive and analytical skills, test unlikely interdisciplinary collaborations, and build a collective body of work culminating in the final projects.

THE NEW NORMAL was structured in an alternating sequence of modules organized cumulatively and having specific functions at key times during the program. Snowballing from start to finish, each set the stage for the one that followed, while building on the overall research focus and conceptual agenda of the program.

> A fire broke out backstage in a theatre. The clown came out to warn the public; they thought it was a joke and applauded. He repeated it; the acclaim was even greater. I think that's just how the world will come to an end: to general applause from wits who believe it's a joke. — Kierkegaard
> The ape regards his tail; he's stuck on it. Repeats until he fails, half a goon and half a god. — Devo

Ghosts are Strata

During my first trip to Moscow after having accepted the position as director for the postgraduate educational program at Strelka Institute, one particularly significant thing did not happen. I have been thinking about it not happening a lot lately. One sleepy Sunday afternoon, while on a mundane errand to buy a SIM card, I passed the Russian White House, the scene of the failed 1991 coup that, by a turn of events, brought Boris Yeltsin to power. Among other events, this signaled the end of the Soviet Union. Despite official media blackouts, thanks to an early Relcom link sending updates to the outside world, it was also, in a real sense, the launch event for the Russian internet. One system gives way at the moment another makes its appearance.

By coincidence, as I rode past the parliament building in a taxi, I happened to recollect the date—August 21, 2016—and realized that it was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the end of the coup. Shouldn't this place be a scene of some sort of remembrance? There was no one in sight. I am not one to stand on ceremony, but for someone who grew up in California in the midst of the Cold War, finding himself in Moscow on that day, to witness the ponderously conspicuous silence and absence of commemoration or even acknowledgement, was memorably eerie. In front of the parliament building, where tanks had been, there was only regular weekend traffic. There was nothing much about it on TV either, just a brief mention in passing, as if required by ordinance. On the street, at the site of its occurrence, the anniversary of this "revolution" was an unmarked non-event. The accumulated debt of an unprocessed past makes it extraordinarily difficult to invest in a real future. Instead, the past gets buried. Moscow is full of layered ghosts, all the more spooky for their muteness. Until, that is, the repressed returns and bursts forth, burying a new stratum of ghosts all over again.

I had been to Russia many times before, including as a teenager when I visited the city still called Leningrad. I have had the chance to reflect on the deep and strange interrelations between Russia and California, where I am from: the military antagonism, the space race, the long arch of algorithmic governance, attempted and realized, etc. Both places have their unique politics of amnesia. For the beautiful and banal La Jolla, the amnesia is based in phones, drones, and genomes. For Moscow, it is a century or more of unmourned, unprocessed utopian regimes. Maybe these are more similar than they first appear. In that summer of 2016, it seemed as if the two might have been tilting toward some awkward convergence, but of what exactly? It may take a while to become clear.

Across the river from the Strelka campus is a famous church that looks like it's from the nineteenth century but is actually from the 1990s. There was once another church there that took more than twenty years to construct (1839–1860), but in 1931 the Soviets saw fit to knock it down to make way for the Palace of the Soviet Socialist Republics. The design of that massive capital of world socialism drew competition entries from around the world before settling on the scheme known to every architecture student, a structure that would have been the tallest building in the world, with a King Kong-sized Lenin on top pointing to the future. The Great War with Germany intervened in the plan to build it, and available steel was used for military efforts instead. But the vast circular foundation had already been dug. What to do with such a big hole in the ground? For most of the Soviet era it became a gigantic open air public swimming pool. It was a remarkable thing. But of course, when the Orthodox Church came back in the 1990s, they wanted their pre-revolutionary church back—but this time bigger and better. And so, one was built. When Pussy Riot performed "Punk Prayer" in that new church in

2012, they were almost twice as old as the building itself, but you wouldn't know by looking at it. It's a reasonable simulation of what you would imagine a very old Orthodox cathedral would look like in a movie about very old Orthodox cathedrals. You can still see where the swimming pool used to be. There is no trace of the Palace of the Soviets, however, other than in architectural history seminars. The site, just out the window of our seminar and studio windows, is a microcosm of Moscow's layering of ghosts of futures.

The New Normal education program at Strelka took the urban as a medium whose messages are at once both determinant and up for grabs. Something has shifted, it seems: this much is true. We are making new worlds faster than we can keep track of them, and the pace is unlikely to slow. If technologies have advanced beyond our ability to conceptualize their implications and revelations, then such gaps can be perilous, and it is less their fault than ours. One impulse is to pull the emergency brake and try to put all the genies back in all the bottles. This is, at best, ill-advised, and at worst, genocidal. Better instead to invest in emergence, in contingency, to bend our grasping toward its implications: to map the new normal for what it is, and to shape it toward what it should be. That said, waking ghosts is an uncertain invitation. Things can get out of hand quickly, but that may be the point.

The Obscurity of Hybrids

The previous research theme of Strelka's educational program was called "Hybrid Urbanism," and was based on the idea that physical/virtual mixtures of bricks and bits are still a mysterious novelty. They are not. Their coexistence is quite normal, and if we don't have the words to articulate how so, other than by calling them hybrids, we should make them up. In fact, the language of hybrids is part of the problem. When something new appears, we may understand it as a combination of other familiar things. A car is a "horseless carriage." A handheld computer plus camera plus wireless data plus screen is a "mobile phone." A metropolis woven with sensor networks and information technology is called a "smart city." A blockchain is, more or less, "digital money." And so on. Formal and vernacular languages are strewn with horseless carriage metaphors. In the short-term, hybrids may make sense by way of analogy and continuity, but soon they create confusion, and even fear, as the new things continue to evolve and resemble the familiar less and less. Hybrid terminology delays recognition and defers understanding of what requires the most audacious attention.

Instead of piling on more hybrids, exceptions, and anomalies, we need a glossary for a new normal, and for its design and redesign. But why is that so hard, and what is the new normal anyway? Or better yet—what should it be? So much of the new normal doesn't seem "new" at all. To the contrary, it seems like a nightmarish regurgitation of history-themed vulgarities, all positions frozen in place for a long winter's ground campaign.

As I wrote the research plan for the program, watching the year 2016 sputter away, many were struck by the ambience of stupefaction that covered the globe. Sometimes things are not as they seem (and sometimes they are even more what they are than they appear to be). To see things new again, strange and marvelous, requires a more serious and quiet train of thought.

The "new normal" is a term that can have several connotations, and we rode that slipperiness. The first is that design must map its bizarre circumstances anew if it has a hope of ever designating their futures. From this a second connotation follows, which is working to enforce new normative claims. Design's

reaction to the new normal cannot be phrased only in terms of acceptance or resistance, but of reconfiguring what norms will be based on the new shit that has come to light.

The new normal twists distant sites into one another. Discontiguous megastructures cohere from molecular, urban, and atmospheric scales into de facto jurisdictions. Ecological flows become a public body of intensive sensing, quantification, and governance. Cloud platforms take on the traditional role of states, as states evolve into cloud platforms. Cities link into vast and tangling urban networks as they multiply borders into enclaves inside of enclaves, nesting gated communities inside of gated communities. Interfaces present vibrant augmentations of reality, now sorted as address, interface, and user.

School of Thought

Strelka is not just a school of design, but a school of thought. Just like Vkhutemas, Bauhaus, and however many others, it makes its own language of and for the urban. For its part, The New Normal dealt with cities as an artificial planetary crust, an information technology for emergent economics, politics, and cultural norms. Cities are the shuttles through which the multipolar Anthropocenic precipice unfolds its many crises of authority (too much, too little), genomic flows and flux, various desperate fundamentalisms, financial melodramas, and a video game-like geopolitics full of hidden trapdoors and Easter eggs.

How to name all these more directly? That was the plan. It is not just hybrid terms that are suspect, but good solid words too, like "sovereignty," "politics," "identity," "human," "organic," "citizen," "home," "modern," "authentic," "progressive," "natural," etc. What do these words mean anymore? Or rather, does what they mean describe what is actually happening? When does the gap between what they mean and what is happening become so wide that we need to move on to new words? Can we invent a conceptual language to describe what we need to? How to design a more effective glossary? Can we do it fast enough? I honestly don't know, and only time will tell. But if it is possible, then the way to do so would be less to write out a new vocabulary list than to make the things that are only possible to say with the new words.

To assume that the future will be like the present, only more so, feels safe, but is actually quite a risky bet. All historical evidence is against it, even as it comforts us as bent-over creatures of habit hoping to preserve our predictions. On another level, it makes our relationship to technology equally contorted. The value of emerging technologies is less in that they fix new solutions and more in how they pose essential problems and questions in new ways. Automation of what? Machine vision of what? Recognition of what pattern? Which artificial intelligence about what? The future city when? Who is included and excluded from the new normal, and on what terms will we be included in each other's worlds, or not? We do not know what new technologies are for good yet. No one does, and that's the point. They remain open to definition. They probably have nothing to do with what we think they're for right now. That is the good news.

Design Futures Against Design Futures

J. G. Ballard once wrote that "the future is a better key to the present than the past." An essential aspect of the new normal is that the very idea of the future (a future, any future at all) seems both a foregone conclusion and impossible to imagine: a dark tautology and a vanishing illusion. This double-

facedness of the future tends to encourage prophetic fatalism, not thoughtful long-term composition. Cognitive faculties of foresight can lose their grip and become eschatology. Compared to California, where "the future" is a cottage culture industry, a different museum of futurism weighs heavy in Moscow's ghostly layers. Cycles of change in Moscow are felt to be both inevitable and inconsequential. When the future comes, and afterwards, will things be even more the same than they already are?

During The New Normal, Zaryadye Park, a sprawlingly landscaped public park next to the Kremlin, ostensibly designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, opened across the river from Strelka. The most iconic architectural feature of the park is a long dramatic looping bridge that lets park-goers walk out over the river and back again. One night, I asked my taxi driver what he thought about this new public park that had just opened. He looked at me the rearview mirror to size up my question. "It's very symbolic," he said. "It is?" I answered, honestly not sure what he meant. "Yes, it's obvious." A long silent pause between us. "Ok, how so?" I ventured. He seemed surprised that I could be so dumb. "The bridge where you go out over the river and look down and come back around. This is the government saying to us 'you can go out as far as you want, it doesn't matter, you will end up back where you started.'" We were silent again.

When the program first launched, I was once asked by an aggressive and impatient Russian journalist whether The New Normal would bring practical designs that help Muscovites right here and now, or wild and impractical gestures that would not. By the latter, I surmised that they meant, for example, the grove of isolated skyscrapers that comprise the somber Moscow City, conjured up as a flat-pack financial district near the third ring road in the 1990s. I told them that we hold quick fix schemes in low regard.

The New Normal was meant to be a research think tank, and we make no apologies for this. We did not convene to build more buildings on the spot. Yet the work we made was, I would argue, extremely practical, perhaps disturbingly so. It is the type of work that would be common sense in a city governed by the quiet clarity of reason. I told the journalist that our interest in Russian urbanism departs from the year 2050. We may normally think of that as the future, but it's not. It's pretty much next week, all things considered. I sensed in the way the journalist changed his posture when I responded that this line of thinking seemed plausible to him. Whereas for other education programs elsewhere in the world, that year may underwrite "design futures," for which the future is a convenient alibi into which present problems are deferred. But for us, it does not. Again, 2050 is not the future. We are all setting the table for 2050 right now, with every little and large system we use or abuse.

The journalist then asked me, considering that cities last so long, why is the timescale of architecture so myopic? What's wrong with you people? I responded that maybe his initial question about whether we would focus on immediate practical issues is part of the problem. Perhaps it's because the autobiographical sense of cause and effect is so weirdly foreshortened, so over-tuned to the most immediate subjective experiences, that we understand five-to-ten-year project cycles as "long-term." Much longer circuits between decision and outcome must be internalized, not because it would be ideal, but because it is a more practical approach.

If the "Long Now" is some kind of ten-thousand-year mindfulness, what **THE NEW NORMAL** is after is more like a "thick now," for which the depth and complexity of this wider immediate moment

(roughly 1850–2050 CE) is given greater reign over humanity's mayfly phenomenology. Put differently, because cities and ecologies operate at rhythms that are both much faster and much slower than human social time—an intergenerational exquisite corpse—engineering them as if they will die with us sets in motion cascade effects which can, depending on how they're designed, either coalesce into an emergent intelligent order or pile up into gigantic monstrosities. The purpose of design intelligence is to abstract patterns above and beyond individual perspective and incremental optimization, such that systems might be steered away from either banal dysfunction or self-destruction. Is that too much to ask? I think he got the point.

Eleven Time Zones as Site Condition

The Russian context is an "interesting" position from which to map these circumstances. It is no secret that contemporary mainstream Russian political discourse is not entirely enamored with the premises of universal modernity and the eminence of secular reason. If for much of the twentieth century Moscow saw itself as the seat of one kind of internationalism, today it would be of another, defined by inverting many terms of the one it previously replaced. Against this current, we asked how past Russian futurisms (literary, cinematic, scientific, social, etc.) might yet shape urbanism here, there, and elsewhere. This is not as quixotic as it may seem, as the last years of the 2010s have been defined by the push and pull

between neo-modern and neo-reactionary narratives, and it is not always clear which is which. The aims of **THE NEW NORMAL'S** own little cosmopolitan sect of speculative urbanists are unambiguously universalist, but what that actually means requires continual rediscovery and reformulation.

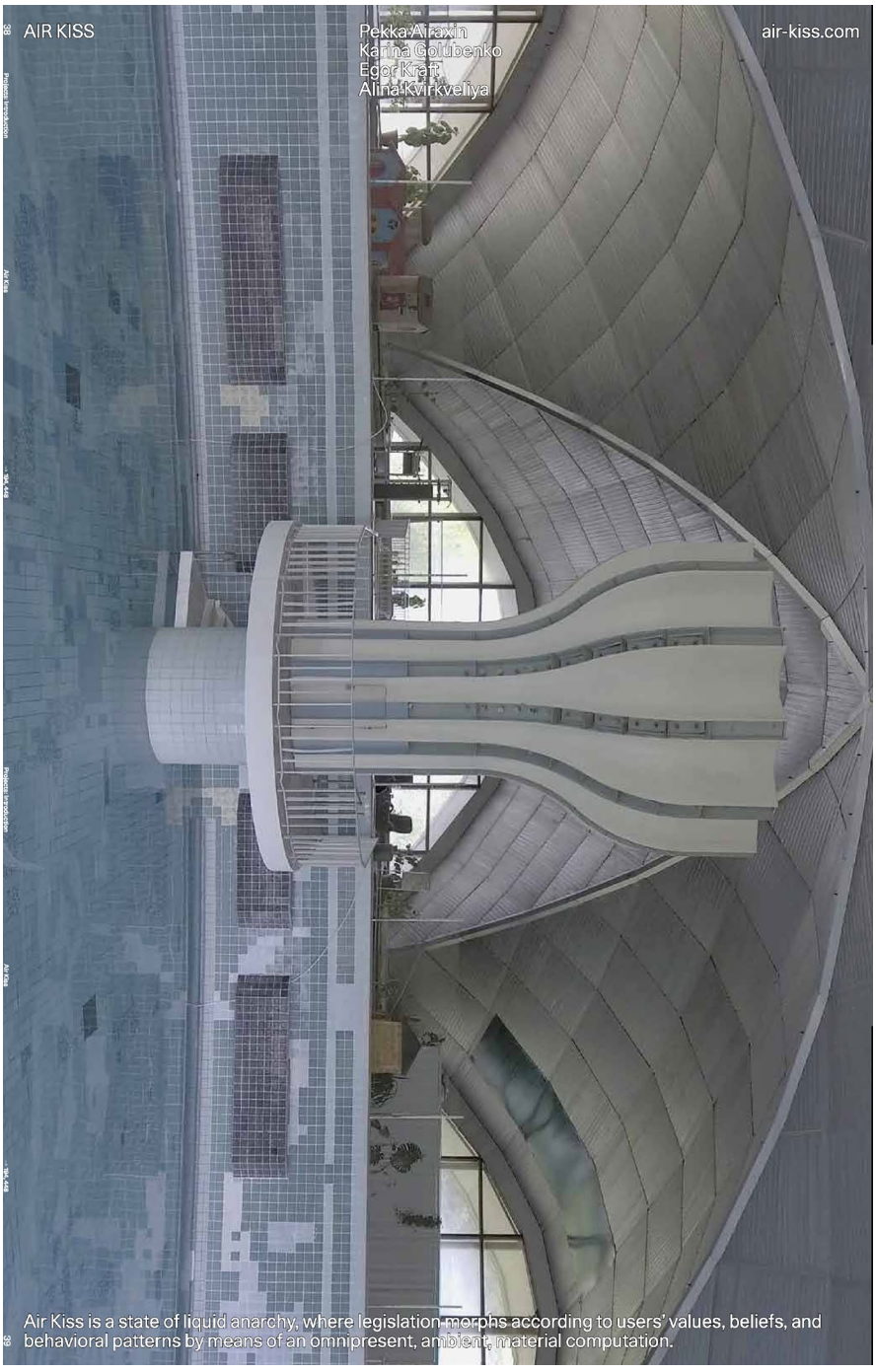
Strelka's campus is right in the middle of Moscow and its legacies of melancholic utopianism and voluptuous dystopianism. The city links European and Asian passages, Arctic and Baltic flows, and is where, during the twentieth century, algorithmic governance found one of its primordial forms. Will the expanded jurisdictional circumference of "the Moscow agglomeration" innovate a regional vernacular of duplicative sprawl, or interlocking nested megastructures? Perhaps both, or neither. At twenty million inhabitants and counting, will Moscow's path be one toward lower density or higher density—and density of what? How much energy can it draw into the centripetal force of sovereign centralization until—like the Antonov 225, Tsar Bomba, Ostankino Tower, or Norman Foster's unbuilt Crystal Island—the city becomes just too big to function, and finally is set aside for other options? Will it only find new ways to rehearse the existential malaise of the Strugatsky brothers' Doomed City, perhaps now cast as an Aeroflot safety video on endless loop along the arcades of GUM?

From Russia's eleven-time-zone expanse, the first vertical forays of Earthlings into space were launched, freeing us from one sort of planetary predicament and revealing others from which we can never leave. A century ago, Nikolai Federov, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, and other cosmists imagined migration off-planet as a necessary evolutionary step for the species. But where to now? Mars? Probably not, but Mars has long been a preferred location for Russian charter cities, from Alexander Bogdanov's Red Star (1908) and Aleksey Tolstoy's Aelita (1923) to Valery Fokin's (and Francis Ford Coppola's) Nebo Zovyot (1959) and the Mars 3 craft which, in 1971, was the first Earth machine to land on the Red Planet. According to this tradition, The New Normal conceives its own charter cities and charter stacks as if they were for some place like Mars, because, in a way—whether it is Laika's little space suit or growing food under a domed desert—they are.

Perhaps, as before, the path out is upward, where the idealism of internationalism and the geometries of the global give way to a stark and vibrant planetarity. Of course, "outer space" is not actually out of anywhere (I once had to remind a student, whose speculative design project was about "the first human born in space," that all humans, hurtling around the sun as we are, were born in space). How space signifies an exterior alternative (or alternative exteriority) is provisional, but productively so. Whether from orbit or on Mars, the interdependent totality of Earth's planetary circumstance can be perceived as untethered from mankind's intuitive horizontalism, and when it is, it suggests but never guarantees the possibility of comprehensive alternatives. If Mars stands for Planet B, it is less because we will move there than it is because solving systems for its arid plains makes solving for Earth's teeming tropics easy by comparison.

The Clown Hair Problem

Geopolitical uncertainty can be a position of leverage—and camouflage. For us, this meant embracing that saying exactly what you mean doesn't entail speaking so that everything is obvious. Once upon a time, the man elected president stood in front of the press and waved away questions about espionage and influence with the whopper: "The whole age of the computer has made it where nobody knows exactly what's going on." We were perfectly aware of the risks and pleasures of locating this work in Moscow. Its implications may be radical, but in ways that are illegible to those who may want to make life hard for that sort of thing. They can look all they want at our work, down to every detail, and will find mostly things that they are not sure what to make of. Is this for real? Is this serious? Are they making fun of us or pitching us a plan? Is this supposed to be a critique of the status quo, or a proposal for what should be happening instead? Can we actually invest in this? Did all of this already happen? The answers to all of these questions are both yes and no.



Looking back at the work that was produced within the think tank, I am no more certain than when we started whether each project is an aspiration or a warning, or both. We don't want to know too fast. The old chestnut of the pharmakon as both remedy and poison still holds. Some of the journalists and critics who came to the three annual final presentations, or watched them online, wrote that the work presented showed that we were everything from authoritarian technocrats to dreamy artists, neoliberal

shills, and/or communist psy-ops. To construct three years' worth of projects that can maintain and sustain that sort of Rorschach inkblot abstraction-plus-recognition is not so easy, but it was deliberate.

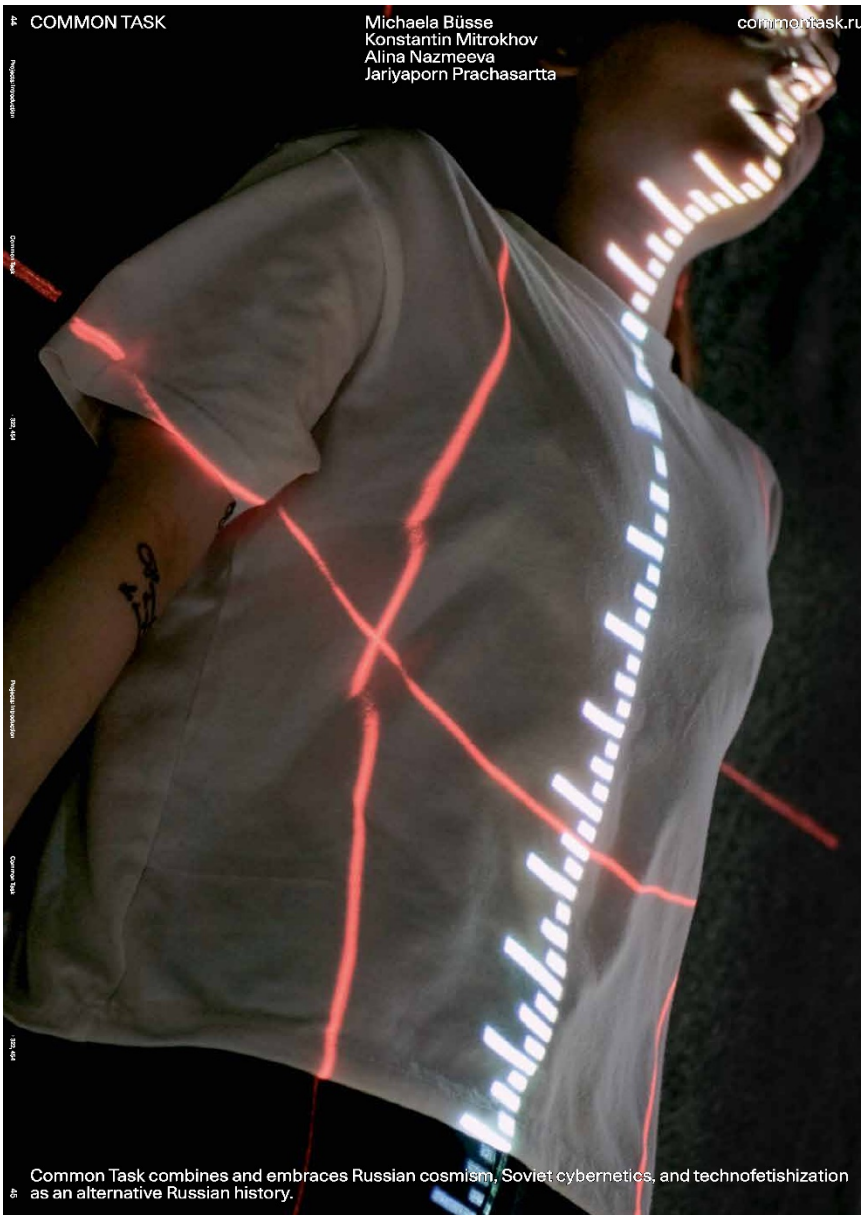
This is a far better method than what stands now for so much "design thinking," a term that suggests a multipurposed meeting room filled with sticky notes and stakeholders reluctantly drawn into a bad faith LARP; a cringe corporate ritual based on the mistaken notion that if by coercing anyone with a possible future complaint to voice their improvised opinion upfront, then the eventual "design" will bear a veneer of consensus and collaborative equality. Design thinking, in this sense, is a way to avoid investing in expert designers with adequate budgets and authority, based on the mistaken notion that unlike almost any other profession, design is an easy formula that works best when every random preference is mixed in to the whole. The performative dynamics of this horrible process lend themselves to passive aggressive demagoguery, subtextual subterfuge, and absolute amateurism. No wonder then that design is so easily lent to processes which seek to incant outcomes into being by guaranteeing that the organization of meeting-goers fully represents the presumed outcome in the most superficial ways. Like ineffectual ritual-based political activism that finally gave up on power and relocated to galleries and museums where its beatific pointlessness was seen as a virtue, the same fate is befalling "critical design."

For **THE NEW NORMAL** program specifically, the urban was taken more as a format for design rather than a genre of design. Cities are media for the circulation of potentials (as well as the encapsulation of foregone conclusions), and to search for that potential means getting out of our own skins. The passages between hard science and science fiction set the rules for spatial scenarios to play out. To make the future look Russian, we will have to cultivate that most Russian ethos: alienation.

The phrase "new normal" has been trending in popular discourses since the program launched, all on its own. It has often been used to declare that certain new things should never be considered "normal," and that we should not bend the frame of acceptability to include them. Here we can be reminded of Eugène Ionesco's play, Rhinoceros (1959), in which people rationalize away the massive savannah mammal marauding suddenly through town. "Give it a chance, wait and see. Maybe it's a rhinoceros and maybe it's not. How bad could it be, really? I heard that it's not even happening." Among our thematic trends was the infrastructural-scale defamation for the real by conspiracy, intrigue, superstitious populism, clickbait pseudoscience, causality/correlation fallacies, and motivated inference. Yet these new normals have already become part of the long collapse of novelty cycles, such that technologies become normal even before they become real. AI is already normal. Universal Basic Income? So August 2015! Driverless cars are blasé and they aren't even on the road yet. Your mom was probably already playing Pokémon Go before its denouncers knew what was going on. She was perhaps among the crowd gathered day and night at the park on Porovsky Boulevard near the Kremlin, huddled around the densest cluster of Pokémon gyms, Pokéstops, incenses, and lure modules in the whole time zone. That this assembly was interpreted by the Russian government as a dangerous message from Google (Niantic Labs, the game developer's parent company), that they could send a crowd to the Kremlin anytime they wanted, is not so surprising.

Part of what animated the little worlds we hoped to carve out was an impatient exhaustion with the contemptuous, tautological malaise exemplified by mainstream "critical design" shouting at history in big sans serif visual prose. And as for mainstream politics, in the exact spot where a viable future should be, something insufferably backwards has filled it in: a psychotic simulation of medieval geopolitics burning as

bright as creepy clown hair. The rise of ethno-nationalist populism is a global phenomenon with global causes. Yet in each case, the locals either blame or congratulate themselves for their unique failure/accomplishment. But from Manila to Milwaukee, we see the same demographic voting patterns of urban, highly-educated cosmopolitans, and rural, less-educated monocultural nationalists (and/or national monoculturalists). Even as globalization has delinked class from geography in uneven ways, we all try to deal with the phenomenon one eighteenth- century jurisdiction at a time. This is also a moment when networks of city-states seem decisively detached from their national hosts. For those from District 13 in the real-life Hunger Games, the city is a source of arbitrary power, and in this way, urbanization itself a focus of populist backlash.



Common Task combines and embraces Russian cosmism, Soviet cybernetics, and technofetishization as an alternative Russian history.

We may be seeing the emergence of a new (old) multipolar order of geographically encapsulated domains, an amalgamation of legacy polities that could last a few years or a few decades. While some functions of globalization proceed according to the dynamics of spheres and networks, the nomos of the cloud is subdividing into multilateral sovereign domains, each with a parallel stack of servers, sensors, data, applications, and users/ citizens. A silver lining to this enclosure into regional sovereign stacks (North American, Eurasian, Russian, Chinese, etc.) may be a diversification of innovation at each layer according to differing contexts. Such consolidations may be another phase in the "great convergence" of political economies under information logistics, and if so, it holds both dark and light potentials. The segmentation of stacks may force the diversification and speciation of software and

hardware by hemispherical "Galapagos effects." Among the strange implications of this might be its effects on the evolution of artificial intelligences, which are bound to the data they are allowed to sense and process, and so may be physically constrained by the Great Firewalls of the regional stacks inside of which they are born. For the coming years, the morphogenetic diversity of AI may be a function not only of their application domains, but of their sovereign domains as well.

Along the coast or countryside, on Earth or Mars (one standing in for the other), the question of urbanization is now, and will remain, a question of who and what is urbanized, when, and how so. For The New Normal, the ante is a tempered alienation from conventional answers. For all our interest in planetary-scale systems, the bleeding-edges of urbanism are at the level of sensing and sensation, both human and machinic. Smart city scenarios are full of sensors in the service of administrative loops, but they tragically undersell the potential of machine sensing at urban scale. In real cities, much more interesting applications already flourish—and besides, cites have always been information-rich. Concurrently, technologies that augment human sensation have become more mainstream, and as they do, they extend and focus the perceptual practice of everyday urban life. We see these vectors—machine sensing and augmented sensation—as correspondent to and convergent with one another. For machine sensing, the surfaces of the city are made more vital as they respond to light, touch, and motion in new ways, and for augmented sensation, the living inhabitants' sensory apparatuses are infused with new layers of hot and cool stimulus. There is an urbanism to be found in the hatched membrane between these.

Megastructures in the Wild

One hope is that the result of this new tale of sensing and sensibility is a tactile intimacy with the unfamiliar and inaccessible rather than another way of projecting more dumb constellations onto a new glass ceiling. A possible price to pay for this is that boundaries between what feels like the inside and what looks like the outside are less certain, testing our confidence in causation versus misapprehension. What some call "affect" is distributed into an overwhelming synthetic kingdom of sensors and their prostheses; the senses of memory and agency shift seats. Another more expensive toll, however, is the amnesia of our perpetual present-tense, the virtual reality that is waking life. And yet, even that may come to de-subjectivize and de-individuate historical trace and trauma; itself a possible precondition for the futurisms most needed.

A generation ago, the present moment might have been explained this way: Foucauldian disciplinary society based on institutional walls gave way to the Deleuzian society of control based on switches and gateways, so now a biopolitics of synthetic sensing (including seeing) is the physical location of metropolitan power. If so, synthetic sensing and sensation can be used to narrate urban designs, but also, user by user, they are the bricks out of which cities are built. For The New Normal, such technologies were taken as both tool and subject matter. We learned to think with each and understand how each thinks with us. We made use of them as drawing tools with which to tell stories. In some scenarios, technologies may be the protagonist or antagonist of said stories.

This presents a rather different definition of the "city." It may be true, as Rem Koolhaas has suggested, that we've invested precious little time into re-thinking what urban form might be, and that the concentration of human populations into megacities has allowed us to overlook revolutions in rural and

suburban peripheries. It is in data centers, distribution warehousing zones, ports, crop fields, and energy farms where the logistical sublime of algorithmic urbanism has already reshaped the built environment most decisively. Even as these places serve huge metropolitan populations, they are increasingly manned by lean crews of technicians and service staff, itinerant or not. Given their scale, they surely count as megastructures, but of a different sort than the now-canonical 1960s-era encapsulated utopias of the Metabolists, Buckminster Fuller, or Constant (though they do bear affinity to Archizoom's networked refractions, with wide grids optimized for programs other than human habitation). An urbanism for inanimate objects is not itself a speculative exercise, but now one pillar of what is and will continue to be the real city. This doesn't diminish factors like energy and access; to the contrary, they come to the fore in ways that they probably would not, if this architecture were designed only as a stage for human dramas.

Megastructures have played a starring role in urbanism's own historical "speculative design" avant la lettre. They have been a way to make sense of planetary scales and non-local integrations; they have extruded diagrammatic plans of ideal societies into domed sections. From Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture (1972) to Biosphere 2 (1991), they have been a figure of totality, either social or ecological or both. Their currency is traded for and against ideas of what those totalities should be, and so they are, at least in this way, models that are at once descriptive, predictive, and projective. Now, as the Anthropocene binds social time to geologic time, the totality of totalities becomes a yet more critical, and in no way hypothetical, geodesign brief. Even so, given that the continuance of urban design conventions will not clarify this work, speculation is a necessary, not fanciful, method. The New Normal drew from these histories, but also from those we lived in Moscow: things like the subterranean public luxury of the palatial subway station network, the vectoral obelisk that caps the Museum of Cosmonautics, and the charming, sprawling, miscellaneousness of the VDNKh exhibition grounds. Totalities were abundant.

Besides the role of hard science/science fiction for Anthropocenic urbanism, "discontiguous megastructures" were understood as the essential platforms we must understand and design with/ for/against. The cloud urbanism that now drives urban/rural core/periphery dynamics links moments of production, distribution, habitation, and consumption into fantastically regular cycles. Its choreographies also pile on dangerous effects, which is all the more reason to commandeer the algorithmic coding and zoning machines toward better outcomes.

We tried to detail how the cloud enables and prevents different urban forms. Just beneath the city's skins, working as a vast animating engine, we tapped into various appliances (buildings, cars, phones, etc.). Where it oozes through screens, we marked a digital aesthetic, both human and inhuman at once, fleeting like weather patterns. As urbanism, it binds contact, conflict, consensus, and monumentalization, taking form in cities but not reducible to them. In search of our own kind of cloud Brutalism, we decamped the think tank to the Arctic coast where Russia (along with Norway, Canada, and others) is building automated shipping ports in anticipation of the further melting of the polar cap and the opening of the Northern Passage. There is little that is more "new normal" than a networked archipelago of hyperborean robot cities sending containers back and forth to one another across the top of the planet. In search of the edge, we also went to mining and manufacturing hubs in the Urals and to the Siberian

port city of Magadan (which is the closest to Martian environmental conditions that humans may ever get to experience).

Along the way, we were reminded of Stalin's "Great Plan for the Transformation of Nature" from the 1940s, to terraform the country's agricultural interior through massive infrastructural works and Lysenkoist geoengineering. If the enduring value of post-WW2 utopian megastructures is how their ambitious urban-scale architecture (or architecturally-enveloped urbanism) sought to diagram a programmatic totality, their weakness was an inability to adapt to intrinsic or extrinsic perturbations that demanded accommodation. Despite the modularity of contemporary platforms, we shouldn't be overconfident that the discontiguous cloud megastructures of today are so different from their forebears. As urban systems (macro to micro) link molecules and continents, cause and effect are difficult to model, and in the face of that difficulty, placeholder clichés from smart city advertising stick around beyond their shelf life to become inadvertent conventional wisdom that is hard to dislodge.

The New Normal projects not only illustrate integrative scenarios, but also microprotocols, games, and ruses, understood not as minor exceptions but as a primary grammar for how spatial systems work. We focused on maneuvers that produce unexpected outcomes as the basis of a more hard-realist urban cybernetics by paying close attention to how incrementally more precise measurements often come at the expense of understanding what needs and does not need to be measured in the first place. The big picture gets lost as the details become more precise. Pull on which levers to push which urban systems? Perhaps for the global economy, our indexes are metering a ghost economics, and our game theories, legal fictions, and incentive zones are poorly disposed to zero-marginal-cost platform economics. Or perhaps not, and we just don't know what to do with them. As ever, reflexively treating each awkward signal as anomalous to the rule— instead of as a reason to fix new rules, patterns, and norms—only defers conclusions. The alternative is for design to wield its essential craftiness and cunning (and critique) to trick those new norms into appearance.

Inside the Outside

If one of the key questions for any architecture is who or what is inside and/or outside any envelope, The New Normal accepted the nervous uncertainty of the answer as a starting point. For starters, in the architecture of political geography, who or what is and is not a migrant of one sort or another? But in that solidarity, there are cutting differences: for some, that status is a death sentence, and for others it's a token of access. From across the spectra of positions, the work needed is on behalf of the permanent artificiality of the built environment. Among the uncanny effects of climate change is how the ground shifts beneath our feet. Whole habitats migrate north or south with species chasing or escaping the sun. Do their humans follow them, or are they left behind as indigenous refugees? Such new normal conundrums organize, entangle, and confuse. Our responses have been on behalf of the emergent, not just the emergency.

While accepting our own presumptions and blind spots, we deduced and sorted interesting patterns and assembled them into charter cities and charter stacks, drawn not only with lines and volumes, but also with diagrams that trace what might ensue. Just as with synthetic sensing, the conjunction and disjunction between code, image, and model is multidirectional. The New Normal projects are proposed as fungible platforms, not fixed master plans. Almost all are systems more than policies, and accordingly,

all have their own economics and aesthetics that allow them to work as they do. The circumstances in which they move about are sometimes cloudy. Appearances confuse. What looks like a clean slate may actually be a canvas so full of contradictions that no light can penetrate it. What seems uncertain may not be; what looks like cool gamesmanship may be a slow-motion fake out. The post-truth mode of knowing may be less a cunning scheme than a sign that the sovereign has nothing left to lose. Or it may be nothing but a facile preference for conspiracy myths that keep the hero's sentimental journey in center frame. What good is algorithmically-augmented pattern recognition for someone who thinks they already know how the movie ends, despite all of the "known unknown" sleights-of-hand that turn audiences into users, developers, believers, and collaborators?

As urbanism itself variously sprints and meanders toward different platform economics, their aesthetics take on more gravity. To design accordingly is not straightforward. The task solicits gestures of revelation and secrecy, of obscuring as a kind of revealing. It involves both stating things plainly and telling winding stories; a hardcore cultural realism based on hiding in plain sight. Steganography, for example, is the practice of encoding information within other non-secret text or data, such as messages hidden in the raw code of a JPEG image, but even that is too James Bond for us. The New Normal was best suited for those comfortable with counterintuitive perspectives and working across more differing scales than their current circumstances might have allowed them: urban data, urban economics, urban philosophy, urban software, urban cinema, urban services, urban science fiction, urban systems, urban interfaces, and even urban planning.

We spoke different conceptual languages to engage the new normal and things to come—search, orientation, projection—sometimes all at once. Our work overfilled content feeds with nice images, good ideas, and terms to build a new glossary, but the real "deliverables" of The New Normal are new design practices themselves. The subdivision of design practice into graphic, industrial, interaction, service, urban, and architectural design, etc., has already been supplanted and augmented by another distribution of robotic, ecological, and biological techniques. Yet the latter doesn't replace the former as some new orthodoxy. Practices must mix the old and the new on their own terms. They should hone a generous philosophical approach and deploy them with as much coldness and cruelty as they can muster. If urbanism intertwines so many scales and modalities of life, there is need for urban design practices that deploy combinations of their own full-stack service and/or independent development concerns. This fits both very well and very badly with forms of the now-normal asymmetrical information battle that operates on many fronts with dissonant messages aimed at the same goal and sometimes without clear attribution of blame, credit, or authorship. In other words, if the world has made discontiguous megastructures, now we need to make the discontiguous megastructuralists.

I still think back to the unmarked anniversary of the failed 1991 coup, and wonder what the lesson may be about a purported fidelity to "events" when revolutions are eventless? Perhaps the real processes and the ways they "take place" don't need to be marked by human-scale events. Like cities, they just keep on happening with or without our observances. Who knows, by 2050 we may look back on the 2010s as the "pre-war years." If so, let the record show that the danger was less artificial intelligence than old-fashioned human stupidity. We blamed the machines for listening to us and doing exactly what we told them to do. We should have built machines that knew not to focus only on us, but on everything else.

The questions of what is the new normal, what it should be, and what should be resisted and never normalized are poorly served by simple stories of tradition, justice, or efficiency. Some systems may be broken because they are deeply cemented niches impervious to new signals, and others because they do nothing but receive, reflect, and amplify every desire back to themselves. Cities are guilty of both, but they are victims too.

Design always takes a risk when addressing any state of exception, in that its techniques of mitigation may prematurely normalize, and so sustain, a pathology that would otherwise dissipate under the weight of its eventual failures.

In hopes of protecting what is good, design interventions can support what is harmful to carry on. Sometimes the best defense is to let something destroy itself.

So, pick your emergency: electron distribution, value exchange, protein capture, carbon dioxide storage, etc. What is actually worth what, and to whom? How much value is there in the world, and why? What should be done with cities, now? To see things anew, and to see them for what they really are, in all their marvelous strangeness, both beautiful and ugly, will require our most intense and adventurous imaginations and techniques. The future has not been canceled. The future is where we will live and grow, but first we need to catch up to the present. <>

AM ENDE DER GLOBALISIERUNG: OBER DIE REFIGURATION VON RÄUMEN edited by Martina Löw, Volkan Sayman, Jona Schwerer, Hannah Wolf [Transcripy Verlag, 9783837654028] Open Access

Globalisation has become an omnipresent certainty. But how accurate is the concept of "globalisation", when at the same time national borders are being enforced and transnational free trade zones are being expanded, when territories are being overcome on different scales and at the same time territorial boundaries are being redefined? Understanding current changes as a reconfiguration of spaces enables the analysis and discussion of contradictory, tension-filled and conflictual spatial processes and their everyday experience. The interdisciplinary contributions of this volume present theoretical and empirical results of the Berlin Collaborative Research Centre 1265 "Re-Figuration of Spaces".

Inhalt

Translation

At the End of Globalization: About the refiguration of rooms edited by Martina Löw, Volkan Sayman, Jona Schwerer, Hannah Wolf [Transcript Verlag, 9783837654028]

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At the End of Globalization: About the refiguration of rooms by *Martina Löw, Volkan Sayman, Iona Schwerer, Hannah*

Since the Corona crisis, it has been on everyone's mouth: the end of globalisation. We have learned that borders can be closed, that political decisions are once again clearly national, that air traffic is almost stalling, that cruise ships are in the grips. However, we found the title for this volume long before the pandemic. He starts with the observation that late modern companies are characterized by intense counter-tensions, which are insufficiently descriptive with globalization versus nationalization. We see economic protectionism, we see the accelerated construction of fortified borders between states and we observe the rise of left- and right-wing nationalist populists with decidedly anti-globalist attitudes. All this challenges commentators to new interpretations, such as that of a multi-pole world, the crisis of globalization or that of the terrestrial age. On the other hand, however, we also see global orientations and circulations – and this can also be exemplified by the Corona crisis – that the political responses to the risk of Covid19 infection are similar worldwide, the World Health Organization is gaining notoriety, and the virus itself appears to be living proof of a globally circulating object. The normality of movements around the globe becomes particularly apparent in the interruption.

> »At the end of globalization. About the refiguration of spaces" is a conceptually designed book. At no point should it be questioned that there are numerous phenomena that can be described as globalisations. It is certainly not to be said that we have a to observe the decline of globalization in the sense of declining networks and dependencies worldwide (see on the definition of globalization: Dürrschmidt 2002: 12).

Rather, the book proposes to use the concept of *refiguration,* which was developed in the Berlin DFG Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1265 ‚refiguration of spaces, to describe late modern societies, firstly, to understand from the eternal loops of the juxtaposition of global – localized (Roudometof 2019) and instead to understand globalization – localization, network formation – territorial closure, hetero- genrization –homogenization, etc. as intertensioned phenomena in changing late modern societies, and secondly to fundamentally understand this change as spatial. Refiguration asks about the simultaneity of opposing tendencies, which it initially weights equally: the delimitation of the global, the formation of network spaces, which are exactly associated with digitized mediatization, here and there the equally decisive limitation, closure and containerization on various scales (Knoblauch/ Löw 2020a, 2020b). Refiguration is a concept that asks about the change in quality of the social (in the process, i.e. also unevenly, in unreal balances of power, relational).

Already now there are sufficient empirical findings, which show that fundamental social structures, spatial imaginations and everyday spatial action have changed significantly in recent decades. These empirically based observations, described in many of the articles of this book, can only be interpreted in part as globalization. As editors, we therefore advocate using globalization (preferably in the plural as globalizations) as a description of phenomena for global networking and dependency relationships, but to think of the end of globalization as a *comprehensive, analytical concept.* As early as 2006, Helmuth Berking wrote: "There is hardly a word image that has changed our conceptions of the world in which we live more than that of "globalization". Whether as a vision of terror of de-solidarized societies or as

a promise of a para-thisian future, it is always about the dramatic consequences of a new or as a newly imagined social-spatial order [...]" (Berking 2006: 7) to remind that territorial states continue to "remain full forms of organization of social-spatial socialization" (ibid.: 11) and the Globale "let the local emerge as an analytical blind spot" (ibid.: 14). Refiguration is a conceptual response to the constant juxtaposition of local and global, national and global, criticized by Berking, among others.

Refiguration is also a concept that empirically asks about the variants and, above all, the interdependencies in social change (while at the same time assuming similarities such as digitized mediatization). Globalisation too often assumes an evenly interwoven interconnection of connectivity and dependency, against the fact, for example, that interconnectivity nodes such as global *cities* produce suspended regions and exclusions (Sassen 2001; Harvey 2006) or that there are country-specific patterns of contact networks and exchange relationships that are better than transnationalisation. It has often been emphasized that globalization is actually to be thought of as a glocalization, because the global is necessarily in the local, and the experience of globalization is coined with a strengthening of local authorities (Robertson 1995; Massey 2005). Finally, the drifting out of currents and the formation of *scapes*, that is, globalized, deterritorialized spaces with their own logic, are problematized. In particular, Arjun Appadurai (1996) argues that the circulation of information, knowledge, images and interpretations leads to the emergence of specific *scapes,* namely *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes* and *ideoscapes,* which challenge global logics. Now it has long been emphasized in the globalization discourse that different directions have to be distinguished (see the following differentiation Dürrschmidt 2002): significant networking services of an economic nature (trade relations, financial markets, etc.), technological (electronic network, transport railways, electricity and water supply, etc.) and cultural (exchange of ideas and consumer products, but also mobility in tourism or through migration). However, the merging of these strands has not yet been successful. The subproject leaders and staff of the DFG Collaborative Research Centre, who compiled this volume as the first presentation of the results, combine a spatial-theoretical perspective as a common basis in order to bring together the various social dynamics and to understand them in their conditional relationship. All of the above-mentioned networks articulaspatially. They are based on similar spatial figures, weave into spatial polycontexts and change with the spatial knowledge of the actors.

Globalization as a concept of an even development of interconnection and dependencies is no longer sufficient, according to the title-giving thesis, for an appropriate description and analysis of the current socio-spatial change. Too often, globalization implies both a linear development towards an ever more interconnected world and the primacy of a global *scale.* Against this background, demands for consistent regional measures, such as those raised by climate protection movements, quickly appear to be a contradiction to globalization, and climate is a spatial phenomenon, and climate regulations are at the centre of the refiguration. The concept of refiguring spaces can contribute to a complex understanding of changes under globalized conditions, because globalization is not assumed to be clarified either as a spatial or as a discursive phenomenon. Rather, the historicality of social spatial constitution, the scales of world orientation and spatial knowledge are always the subject of empirical analysis. This avoids misleading zero-sum games between space figures, for example, to see globalization as either a loss of the spatial congruence of national political institutions in favor of global network spaces; or vice versa, to describe as the dismantling of globally re-territorialized national power in favour of the restoration of self-sufficient, mutually exclusive national territorial territory.

The productivity of a mindset in spatial figures is also at stake in the Criticism of state-centrist globalization theories, which allow no other spatial figure than that of the territory, and to deterritorialize globalization theories, which consider the territorialization of political spaces almost obsolete. It may come as a surprise at first glance that globalization theories argue state-centric, but Neil Brenner is justifiably critical of spatial concepts contained in Roland Robertson's and Immanuel Wallerstein's globalization theories. Both can be read as "global territorialists" because they transfer the supposedly historyless territorial container form of the national state to the spatial structure of the globe as a whole, as if it were only a matter of national and global territories.

Size differences. This is accompanied by the assumption that practices populate spaces rather than constitute them. Paradoxically, state-centered thinking in globalization research has the effect of underestimating the role of nation-state territories as enabling, driving, and stumbling space forms in globalization processes, because they assume that states are passively exposed to waves of globalization. A advantage of the theoretical offer of the refiguration of spaces is that global spaces can be described as historically constituted, multiple and overlapping spatial arrangements and thus the processuality of their formation, change and dissolution is emphasized. De-territorializing globalization theories, on the other hand, argue that the increase in the importance of global scales presents historically grown territories with mutually exclusive alternatives: erosion in the face of globalization or persistence despite globalization. The fact that spatial arrangements such as national territories, regions, cities and places are refiguring themselves under the influence of waves of globalization as well as shaping the latter – think of the radiance of globally networked metropolitan regions – is so much out of sight.

Globalisation is, of course, not a coherent discursive narrative which, as the term initially suggests, aims at the constitution of an integrated global society, the world society in the world state. Because globalization phenomena empirically consider both a wide cosmos of discursive arenas with possible interpretations and speaker positions as well as a series of disparate spatial refigurations and power relations, increasingly critical questions arise: can the concept of globalization, for example, absorb the multi-fold and inconsistency of the changes that result from the decoupling of national territories and political sovereignty and relativize borders, but which do not lead to a globalized world? Or will it become fairer to the fragmented socio-technical realities of our world if, like Bruno Latour, we assume that the loss of authority of Western reason, that is, the means of knowledge of science, does not lead to globalization, but to a conflicting plurality of natures and worlds, as the debates about conspiracy theories versus science show? The narrative of globalization has lost its universalizing power as a Western-shaped, hegemonic spatial meta-metaphor. Its validity-claim must compete with local, translocal, regional, national or even planetary up to religious spatial references of social processes. One can react to this like Ilse Helbrecht, Lucas Pohl, Carolin Genz and Janina Dobrusskin (in this volume) and consistently demand a thinking of globalization in the plural and broaden the grip of globalization. Globalization can also be used as a description of phenomena that are mainly located at the scale of the global, and can be used as a concept to "understand late modernity as a contradictory, conflicting social formation characterized by the simultaneity of social rise and descent, a simultaneity of cultural appreciation and devaluation – in the end by processes of polarization".

In our opinion, therefore, an analysis of the current socio-spatial change of societies requires theoretical concepts that make the unequal developments of spaces as well as the simultaneous ity of the

effectiveness of different and potentially contradictory spatial figures and spatial logics comprehensible on various spatial scales. With this book we propose to think of these simultaneous, polarizing, tensions and contradictions as a refiguration. Since refiguration is spatially articulated, the sub-projects of the DFG Collaborative Research Centre 1265 examine how spatial knowledge and spatial action are changing and how new formations are emerging in the course of change. In this volume, some of the results as well as conceptual considerations are presented for the first time in a bundled form to the German-speaking professional public. Due to the interdisci- plinric orientation, the orientation to *middle-rang*etheories and the subject-related nature of empirical research, the following additions want to dare to try to clarify the simultaneity and interrelationships of poly-contextural and translocal spatial constitution.

In their contribution, which opens the volume, *Hubert Knoblauch and Martina Löw* into the concept of refiguration. They present a heuristic for the analysis of refiguration in the form of four spatial figures: places, territorial, network and railway spaces. Using insights into the empirical research of the CRC, they explain the*sensitizing concepts* of mediatization, translocalization and polycontexturalization. Finally, garlic and lion propose the concept of spatial cultures in order o investigate similarities, variations and differences in spatial forms of action and practice, in spatial knowledge as well as in institutionalized spatial research and their circulations.

Stefanie Bürkle is the second contribution to the art project at the SFB, which , in particular with visual works– explores spatial references that arise from the mutual overlapping of the phenomena of migration and tourism.

After these overarching contributions, we break down the presentation of the results along the fields of politics, digitization and spatial knowledge. We are seeing changes, particularly in the *spatiality of policies.*

Johanna Hoerning, Theresa Adenstedt and Paul Welch Guerra describe processes of spatial restructuring in the policy areas of housing and asylum policy in their contribution. They examine how NGOs and interest organisations react to refiguration in their spatial practices, deal with it and shape it. The authors show how the practices of the actors simultaneously made different spatial scales and spatial logics relevant, negotiated and strategically used. The simultaneity of these different, sometimes contradicting spatial references, Hoerning, Adenstadt and Welch Guerra grasp as polycontexturalization.

The contribution of *Jan-Peter Voß, Volkan Sayman and Jannik Schritt* deals with the circulation of knowledge in relation to the policy instrument of the mini-publics. They examine the translocal instrument spaces resulting from the practice of mini-publics. The authors look at the role of infrastructures for supporting and developing such mini-publics and show by using three theoretic concepts – »centers of calculation», »scopic media» and the »structuring of spaces»

- how these infrastructures constitute translocal spaces of knowledge circulation and also regulate the circulation of knowledge in a specific way.

Steffen Mau, Fabian Gülzau and Kristina Korte show that national territorial borders continue to be effective institutions despite transnationalization and globalization processes. In their contribution, the authors examine the material design of territorial border infrastructures as well as the global distribution of different levels of materially closed border types. Using quantitative and qualitative data,

they demonstrate how these boundary types are spatially unequally shared and which factors and motives can be underlying the material design, in particular fortified border infrastructures.

Digital mediatization is a key driver of refiguration. Few of the many effects that digitalization entails can be described as globalization. The spread of digital communication and information infrastructures points less to a repeal than to a refiguration of spatial-temporal references and a "localizing turnaround" (Koch 2016), in which physical, tangible and media spaces intersect and intertwine (Zimmermann 2007).

Hubert Knoblauch, Arne Janz and Joshua Schröder conclude in their analysis of control centers that digitization leads both to the centralization of formerly distributed functions in a room and to an expansion of network logic by many distributed and networked, smaller control rooms. In this way, they vividly illustrate the tension between the contai- nerization of spaces on the one hand and their networking, circulation and mobility on the other, which characterizes the re-creation of spaces. Their ethnographic and videographic analyses specify the process of polycontexturalization. To this end, they shed light on the interrelationships of communicative actions of individual human actors, the interactions between them and the intraaction, i.e. the forces of action generated by digital automation across different contexts. Although they observe that interaction between people in digitized control centers is becoming less important because automated contexts become more invisible, human actors are still central in crisis situations and in public representation.

Gabriela Christmann and Martin Schinagl reconstruct in how the digitization of planning has developed since about 1990. Based on this, case studies from New York and Frankfurt analyze how spatial constructions and working methods of planners change through the digitization of tools, communication infrastructures and visual representation practices. They take into account that digital tools and infrastructures allow planning teams to work spatially, involve more stakeholders and planning products. The complexity of the work processes increases with the complexity of the planning tools, which, for example, are able to layer any number of data-infected spatial layers on top of each other.

Dominik Bartmanski, Seonju Kim, Martina Löw, Timothy Pape and Jörg Stollmann discuss, using the example of the South Korean city refoundation Songdo, to what extent the claim to radical novelty made in the city's Smart City concept must be relativized against the background of local traditions of planning and building large apartment settlements as well as the living of co-layers. According to this, smartification is part of the refiguration of spaces that has taken place since the 1960s and is much more comprehensive in society. On the basis of their broad qualitative empirical material, they can show that Songdo is a polycontextual- ural spatial unit that relates the heterogeneous knowledge regime of the digital, the traditional, the urban and the commercial without merging it into a whole.

The increasing digitization of architectural visualizations (renderings) is changing how planning offices represent architectural futures internally and to the public. *Sophie Mélix and Ajit Singh* demonstrate how renderings compress space, time and society on an image surface seemingly unbroken, thus obscuring the conflicting and contradictory processuality of planning processes.

Based on the observation that public places are formally accessible to all, but are mostly used by specific social groups, *Eric Lettkemann and Ingo Schulz-Schaeffer* ask how locative media are changing the meaning constructions of public places. Using the example of users of the digital recommendation service Four

Square, they illustrate how "hybrid spaces" (de Souza e Silva 2006) arise when evaluation systems and testimonials superimpose physical space. The CAMPP model (Constitution of Accessibility through the Meaning of Public Places) developed by them places the subjectively assumed (un)accessibility of public places, typical forms of interaction in places and forms of knowledge that give meaning to places, in an analytical context. The results show that the knowledge provided in Four Square helps users on the one hand to behaviour to the usual meanings of these places. On the other hand, it can be observed that the use of the service can reinforce existing social-world boundaries through algorithmic filtering and personalization of content.

Spatial knowledge is also changing significantly at the moment. Spatial knowledge means the (socialized) subjective experience and experience of space, the conceptions of space as well as the emotions and affect associated with spaces. Subjective spatial knowledge can be physically, linguistically or visually objectified.

In their contribution, Eva Korte and Gunter Weidenhaus critically question the current diagnosis of a "global middle class" – the assumption that a middle class, thus presented as homogeneous, has been formed across national borders, regional and territorial areas, whose fellow ship is similar not only economically but also in terms of their investment status work. Against this background, the article explicitly searches for similarities and differences in the lifestyle of middle-class members in Kenya and Germany and comes to a dif- fer-meaning picture in which great differences can be seen, especially in the spatial perspective. The two authors conclude that the historically and biographically mediated difference between colonial and postcolonial subjectivity leads to different modes of identification with the global. Thus it becomes apparent that, especially in concomitant socioeconomic "global" classes, unequal relations of power and shame continue, which can be understood and analyzed with a conflict-theoretical concept of refiguration.

Ilse Helbrecht, Lucas Pohl, Carolin Genz and Janina Dobrusskin criticize in their contribution the enforcement of a narrow and reductionist, a-spatial understanding of globalization and its underlying assumptions and prerequisites. In excerpts of their empirical research in Singapore, Vancouver and Berlin, they illustrate very different imaginations of being part of a globalization process. They conclude that research into globalisation, which takes space seriously as a challenge, can only speak of globalisation in the Palatinate, in order to focus on the diverse, situational and sometimes recalcitable imaginations of globalisation.

Linda Hering and Julia Fülling show the example of one of the most popular fruit varieties in Germany, the banana, the complex spatial between cultivation, logistics and sales. In doing so, they cast a critical spotlight on the spatial knowledge (and its manipulability) of consumers, traders and consumers. While in supermarkets, above all, the – supposed – place of origin of "fresh" fruits and vegetables is made visible, it is in particular the railway space of transport and logistics that only produces the banana in its specific materiality and on which the fruit itself acts through its own sheep. The banana as material objectification arises and thus has a polycontextural effect, whereby changed conditions of production, lo- gistics and consumer desires lead to constant refiguration.

In their contribution, Talja Blokland and Henrik Schultze examine and compare the everyday forms of coexistence and coexistence in urban spaces in Berlin and Rotterdam. With their question of how to

establish, consolidate or loosen connections symbolically and practically in neighborhoods, they combine the search for suitable theoretical concepts for the study of polycontextual encounters and relationships. The authors argue for a theoretically differentiated and empirically of- the familiar public's perspective as an urban texture in which global and local references overlap or penetrate each other, thus providing the basis for diverse practices of inclusion and exclusion.

The contribution of *Anna Steigemann and Philipp Misselwitz* also deals with global-local spatial references: Using the empirical example of accommodation for refugees in Berlin, the authors ask how practices of different actors lead to these companies becoming a "provisional home". First of all, accommodation for refugees turns out to be polycontextural, integrated into several administrative, surveillance and regulatory regulations. Secondly, these accommodations are rooms that are temporarily appropriated and designed by the residents, even against resistance. Overall, Steigemann and Misselwitz trace a complex process of refiguration in which translocal knowledge and concrete spatial practice influence each other.

The volume concludes with two contributions reflecting the epistemological policies of space research in the Collaborative Research Centre.

Séverine Marguin summarizes the recently increasing interdisci- plinary interdependence between architecture, planning and sociology as polycontextural knowledge production. Despite different Logics of the scientific fields of sociology and architecture, it observes converging tendencies in such a way that a creativeization of sociology and a scientificization of architecture takes place. Using Bourdieu's concepts of capital conversion, structural homology and intrusion, she interprets her material as a science ethnologist in the CRC. In this way, it can show how actors in the two fields develop strategies to combine conflicting demands on interdisciplinary researchers on the one hand and disciplinaryly bound karrie redevelopment on the other.

In their contribution, Séverine Marguin and Hubert Knoblauch finally dedicate themselves to the communicative forms and challenges of interdisciplinary knowledge production. They argue for an empirical theory of science that is capable of refining both normative and institutional claims and possibilities of scientific practice. Using the concrete example of the exchange and its hurdles in an interdisciplinary Collaborative Research Centre, the paper shows how communicative action within and beyond the boundaries of the scientific field can help to re-certify normative, practical and socio-political demands, expectations and evaluations. <>

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Bibliography

Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture by Eliezer Diamond [Oxford University Press, 9780195137507]

The existence of ascetic elements within rabbinic Judaism has generally been either overlooked or actually denied. This is in part because asceticism is commonly identified with celibacy, whereas the rabbis emphasized sexuality as a positive good. In addition, argues Eliezer Diamond, it serves the theological agendas of both Jewish and Christian scholars to characterize Judaism as non- or anti-ascetic. In fact, however, Diamond shows that rabbinic asceticism does indeed exist. This asceticism is mainly secondary, rather than primary, in that the rabbis place no value on self-denial in and of itself, but rather require of themselves the virtual abandonment of familial, social, and economic life in favor of an absolute commitment to the study of the Torah. It is an asceticism of neglect, rather than negation. He also notes that this asceticism of neglect dovetails with the rabbinic theology of sin and punishment, which encourages delaying gratification in this world in the hopes of a greater reward in the next. The rabbis believed, moreover, that every pleasure taken in this world detracts from what awaits one in the future.
The rabbis valued and occasionally engaged in primary asceticism as well. In fact, as Diamond shows, the vocabulary of holiness was often used by the rabbis in connection with voluntary self-denial. One form of primary asceticism--fasting--became increasingly popular in the wake of the destruction of the second temple. He traces this development to the need to mourn the temple's devastation but also to the cessation of three forms of temple-related rituals: the sacrificial cult, the *Ma'amadot* (groups that would fast, pray, and read from the Torah while daily sacrifices were offered), and naziritism. Fasting is linked by the rabbis to each of these practices and Diamond shows that fasting was seen as a substitute for them after the temple was destroyed. In a final chapter, Diamond shows that there is a greater tendency toward asceticism among the Palestinian rabbis than among the Babylonian. He contends that the divergent political histories of these communities as well as differing external cultural influences account for this disparity. <>

A History of Kabbalah: From the Early Modern Period to the Present Day by Jonathan Garb [Cambridge University Press, 9781107153134]

This volume offers a narrative history of modern Kabbalah, from the sixteenth century to the present. Covering all subperiods, schools and figures, Jonathan Garb demonstrates how Kabbalah expanded over the last few centuries, and how it became an important player, first in the European then subsequently in global cultural and intellectual domains. Indeed, study of Kabbalah can be found on virtually every continent and in many languages, despite the destruction of many centers in the mid-twentieth century. Garb explores the sociological, psychological, scholastic and ritual dimensions of kabbalistic ways of life in their geographical and cultural contexts. Focusing on several important mystical and literary figures, he shows how modern Kabbalah is deeply embedded in modern Jewish life, yet has become an independent, professionalized subworld. He also traces how Kabbalah was influenced by and contributed to the process of modernization. <>

Nature and Norm: Judaism, Christianity, and the Theopolitical Problem by by Randi Rashkover [New Perspectives in Post-Rabbinic Judaism, Academic Studies Press, 9781644695098]

Nature and Norm: Judaism, Christianity, and the Theopolitical Problem is a book about the encounter between Jewish and Christian thought and the fact-value divide that invites the unsettling recognition of the dramatic acosmism that shadows and undermines a considerable number of modern and contemporary Jewish and Christian thought systems. By exposing the forced option presented to

Jewish and Christian thinkers by the continued appropriation of the fact-value divide, **Nature and Norm** motivates Jewish and Christian thinkers to perform an immanent critique of the failure of their thought systems to advance rational theopolitical claims and exercise the authority and freedom to assert their claims as reasonable hypotheses that hold the potential for enacting effective change in our current historical moment. <>

In the Presence of Schopenhauer by Michel Houellebecq, preface by Agathe Novak-Lechevalier, translated by Andrew Brown [Polity, 9781509543250]

The work of Michel Houellebecq – one of the most widely read and controversial novelists of our time – is marked by the thought of Schopenhauer. When Houellebecq came across a copy of Schopenhauer's Aphorisms in a library in his mid-twenties, he was bowled over by it and he hunted down a copy of his major philosophical work, The World as Will and Representation. Houellebecq found in Schopenhauer – the radical pessimist, the chronicler of human suffering, the lonely misanthrope – a powerful conception of the human condition and of the future that awaits us, and when Houellebecq's first writings appeared in the early 1990s, the influence of Schopenhauer was everywhere apparent. <>

Society without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us about Contentment (SECOND EDITION) by Phil Zuckerman [New York University Press, 9781479878086]

First edition "Silver" Winner of the 2008 *Foreword Magazine* Book of the Year Award, Religion Category

Before he began his recent travels, it seemed to Phil Zuckerman as if humans all over the globe were "getting religion"—praising deities, performing holy rites, and soberly defending the world from sin. But most residents of Denmark and Sweden, he found, don't worship any god at all, don't pray, and don't give much credence to religious dogma of any kind. Instead of being bastions of sin and corruption, however, as the Christian Right has suggested a godless society would be, these countries are filled with residents who score at the very top of the "happiness index" and enjoy their healthy societies, which boast some of the lowest rates of violent crime in the world (along with some of the lowest levels of corruption), excellent educational systems, strong economies, well-supported arts, free health care, egalitarian social policies, outstanding bike paths, and great beer. <>

How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others by Tanya Marie Luhrmann [Princeton University Press, 9780691164465]

The hard work required to make God real, how it changes the people who do it, and why it helps explain the enduring power of faith

How do gods and spirits come to feel vividly real to people—as if they were standing right next to them? Humans tend to see supernatural agents everywhere, as the cognitive science of religion has shown. But it isn't easy to maintain a sense that there are invisible spirits who care about you. In *How God Becomes Real*, acclaimed anthropologist and scholar of religion T. M. Luhrmann argues that people must work incredibly hard to make gods real and that this effort—by changing the people who do it and giving them the benefits they seek from invisible others—helps to explain the enduring power of faith.

Drawing on ethnographic studies of evangelical Christians, pagans, magicians, Zoroastrians, Black Catholics, Santeria initiates, and newly orthodox Jews, Luhrmann notes that none of these people

behave as if gods and spirits are simply there. Rather, these worshippers make strenuous efforts to create a world in which invisible others matter and can become intensely present and real. The faithful accomplish this through detailed stories, absorption, the cultivation of inner senses, belief in a porous mind, strong sensory experiences, prayer, and other practices. Along the way, Luhrmann shows why faith is harder than belief, why prayer is a metacognitive activity like therapy, why becoming religious is like getting engrossed in a book, and much more. <>

Apperception and Self-Consciousness in Kant and German Idealism by Dennis Schulting [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350151390]

In **Apperception and Self-Consciousness in Kant and German Idealism**, Dennis Schulting examines the themes of reflexivity, self-consciousness, representation and apperception in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and German Idealism more widely. Central to Schulting's argument is the claim that all of human experience is irreversibly self-referential and that this is part of a self-reflexivity, or what philosophers call transcendental apperception, a Kantian insight that was first apparent in the work of Christian Wolff and came to inform all of German Idealism.

In a rigorous text suitable for students of German philosophy and upper-level students on metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, and aesthetics courses, the author establishes the historical roots of Kant's thought and traces it through to his immediate successors Karl Leonhard Reinhold, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. He specifically examines the cognitive role of self-consciousness and its relation to idealism and places it in a clear and coherent history of rationalist philosophy. <>

Emotion and Virtue by Gopal Sreenivasan [Princeton University Press, 978-0691134550

A novel approach to the crucial role emotion plays in virtuous action

What must a person be like to possess a virtue in full measure? What sort of psychological constitution does one need to be an exemplar of compassion, say, or of courage? Focusing on these two examples, *Emotion and Virtue* ingeniously argues that certain emotion traits play an indispensable role in virtue. With exemplars of compassion, for instance, this role is played by a modified sympathy trait, which is central to enabling these exemplars to be reliably correct judges of the compassionate thing to do in various practical situations. Indeed, according to Gopal Sreenivasan, the virtue of compassion is, in a sense, a modified sympathy trait, just as courage is a modified fear trait. <>

Reading David Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste" edited by Babette Babich [De Gruyter, 9783110585346]

This collection of reading and essays on the *Standard of Taste* offers a much needed resource for students and scholars of philosophical aesthetics, political reflection, value and judgments, economics, and art. The authors include experts in the philosophy of art, aesthetics, history of philosophy as well as the history of science. This much needed volume on David Hume will enrich scholars across all levels of university study and research. <>

After Heidegger? edited by Richard Polt and Greg Fried [New Heidegger Research, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 9781786604859]

This unique volume collects more than 30 new essays by prominent scholars on what remains philosophically provocative in Heidegger's thought. His writings continue to invite analysis and application — and, particularly in the light of his political affiliations, they must also be critiqued. Philosophy today takes place after Heidegger in that his views should not be accepted naively, and there are new issues that he did not address — but also in that we continue to think in the wake of important questions that he raised. <>

Aztec Religion and Art of Writing: Investigating Embodied Meaning, Indigenous Semiotics, and the Nahua Sense of Reality by Isabel Laack [Numen Book, Brill, 9789004391451]

In her groundbreaking investigation from the perspective of the aesthetics of religion, Isabel Laack explores the religion and art of writing of the pre-Hispanic Aztecs of Mexico. Inspired by postcolonial approaches, she reveals Eurocentric biases in academic representations of Aztec cosmovision, ontology, epistemology, ritual, aesthetics, and the writing system to provide a powerful interpretation of the Nahua sense of reality.
Laack transcends the concept of "sacred scripture" traditionally employed in religions studies in order to reconstruct the Indigenous semiotic theory and to reveal how Aztec pictography can express complex aspects of embodied meaning. Her study offers an innovative approach to nonphonographic semiotic systems, as created in many world cultures, and expands our understanding of human recorded visual communication.
This book will be essential reading for scholars and readers interested in the history of religions, Mesoamerican studies, and the ancient civilizations of the Americas. <>

Strelka: The New Normal edited by Benjamin H. Bratton Nicolay Boyadjiev Nick Axel Project Lead: Olga Tenisheva [Strelka Press, ISBN 978-5-907163-08-9; Park Books, ISBN 9783038602200]

The New Normal (2017-2019) was a post-graduate program and Speculative Urbanism think-tank within Moscow's renowned Strelka Institute of Media, Architecture, and Design. Directed by distinguished American social theorist Benjamin H. Bratton, the The New Normal conducted a collaborative research to investigate the impact of planetary-scale computation on the future of cities both in Russia and around the world.

The New Normal book, edited by Benjamin H. Bratton, Nicolay Boyadjiev, and Nick Axel, features twenty-two interlinked projects that were part of the research. Published alongside are seventeen lavishly illustrated contributions by international researchers and designers that outline the wider scope of The New Normal program's output, held together by concise thematic texts contributed by Benjamin H. Bratton. Contributors include many of the most influential contemporary designers, philosophers, architects, and artists, such as Yuk Hui, Liam Young, Anastassia Smirnova, Lydia Kallipoliti, Lev Manovich, Julieta Aranda, Trevor Paglen, Metahaven, Keller Easterling, Robert Gerard Pietrusko, Molly Wright Steenson, Ben Cerveny, Rival Strategy, Geoff Manaugh, Stephanie Sherman, and Patricia Reed. The fields of research include Speculative Megastructures, Human AI Interaction Design, Protocols and Programs, Synthetic Cinema, Alt-Geographies, Platform Econometrics, and Recursive Simulation. <>

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